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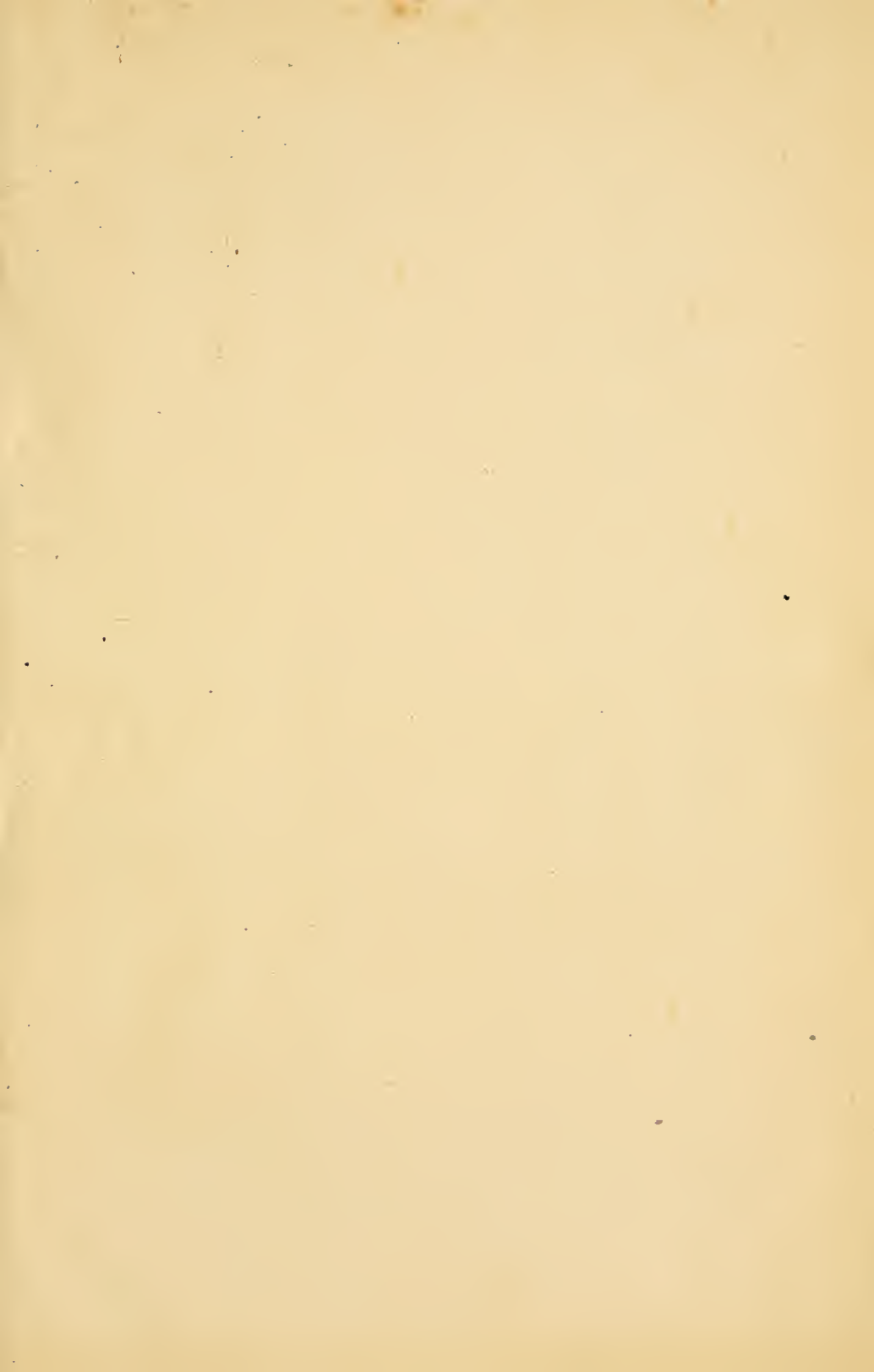
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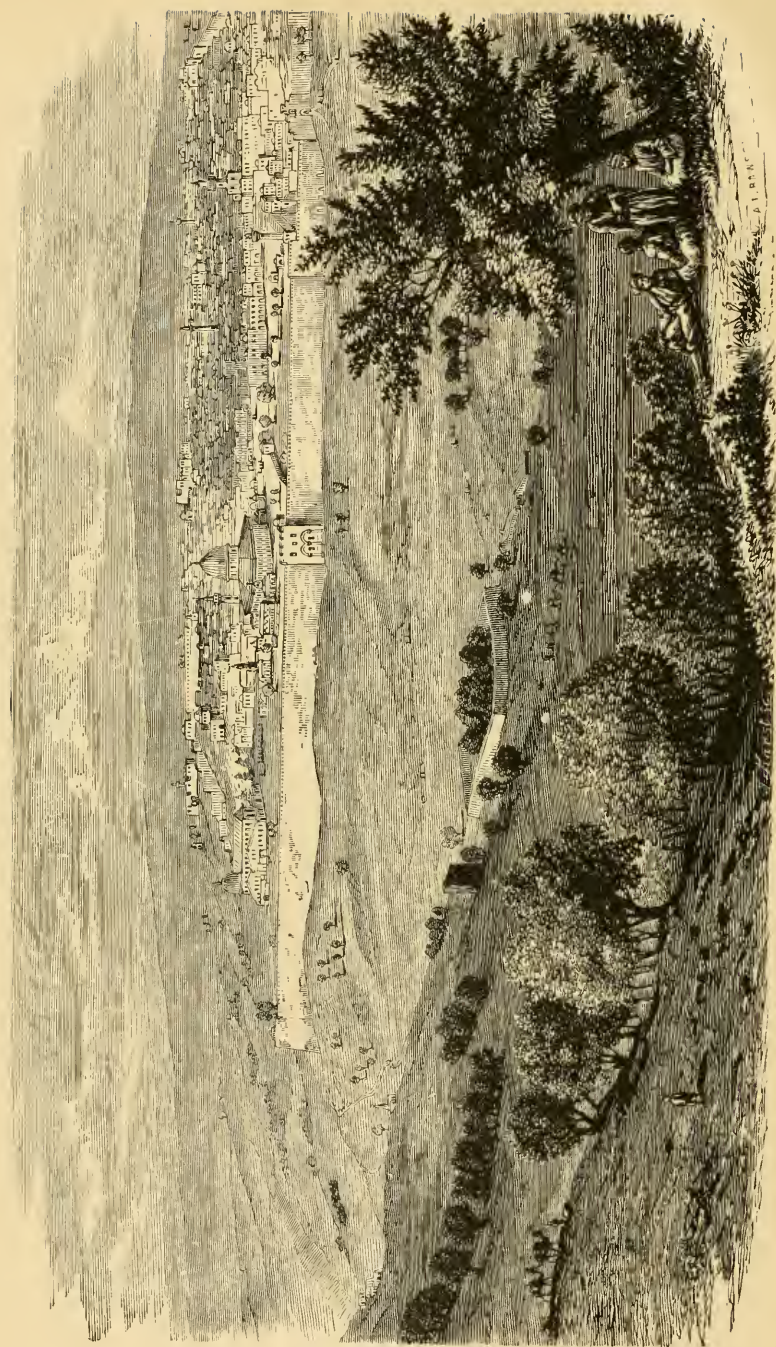
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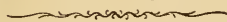
JERUSALEM, FROM OLIVET.

POPULAR EXPOSITOR
OF
THE GOSPELS AND ACTS,

FOR
PULPIT, SUNDAY-SCHOOL, AND FAMILY.

MATTHEW, MARK, JOHN.

↓
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PREFACE.

In the preparation of the "EXPOSITOR," the Author, with a view to its usefulness, very freely availed himself of all the reliable aid within his reach, without deeming it necessary in all cases to indicate the numerous sources from which it was derived. Instead of encumbering the volume with a mass of authorities, or the history and comparison of conflicting opinions, which, for the ordinary reader, tend rather to obscure than to elucidate, it was his aim merely to present the last and best results of Biblical research, scientific discovery, and historical development, bearing upon the portions of Scripture expounded. And this he labored to do, with such an union of exegesis and practical reflection, as well as in such method, spirit and style, as would combine attraction, instruction, and profitable impression. Difficulties, without being formally stated in some instances, and without hope of their unshadowed solution in many more, were, under a sense of duty, grappled by him according to his ability. Constant care was also taken in the treatment of all passages to avoid the extremes of too great brevity and too great fullness.

In the full notation of parallel passages, the attachment of a list of questions to each chapter, and the insertion of the "HISTORICAL INDEX," which furnishes a more extended explanation of persons, places and things than would have been proper where they severally and repeatedly occur in the text, reference was had not only to the convenience of the student, but also to his economy of time and means. The *Appendixes*, in which are presented a "Biographical Sketch of the Apostles," and an essay on "Demoniacal Possessions," will, it is hoped, be regarded with interest as well by the general as the professional reader.

The work has involved a large expenditure of time and strength, but this was patiently borne under a deep conviction that they were being devoted to the noblest and best of all services. In all expositions supreme reference was had to "the mind of the Spirit," and it is gratefully acknowledged that one great compensation for the toil endured has been already received in the testimonies of so many eminent Ministers and Laymen, who occupy different, and in some respects divergent, sections in the vineyard of our blessed Lord—that the portion of the Divine Word which we have dealt with, has been, without evasion, compromise or dilution, fully and faithfully unfolded—thus showing that in *their* judgment, as well as in our own, there is a broad and deep substratum of truth in the Bible, which may be reached, and on which God's dear people may and do rest as the rule of their faith, hope and practice, even though, for reasons which it is not necessary for us here either to state or discuss, such common basis be not yet as visibly and practically recognized, as very many think it should be, and fervently pray it soon may be.

The Divine blessing is earnestly implored upon the work, whenever, wherever and by whomsoever it may be read. Should it prove acceptable to the public, an exposition of the remainder of the New Testament will follow in due time, if Providence permit.

PHILADELPHIA, September 1, 1872.

PREFACE

TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

HISTORY OF THE APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST.

The details of Matthew's life which have been preserved are very scanty. Little is known of him except what he has recorded of himself. (ix. 9-13, x. 3.)

He was a Galilean, but of what city or tribe of Israel is unknown. Though a Jew, he was employed as a publican, or tax-gatherer, under the Romans, to whom the Jews were now tributary, in the provincial government of Judea. The circumstance that, although deeply attached to the religion of his fathers, he adopted an occupation against which such strong prejudices were entertained, would seem to indicate that, to some extent, at least, he could distinguish between the true essence of Judaism and its outward forms and traditional prejudices. His ordinary residence was Capernaum, on the Sea of Galilee, where he took the customs' duty for the transportation of goods backward and forward, and the toll from passengers, who crossed the water. The name Matthew is probably a contracted form of Mattathiah, *gift of Jehovah*, or, as some think, identical with Amittai, *true, faithful*. That Matthew is the same with "Levi, son of Alphaeus," whom, according to Luke (v. 27, 29), and Mark (ii. 14), the Lord called from the receipt of custom, is evident, not only from the perfect agreement in the circumstances related by these Evangelists with the account given by Matthew of himself (ix. 9), but also from the fact that in the list of the twelve Apostles (Matt. x. 3), Matthew is called *the publican*. If there were two publicans, both called solemnly in the same form at the same place, Capernaum, then one of them became an Apostle, and the other was heard of no more, for Levi is not mentioned again after the feast which he made in our Lord's honor. (Luke v. 29.) This is most unlikely. The change of name cannot be regarded as an objection to the identity of Matthew and Levi. It was common among the Jews to have two names; as "Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus" (Matt. x. 3), and "Simon, who is called Peter." (Matt. x. 2.) When a Jew became a Roman citizen he usually assumed a Roman name. Hence it is supposed that "Levi" was the original Hebrew, and "Matthew" the assumed Roman name of this Evangelist. Or, the former may have been his family name, and the latter the one by which he was known as a disciple. If, as is generally supposed, the father of Matthew was the same with the Alphaeus named as the father of James the Less, then he was the cousin of the Lord Jesus.

Matthew was first called by our Lord while he abode in Capernaum. (Matt. ix. 9.)

He was sitting in his office, by the sea-side, when Jesus, at an early period of His ministry, spoke to him, his hands full of business, his head, perhaps, of calculations, and his heart of covetousness: for it is not certain that he had paid any previous regard to the teaching of Christ. But, when commanded to follow Jesus, such a power attended the word as led him to renounce his employment, and immediately to become an attendant on the Saviour, that he might be a preacher of the Gospel.

"At once he rose, and left his gold,
His treasure and his heart transferred."

It is not probable, however, that he followed Jesus continuously, until he had settled his accounts with those by whom he had been employed. When, before the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord inaugurated His body of Apostles, Matthew was included, and in his own catalogue stands second in class, and eighth in order. There is one circumstance which reflects much credit on Matthew. After the calling of him by Jesus, the Saviour, at his request, partook, with some publicans who had also been invited, of an entertainment at his house. His design, doubtless, in giving this great feast, was, besides paying respect to Christ, to afford his former friends an opportunity for familiar acquaintance with Him, and to give our Lord a favorable opportunity for free and unrestrained conversation on religion and the Messiah's dispensation. But, whilst he gives a brief account of the feast (ix. 10), we are indebted to Mark (ii. 15) and Luke (v. 29) for the fact, which Matthew's modesty omitted to mention, that Matthew himself gave the feast. He wished to do honor to his Master, and to preserve the important sentiments which He had expressed. To others he left it, if they chose to do so, to make known the important part which he had in this matter. It is also observable as indicating the same spirit, that he does not dissemble his former profession as a publican (x. 3), thus exalting the grace of Christ which raised him to the Apostleship.

Matthew continued a faithful attendant upon our Saviour till His crucifixion, and was an eye-witness of His miracles, and a hearer of His discourses. He remained in Jerusalem until the day of Pentecost, when he received the Holy Ghost with the rest of the Apostles, after which there is no authentic account of him to be met with; he doubtless continued in Judea preaching the Gospel till the time of persecution compelled him to retire. According to Socrates, an historian of the 5th century, Matthew preached the Gospel in Ethiopia (*Hist. Eccl.* i. c. 19); where, it is an opinion with many, he died a martyr in the city of Nadabbar or Nadavver, but by what death is not known. (*Cave's* Liv. Apos.) Others say he died in Parthia, or Persia: Clement of Alexandria, on the authority of Heracleon, a learned Valentinian of the 2d century, denies that he suffered martyrdom. (*Strom.* lib. iv.): and Chrysostom in his eulogy on Matthew makes no mention of such circumstance. (*Hom.* 48, 49.) This diversity of opinion evidently shows that these suppositions are without good foundation.

AUTHORSHIP OF THIS GOSPEL.

There is no ancient book with regard to the authorship of which we have earlier, fuller, and more unanimous testimony. From Papias, almost if not quite contemporary with the Apostles, downward, we have a stream of unimpeachable witnesses to the fact that Matthew was the author of a Gospel, while the quotations which abound in the works of the Fathers prove that—at least as early as Irenæus—if we may not also add Justin, whose "Memorabilia of Christ" we cannot but identify with the "Gospels" he speaks of as in public use—prove that the Gospel received by the church under his name was the same as that which has reached us.

LANGUAGE IN WHICH IT WAS WRITTEN.

It was a general tradition in the early church that there was a Gospel, written by Matthew, in Syro-Chaldaic. That he did write some notices of our Lord's life in the vernacular language of Palestine is probable. But the originality and genuineness of the Greek Gospel are sustained by the strongest evidence. No trace of any Hebrew Gospel now remains. In Palestine, moreover, Greek was the language of books of business, and of common life. Looking, therefore, to the habits of his countrymen, and to the approaching dissolution of the Jewish State, he had every inducement to employ that tongue.

TIME AND PLACE AT WHICH THIS GOSPEL WAS WRITTEN.

The time when this Gospel was written is uncertain; but if the testimony of old writers that it is the earliest of the Gospels must be taken into account, this would bring it before A. D. 58-60, the supposed date of Luke. The most probable supposition is that it was written between 50 and 60; the exact year cannot even be guessed at. There is however no doubt that it was written in Palestine.

GENUINENESS.

Irenæus, Tatian, who died A. D. 170, and who composed a harmony of the Gospels, lost to us; Theophilus, of Antioch, who, about 168, wrote a commentary on the Gospels; Clement, of Alexandria, who flourished about 189; Tertullian, born about 160; Origen, born 185; Justin Martyr, and other early writers, prove that the Gospel of Matthew was received very anciently in the Christian Church. It has, indeed, been asserted by some, who admit generally its authority, that the first two chapters are a spurious addition. But for this there is not the shadow of a foundation. "When," says Elliott, "we remember (1) that these chapters are contained in every manuscript, uncial or cursive, and in every version, Eastern or Western, that most of the early fathers cite them, and that early enemies to Christianity appealed to them (Orig. *Cels.* i. 38, ii. 32), when we observe (2) the obvious connection between the beginning of chapter iii., and the end of chapter ii., and between iv. 13 and ii. 23, and when we remark (3) the exact accordance of diction with that of the remaining chapters of the Gospel, it becomes almost astonishing that even *a priori* prejudice should not have abstained at any rate from so hopeless a course as that of impugning the genuineness of these chapters."

PURPOSE OF THIS GOSPEL.

There is plain internal evidence that this Gospel was written particularly for the use of the Jews, to show them in Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah of the Old Testament whom they expected, and not merely Jews in Palestine, but Jews all over the world. It bears a striking Jewish character and coloring. The facts which it selects, the points to which it gives prominence, the cast of thought and phraseology, the number of passages in it which refer to the Old Testament (about 65), the number of verbal citations of the Old Testament—all bespeak the Jewish point of view *from* which it was written and *to* which it was directed. This has been noticed from the beginning, is universally acknowledged, and is of the greatest consequence to the right interpretation of Matthew. His Gospel is pervaded by one principle, the fulfillment of the law and of the Messianic prophecies in the person of Jesus. This at once sets it in opposition to the Judaism of the time, for it rebuked the Pharisaic interpretations of the law (v. xxiii.), and proclaimed Jesus as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world through his blood, ideas which

were strange to the cramped and limited Judaism of the Christian era. From his peculiar genius, his training, and his apostolical calling, Matthew, the publican and Apostle, was peculiarly fitted for the task of writing this Gospel. By it he connects the New Testament most intimately with the Old. And this is done not by an index of the writings of the Old Testament, but by the Old Testament genealogy of Jesus, thus furnishing evidence of the indissoluble connection between the Old and the New Testament, which continued in the secret recesses of Jewish life from the close of the one to the commencement of the other.

STYLE.

The style of our Evangelist is simple and perspicuous. He is grave, without formal stiffness; plain, with dignity. Though he has not the graphic power of Mark, or the spiritual perceptions of John, yet, in the clearness, simplicity and fullness of details, he is perhaps superior to either, and equal to Luke.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS GOSPEL.

One characteristic of this Gospel is its constant citations from the Old Testament. The following list is nearly complete :

MATT.	MATT.
I. 23. Is. vii. 14.	XV. 8. Is. xxix. 13.
II. 6. Mic. v. 2.	XVII. 2. Ex. xxxiv. 29.
15. Hos. xi. 1.	11. Mal. iii. 1; iv. 5.
18. Jer. xxxi. 15.	XVIII. 15. Lev. xix. 17.
III. 3. Is. xl. 3.	XIX. 4. Gen. i. 27.
IV. 4. Deu. viii. 3.	5. Gen. ii. 24.
6. Ps. xci. ii.	7. Deu. xxiv. 1.
7. Deu. vi. 16.	18. Ex. xx. 12. Lev. xix. 18.
10. Deu. vi. 13.	XXI. 5. Zech. ix. 9.
15. Is. viii. 23, ix. 1.	9. Ps. cxviii. 25.
V. 5. Ps. xxxvii. 11.	13. Is. lvi. 7. Jer. vii. 11.
21. Ex. xx. 13.	16. Ps. viii. 2.
27. Ex. xx. 14.	42. Ps. cxviii. 22.
31. Deu. xxiv. 1.	44. Is. viii. 14.
33. Lev. xix. 12. Deu. xxiii. 23.	XXII. 24. Deu. xxv. 5.
38. Ex. xxi. 24.	32. Ex. iii. 6.
43. Lev. xix. 18.	37. Deu. vi. 5.
VIII. 4. Lev. xiv. 2.	39. Lev. xix. 18.
17. Is. liii. 4.	44. Ps. cx. 1.
IX. 13. Hos. vi. 6.	XXIII. 35. Gen. iv. 8. 2 Chr. xxiv. 21.
X. 35. Mic. vii. 6.	38. Ps. lix. 25.
XI. 5. Is. xxxv. 5; xxix. 18.	Jer. xii. 7; xxii. 5.
10. Mal. iii. 1.	39. Ps. cxviii. 26.
14. Mal. iv. 5.	XXIV. 15. Dan. ix. 27.
XII. 3. 1 Sam. xxi. 6.	29. Is. xliii. 10.
5. Num. xxviii. 9.	37. Gen. vi. 11.
7. Hos. vi. 6.	XXVI. 31. Zech. xiii. 7.
18. Is. xlii. 1.	52. Gen. ix. 6.
40. Jon. i. 17.	64. Dan. vii. 13.
42. 1 K. x. 1.	XXVII. 9. Zech. xi. 13.
XIII. 14. Is. vi. 9.	35. Ps. xxii. 18.
35. Ps. lxxviii. 2.	43. Ps. xxii. 8.
XV. 4. Ex. xx. 12; xxi. 17.	46. Ps. xxii. 1.

Matthew's Gospel also contains many circumstances not recorded by the other Evangelists, the chief of which are :

Visit of the Magi, ...	Matt.	ii. 1-12.
Flight into Egypt, ...		ii. 13-16.
Murder of the Innocents, ...		ii. 16-19.
Parable of the Ten Virgins, ...		xxv. 1-13.
Dream of Pilate's Wife, ...		xxvii. 19.
Resurrection of many Saints after our Lord's crucifixion, .		xxvii. 52-55.
Bribing of the Roman Guard set to watch the sepulchre, .		xxviii. 11-16.

Matthew presents the life of Jesus as forming a part of the history and life of the Jewish nation, and hence, as the fulfillment of the hereditary blessing of Abraham. He views things in the grand general aspect, and, indifferent to the details in which Mark loves so much to dwell, he gathers up all in the great result. His narrative proceeds with a majestic simplicity, occasionally regardless of time and according to another and deeper order, ready to sacrifice mere chronology to the development of his idea. Thus he brings together events separated sometimes by considerable intervals, according to the unity of their nature or purpose, and with a grand but simple power accumulates in groups the discourses, parables and miracles of our Lord.

"From its prevailing historical character," says *Lange*, "the Gospel of Matthew may be regarded as forming the basis of all others. It dwells chiefly on the great facts of the life of Jesus as foretold and foreshadowed in the Old Testament, while Mark sketches His individual personality. Luke presents Him in His mercy to humanity at large; and John, in his symbolical, divinely ideal Gospel, opens to our view the fullness of grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. In its typological view and exposition of the Old Testament, the Gospel according to Matthew strongly resembles the Epistle to the Hebrews."

Another minor characteristic which deserves remark, is Matthew's use of the plural, where the other Evangelists have the singular. Thus, in the temptation, we have "stones" and "loaves" (iv. 3), two demoniacs (viii. 28), two blind men (xx. 30), the ass and her colt (xxi. 2), servants (xxi. 34, 36), both thieves blaspheming (xxvii. 44). This is ingeniously accounted for by *Da Costa* (*Four Witnesses* p. 322), though this is not universally applicable, on the idea that "his point of view—regarding the events he narrates as fulfilled prophecies—leads him to regard the species rather than the individual, the entire plenitude of the prophecy rather than the isolated fulfillment."

Matthew and John alone have the honor of being at the same time Apostles and Evangelists. As Evangelist, our *publican* stands first in order, and opens the message of salvation, even as Mary Magdalene, who had been a *sinner*, was the first to bring tidings of the resurrection.

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE LAND OF PROMISE.

THE LAND OF ISRAEL—PALESTINE, OR JUDEA.—Was given in an everlasting covenant to Abraham and his seed forever.—See Gen. xii. 6, 7; xiii. 14-7. It was washed on the W. by the Mediterranean, or *Great sea*, as it is called in the Bible: Num. xxxiv. 6, “And *as for* the western border, ye shall even have the *great sea* for a border; this shall be your west border.” Josh. i. 4, “From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the *great sea* toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.” NORTHWARD, it reached along the Mediterranean sea to *Mount Casius* at the mouth of the *Orontes*, which is the entrance into *Hamath*. Num. xxxiv. 7-9, “This shall be your *north* border: from the great sea ye shall point out for you MOUNT HOR (Heb. *Hor-ha-hor*).^{*} From Mount Hor ye shall point out unto the entrance into *Hamath*,” &c. Its SOUTH border—is the “River of Egypt,”—see Gen. xv. 18, “Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the *river of Egypt* unto the great river, the *river Euphrates*.” And the EAST border—see Deut. xi. 24, “Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: . . . from the river, the *river Euphrates*, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be.”

“The difference of latitude and longitude in the land actually occupied by ancient Israel, and that which was promised in the everlasting covenant, and still remains to be fulfilled, is as follows:—See 1 Kings iv. 25, ‘Judah and Israel dwelt safely from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.’ (But Solomon, like his father David, exercised a nominal or real sovereignty over all the regions which the Lord had given to the seed of Jacob.—See 1 Kings iv. 21.)

“The latitude of Beersheba is 31 deg. 15 min.; of Dan, 33 deg. 15 min.; the south point of the Dead sea, the ancient border of Israel, is 31 deg. 7 min. in the same longitude with Dan, the intervening distance, in a line from north to south, being 128 geographical, or about 150 English miles.

“The latitude of the north point of the Elanitic gulf, on the *Red Sea*, on which *Ezion-geber*, a port of Solomon’s, stood, is 29 deg. 31 min. This is the *south* border promised to Abraham. The mouth of the *Orontes*, or the entrance into *Hamath* from the Mediterranean, is 36 deg., and that of Beer, or Berothah, on the Euphrates, 37 deg. But the range of Amanus lies beyond it, and the medium longitude of the *north* boundary is more than 36 deg. 31 min. N.; or in an ideal line, from south to north, the length of the land is upward of seven degrees, or 500 miles, instead of 150 as of old.

“The *breadth* of IMMANUEL’S land, instead of its anciently contracted span, from the Mediterranean sea on the west, to a few miles on the east of Jordan, stops not short of a navigable frontier everywhere and on every side. The longitude of the river Nile is 30 deg. 2 min.; that of the Euphrates, as it flows through the Persian gulf, 48 deg. 26 min.; or a difference of nearly 18 deg. and a half, or more than 1,100 miles.

“On the northern extremity of the land the range of Amanus mountains from the river Euphrates, to the uttermost sea, or extremity of the Mediterranean, scarcely exceeds 100 miles. In round numbers, the average breadth of the PROMISED LAND is 600 miles, which multiplied by its length, 500 miles, gives an area of 300,000 square miles, or more than that of any kingdom or empire in Europe, Russia alone excepted.

^{*} A very high mountain.

"Separated as Israel is from other lands, such are its borders that it has unequaled freedom of access to all . . . and is well fitted for becoming 'the glory of all lands,' the heritage of a people blessed of the Lord." *

THE LAND OF PROMISE was so called from God's having given it by promise to the seed of Abraham, Gen. xii. 7; see also Gen. xiii. 14-7, "And the Lord said unto Abraham, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, *then* shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it: for I will give it unto thee."—xvii. 8, "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

It was called the LAND OF CANAAN because, upon the dispersion of the three great families of mankind, the country lying at the southeastern extremity of the *Mediterranean*, from Sidon to Gaza, was usurped by Canaan, the eldest son of Ham. And the name of PALESTINE was derived from the Philistines, whose ancestors were the Philistim, or children of the Caphtorim and Casluhim, who were descendants of Mizraim (see Gen. x. 13-4.), and came from Egypt. They passed into Canaan, whence they drove out the ancient inhabitants, and they possessed a considerable tract of country at the time Abraham sojourned in Canaan.—See Gen. xxi. 34, "And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days."—See also xxvi. 14-5. They extended their conquests as far northward as Ekron, and nearly to Joppa, and divided their territory into five lordships, called after their principal cities, viz.: Ekron, Ashdod, Gath, Ascalon and Gaza.—See Josh. xiii. 3, "From Sihor which is before Egypt, even unto the borders of Ekron northward, *which* is counted to the Canaanite: five lords of the Philistines; the Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, the Eshkalonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avites." These dwelt in the western or maritime part of it, bordering on Egypt; and, though they were subjected by David, and kept in obedience by some of his successors, they became afterward so powerful as to furnish the Greek and Latin writers, as well as the neighboring people, with a general appellation for the whole country.

The Israelites left Egypt B. C. 1560,† and after wandering forty years in the wilderness, two tribes and a half of them were settled east of the Jordan by Moses, who died shortly afterward: the children of Israel crossed over the river, under the conduct of Joshua, and, after six years' successful fighting against the Canaanites, divided their land amongst the nine tribes and a half. The southern part of the country, between the *Dead Sea* and the *Mediterranean*, from the *Torrent of Egypt* to Jabneel, now called *Yebna*, was at first allotted to the tribe of Judah: but as it was subsequently found that this was too much for them, the western part of it was given to the tribes of Simeon and Dan, and that to the north was bestowed upon Benjamin. The last mentioned tribe, on whose southern limits was the city of Jerusalem, touched to the east on a small part of the Jordan, and to the west upon Dan. After the death of Joshua, the Israelites became subject to the surrounding nations; but under Saul and David they regained their independence.

The name of JUDAH, or JUDEA, was first applied to the southern part of Palestine when ten of the tribes revolted from the house of David. Upon the death of Solomon, B. C. 974, the kingdom was divided; Rehoboam, his son, being chosen by the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and Jeroboam by the remaining ten tribes: the former was henceforward called the kingdom of Judah, the latter the kingdom of Israel.—(1 Kings xii. 16-7, "So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people

* See Keith's "Land of Israel."

† See Greswell, vol. iii., p. 443.

answered the king saying, What portion have we in David? neither *have we* inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents. But *as for* the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them." 20 ver., "And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.") *Judah*, and the children of Israel, his companions, were from that time called the "kingdom of Judah." After the defection of the ten tribes from under Rehoboam, the two kingdoms maintained their freedom for many years, amidst the continual wars by which they were harassed; but Hazael, king of Syria, at last subdued Israel, and for a long time kept it in subjection. The king of Assyria next invaded them, and having besieged their city *Samaria* for three years, reduced it to ashes.

Such of the inhabitants as survived the dreadful carnage which ensued were carried away captive into Assyria, B. C. 719; and the kingdom of Israel, which had stood divided from that of Judah for more than 250 years, was now at an end. After this, Judah also was attacked by the Babylonians, and subsequently by the Egyptians, the latter of whom reduced it to subjection; but upon the defeat of the Egyptians by the Babylonians, Nebuchadnezzar seized upon Jerusalem, and, after having tyrannized over the people for some years, at last leveled the city and the temple with the ground, and carried away the inhabitants to *Babylon*, and thus put an end to the kingdom of Judah, about B. C. 588, or 476 years from the time that David began to reign over it.—See 2 Chr. xxxvi. Seventy years after, when Cyrus was king of Persia, a remnant of the Jews returned, and built again their city and temple, around which they settled; and the southern part of PALESTINE was henceforth called JUDEA. To the N. of them, in the former inheritance of Ephraim and the half tribe of Manasseh, sate a mixed race of people, among whom may have been some families casually left behind in the great captivity. More certain are we, that colonies of idolatrous heathen were placed there by the Assyrian monarch, 2 Kings xvii. 24-34; and that these were subsequently joined by some Jews, such as Jolada, mentioned Neh. xiii. 28. They were called *Samaritans*, from their dwelling round the old capital of the kingdom of Israel; and were looked upon by the Jews as so impure that they had no dealings with them. Alexander the Great subdued Palestine, and at his death its possession was disputed by Antigonus and the Egyptians, until Antiochus the Great, king of Syria, united it to his dominions. The Jews, under Judas Maccabeus, revolted, and established their freedom. They overran Samaria, and planted colonies in the northern part of the country, which assumed henceforward the name of Galilee; and raised up a king about B. C. 107. His successors called in the Romans to settle their disputes; and the Roman general, Pompey, irritated by the little respect shewn to him, marched against Jerusalem and reduced it, B. C. 63, and soon after completed the subjugation of the whole country. In the time of Marc Antony, Herod was made king of Judea; and it was during his reign that our Saviour was born. Judea remained subject to the Romans till A. D. 66, when a contest arose between the Jews and Syrians respecting the possession of Cesarea; the case being referred to Nero, he decided in favor of the latter; upon which the Jews took up arms, and after committing some dreadful massacres, succeeded in driving all the Romans and Syrians from Judea. Vespasian was sent against them with a powerful army, and would soon have brought them to subjection, but, on his march to Jerusalem, he received the intelligence of his having been chosen emperor; he accordingly left the command of the army to his son Titus, who, A. D. 70, reduced the city to ashes, and put an end to the Jewish nation, as had been prophesied for ages beforehand.

The name of the HOLY LAND is applied to it by Christians in nearly all the languages of *Europe*; chiefly and eminently from its having been the scene of our Blessed Lord's life, death, and resurrection.

In the time of the events recorded in the history of the New Testament, Palestine was divided into five principal parts. These were Galilee, Samaria, Judea, properly so called, Batanaea, and Perea; the three first of which were on this side of Jordan, and the two last beyond it; over all of which Herod, surnamed "the Great," was king.

GALILEE.—Was the northernmost province of Palestine, and was exceedingly fertile and populous, having 204 towns and villages, containing, upon an average, 15,000 souls, making in all above 3,000,000 inhabitants. It touched to the W. on *Phœnice*, to the N. on *Cælo-Syria*, to the E. on *Batanaea*, and to the S. on *Samaria*. It contained 930 square miles. It was subdivided into Upper and Lower, so named with respect to the river Jordan, the former being also called "*Galilee of the Gentiles*," from its being inhabited not only by Jews, but by Syrians, Greeks, Phœnicians, and Egyptians. This province was, above all, honored with our Saviour's presence. It was here that he was conceived; and here, in an obscure village, he lived with his reputed parents until he began to be about thirty years of age, and was baptized of John. And though he visited the other provinces and Judea at the stated feasts, when the male Israelites were commanded to go up to worship in Jerusalem, yet, in fulfillment of prophecy, he fixed upon Capernaum to dwell in; and after his resurrection the disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain, where they saw and worshiped him; the same probably on which he had been seen by Peter, James, and John, in glory, along with Moses and Elias. And they were "men of Galilee" whom he commissioned, saying, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." **UPPER GALILEE** belonged formerly to the tribe of Naphtali. It bordered on *Tyre* and *Sidon*, and extended E. of the river Jordan. In its northern part, close to the W. source of the Jordan, stood *Dan*, which was formerly Laish, until it was wrested by conquest from the Sidonians, when it received the name of the tribe which took it. It was the northernmost town occupied by the children of Israel, in the same way that Beersheba was the southernmost; hence the frequent definition of the land of Israel—"from Dan to Beersheba." **LOWER GALILEE** lay between *lake Gennesaret* and the Mediterranean sea. The northern part belonged to the tribe of Zebulun, and the southern part to the tribe of Issachar.

SAMARIA.—Touched to the W. on the Mediterranean, to the N. on Phœnice and Galilee, to the E. on Perea, and to the S. on Judea; it contained 1,330 square miles. It occupied the whole country between the Jordan and the sea; and therefore such as traveled from Judea into Galilee "must needs go through Samaria."

Samaria derived its name from its metropolis Samaria, which was so called after one Shemer, of whom Omri, king of Israel, bought the ground, for the building of the city; and from the circumstance of this city having become the subsequent capital of the kingdom of Israel, the name of *Samaria* is frequently used by the sacred writers of the Old Testament, to denote the whole of that kingdom. Samaria is intersected by a range of mountains connected with Mount Hermon of Galilee; where this range enters the province it is called Gilboa. Mount Gilboa, celebrated for the death of Saul and Jonathan, and for the defeat of the Israelites by the Philistines, was in the northern part of Samaria, and formed part of that range of hills which traverses the whole province from north to south; towards the city of Samaria, it is known by the names of Phinehas, Ebal, and Gerizim, and upon the borders of Judea as the mountains of Ephraim.

Upon the division of the tribes into the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, Jereboam, king of the latter, built Sichem, or Shechem, in Mount Ephraim, about the centre of Samaria, and made it the capital of his dominions.

Samaria, the subsequent metropolis of the kingdom of Israel till the time of the Assyrian captivity, was only a few miles to the north of Sichem; it was nearly destroyed by the Assyrians, but was restored by the colonists, whom they sent into the country; and who, from this city, first assumed the name of Samaritans. It was very flourishing under the Maccabees, but being once more destroyed, it was again rebuilt

and beautified by Herod, who named it *Sebaste*, in honor of Augustus; it is still called *Sebaste* or *Kalaat Sanour*.

JUDEA, properly so-called.—Was bounded on the N. by Samaria, on the E. by the Dead sea, on the S. by Arabia Peræa, and on the W. by the Mediterranean sea. It contained 3,135 square miles, and constituted the inheritance of four out of the twelve tribes, viz.: of Benjamin, Dan, Judah, and Simeon, the two last being in the southern part of the province. The frontier between *Judea* and *Arabia Propria* is formed by a range of mountains, connected with Mount Seir, and known by the names of *Halak* and *Maaleh Akrabbin*; this latter gives the adjacent district the name of *Acrabattene*. These mountains separated the possessions of the children of Israel from the land of Edom, or Idumea, as the Greeks called it; but when the Jews were carried captive to Babylon, the southern part of their country, being left destitute, was seized by the Idumæans, who became so strong as to be able to maintain possession of it long after the Jews returned from their bondage. They were conquered at last by the Maccabees, but, having embraced Judaism, they were incorporated with the Jewish nation, and allowed to retain possession of the country they had seized upon, which from them was called Idumea; it extended as far northward as Hebron, and was noted, as was the whole of Judea, for its fine palm trees. To the northward of this lay the district Daromas, which still preserves its name in *Darom*; between it and Samaria stretches a range of hills, which caused the district they traversed to be called Orine, or “the hill country of Judea.”

Judea is celebrated above all other divisions of Palestine. The chief city of the whole land—even Jerusalem, the “city of the Great King,” was there. In *Jerusalem* was the temple of the LORD, to which the Jews were commanded to go up three times every year to worship JEHOVAH, the LORD their God. In *Judea* was *Bethlehem*, the city of David, out of which, although it was little among the thousands of Judah, came forth “HE that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” He who was David’s son, and is David’s Lord, was born there. Jerusalem was the scene of his sufferings; for there he offered himself “a Lamb without spot,” without the gate; there he burst the bonds of death; and from OLIVET, on the east, he ascended into heaven. In *Judea* were the disciples to remain until they were endued with power from on high, and from thence was the gospel to go forth unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

BATANÆA.—Was bounded on the W. by Galilee, on the N. and E. by Syria, and on the S. by Peræa, and corresponded nearly with the inheritance of the half tribe of Manasseh beyond Jordan; it contained 1,000 square miles. It derived its name from *Basan*, or *Bashan*, of the Bible, and was noted for its fine cattle and good pasturage; its lofty hills were likewise much celebrated for their beautiful oaks. In the northern part of the province was Mount Hermon—*Heish*, called by the Sidonians, *Sirion*, or *Sion*, and by the Amorites *Shenir*. In its western part was Cesarea Philippi.—In the south-western corner was Gadara—*Om Keis*.

PERÆA.—Was bounded on the N. by *Batanæa*, on the W. by *Samaria*, on the S. by *Arabia*, and on the E. by *Syria*; it contained 1,505 square miles. It derived its name from the Greek word *περα*, *ultra*, from its lying beyond Jordan. The southern part of Peræa, between the two rivers *Arnon* and *Jabok*, formed the kingdom of the Amorites, whose king, Sihon, was defeated by the Israelites. In the centre of Peræa rose the lofty *Mount Gilead*, or *Galeed*, still called *Djelaoud*, near which Jacob and Laban raised a heap of stones in token of friendship; “therefore was the name of it called *Galeed*,” i. e., “*The heap of witness*.”—Gen. xxxi. 48.

Of the LAND OF PROMISE Moses said, Deut. xi. 10—2, “The land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs; but the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven; a land which the LORD thy God careth for; the eyes of the LORD thy

God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year."

The *Jordan* is the principal river.

Few of the *HILLS* approach the character of mountains.

QUARANTINA, north of Jericho, rises an almost perpendicular rock, 1,200 or 1,500 feet.

HERMON.—In the N. E. of Galilee is the majestic *HERMON*, or *SION*, of the Old Testament. The usual estimate of the height of Hermon (*Jebel Esh-Sheikh*) is 10,000 feet above the Mediterranean. The top is partially crowned with snow, or rather ice, during the whole year, which, however, lies only in the ravines, and thus presents at a distance the appearance of radiant stripes around and below the summit. North-westward of Hermon is *Lebanon*, so full of interesting associations.

TABOR.—Although undeserving of the name of mountain, for height, yet is prominent in Scripture for many important transactions. In its neighborhood Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude, were delivered into the hand of Barak—Judges iv. 6-15; and by many it has been regarded as the place of our Lord's transfiguration. The beauty of the mountain, and its conspicuous position, rendered it a favorite subject of poetic contemplation; and when the Psalmist (lxxxix. 12) exclaims, "Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name," he selects these two as the representatives of all the mountains of Palestine; the former as the most graceful, and the latter as the loftiest.

MOUNT CARMEL.—Is often mentioned by the sacred writers; it forms one of the most remarkable headlands on the whole coast of the Mediterranean sea, and is about 1,500 feet high.

The prophecies concerning the *LAND OF ISRAEL* have been so exactly accomplished *that they may be used as history*. The traveler, however careless of divine revelation, and even the scorner, abundantly testifies to the present desolation of the land: the once strong forts and towers are become dens—defensed cities are destroyed, uninhabited and laid waste. The once productive and well-watered plains are become barren, and the herbs of every field wither. The infidel *Vulney* bears witness to the truth of prophecy; for as it had been foretold, he writes, "The temples are thrown down, the palaces are demolished, the ports are filled up, the towns destroyed, and the earth, stripped of its inhabitants, seems a dreary burying-place." Almost daily, accounts reach us vividly portraying the curse that is upon it. Jerusalem, the City of our God, has become heaps; and Zion, as was predicted, is plowed as a field; and the place of the temple of the Most High is desecrated by the erection of a Mohammedan mosque, where death awaits the true worshiper that dares intrude within the polluted place. The ancient population was, for the limits of the country, greater than that of any other part of the then known world. In the time of David the population must have amounted to several millions, as the men able to bear arms were numbered, at the lowest computation, and after an imperfect census, at 1,300,000. In the time of Jehoshaphat, the men of war in Judah alone amounted to 1,060,000. Josephus tells us that at one celebration of the Passover, in the reign of Nero, there were present at Jerusalem 2,700,000 persons. The valleys are composed of a deep, rich soil, free from stones. The rocks are principally of gray limestone, and they contributed greatly toward the sustenance of a large population, as they were terraced in all directions with embankments built up with loose stones, on which grew melons, cucumbers and other creeping plants, as well as the vine, the fig and the olive, as now seen on a few cultivated spots. It would be wrong to argue the former capabilities of the Holy Land from its present appearance, as it is now under the curse of God, and its general barrenness is in full accordance with prophetic denunciation.

But the time is fast approaching when, as said Moses, Deut. xxx. 3-5, "That then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If *any* of thine be driven out unto the utmost *parts* of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: and the Lord thy

God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers."—See also Isa. lxi. 4; Ezek. xxxvi. 8; Amos ix. 13-5.

To the antiquary, to the lover of the sublime and beautiful, and, above all, to the child of God, no land abounds with so many attractions as "The Land of Israel." We have connected therewith the earliest and most faithful records of the wonderful providence of God, from the beginning of creation to the redemption of man. Magnificent remains of the oldest cities in the world are there. Its scenery is of the most diversified beauty. The position is best fitted for its becoming what it was appointed to be, "*The glory of all lands.*" IMMANUEL'S LAND may be the earthly centre of MESSIAH'S KINGDOM, when its bounds are extended according to the description of prophecy, as Psalm lxxii.—*The Gospel Treasury.*

UNITY OF THE FOUR GOSPELS.

The Bible is pervaded by unity. It has, to the fullest extent, that necessary condition of any book which is to make a deep impression upon the minds and hearts of men—singleness of purpose, and that purpose kept in view throughout every page.

The Old and New Testament are but different transcripts of the same great and glorious original. The one is a lock with wards and interstices, and the other is the exquisitely cut key, which, applied to the lock, completely unlocks it, and opens a door of entrance to the bright vision of light and immortality. "They contain," says *Cecil*, "but one scheme of religion. Neither can be understood without the other. . . . They are like the rolls on which they were anciently written. . . . It is but one subject from beginning to end, but the view which we obtain of it grows clearer and clearer as we unwind the roll that contains it." This is undeniably true. Entire harmony exists between Judaism and Christianity. They are but different parts of one system. The one was the stock, gradually growing and strengthening, on which the other, "in the fullness of time," exhibited its bud, unfolded its leaves and diffused its life-giving fragrance. The one was the dawn, the other is the day; the one was the infant, the other is the full grown man. The records of both are the same in authority, substance and mode of communication. The same truth, only not with the same fullness and clearness, was conveyed in "sundry times" and "divers manners" by the prophets, which was made known by the Eternal Word when He "was made flesh and dwelt among us." Through the Patriarchal, the Mosaic and the Prophetic dispensations, the same voice was sounding, only in more distant and feeble tones, which afterwards echoed amongst the hills and valleys of Palestine, as it poured forth the truth in all its divine plenitude and power. The inspired penmen of both economies all struck one grand key-note—Christ, and Him crucified. As in Beethoven's matchless music there runs one idea, worked out through all the changes of measure and of key—now almost hidden, now breaking out in rich, natural melody, whispered in the treble, murmured in the base, dimly suggested in the prelude, but growing clearer and clearer as the work proceeds, winding gradually back until it ends in the key in which it began, and closes in triumphant harmony—so, throughout the Scriptures, there runs one grand idea: man's ruin by sin, and his redemption by grace; in a word, Jesus Christ the Saviour. From the dim promise at the fall to the "Lamb in the midst of the throne," which the Apostle saw from the rocky and barren isle, Jesus is set forth as the burden of the promises, the medium of blessings and the object of saving faith.

Thus is it true that the Book that was written by persons of widely variant profes-

sions, circumstances, idiosyncrasies and trials, is always consistent with itself. Truth is the great and only instrumentality it makes use of, in order to transform, purify and elevate the human character. No matter how its writers teach—whether by history, biography, song, allegory, parable, argument or dogmatic testimony and affirmation, *religious truth* forms the great and essential element in all their instructions. Whatever the subject is of which they treat, they all speak the same thing. Where there was no collusion there is perfect harmony—where there was no preconcert there is perfect concord. They may be compared to a band of musicians playing a grand anthem without previous practice, or to a number of laborers and masons, who, having no idea of the completed appearance of the edifice on which they are employed, lay stone upon stone in blind obedience to the directing architect, until the whole stands forth in sublimity and perfection. The Book which these inspired men wrote is evidently a whole; it has a beginning, a middle and an end; it is the realization of one mind executed by a number of others. The same spirit and feeling pervade the volume. Its ceremonies and dispensations arise naturally from one another. The same golden thread is to be seen running through all its pages—beginning, as it does, with Paradise, which was lost, then stretching itself over long ages, and at length bringing us back again where we started—to the City of God with its Tree of Life. Let a diligent student take up a copy of the Scriptures with copious marginal references, and undertake to collate their instructions upon any one doctrine or moral duty, and he will be surprised at the uniformity of their teaching. They never speak for and against the same doctrine; they never bear witness on both sides of any question; nor is there an instance in which they affirm and deny the same thing. That which in reality has *any* Scripture in its favor, has *all* Scripture in its favor.

These remarks, true of the Bible as a whole, are especially applicable to the Gospels. When the history of a great personage is written by different hands, the historians seldom agree in every particular they record. One begins with his birth, and reminds us of his parentage, his illustrious line and his great ancestors; another, passing over this, takes him up at the commencement of his public career; a *third* not only recites his birth and parentage, but dwells upon the circumstances which preceded him and introduced him, and those which surrounded him when he appeared; and *another* may go further back still into the antecedents, reporting all that he has been able to learn of anterior history that might be supposed to influence his career, or to prepare the times for his appearing. It has pleased God to permit the men who wrote the history of Jesus Christ to exemplify the same diversity of procedure in their narratives. They look at their glorious subject from their respective standpoints. The four books of the Gospel were designed to answer each its specific purpose. They have a side fronting each side of the spiritual world. *Matthew* exhibits chiefly the Jewish and subordinate; *John* the spiritual and divine in our Redeemer; *Mark* His authority over nature and devils; *Luke* His personal history as man. Thus does “the four-sided Gospel,” as Origen called it, resemble four portraits, or four landscapes, all presenting the same objects, but in different lights and from different points of view, and illustrative of one another, yet wholly unsusceptible of mechanical amalgamation, without utterly destroying their distinctive character and even their intrinsic value. So far are the Gospels from being contradictory of, or even different from, one another, that they are substantially the same—distinct views of a complex whole. The great landmarks of the history are unchanged, the same salient points reappear in all, but they are found in new combinations and with new details.

“Viewed as a literary production,” says an eminent scholar, “the Gospel history exists in a four-fold form. But for the ancient, true, churchly view, this circumstance is altogether secondary to the fact that under this four-fold form we have the one Gospel of the Lord. Strictly speaking, therefore, it is not the Gospel of Matthew, etc., as we now are accustomed to say, but the Gospel according to Matthew, according to Mark, according to Luke, and according to John. It is this grand unity of character,

of history, of doctrine, and of spirit, which gives to the Gospels their common designation. Though we have four human writings, they form only one Divine record of the Gospel. To doubt this essential unity is to lose to the same extent the capacity for the churchly appreciation and even the Christian understanding of the Gospels." Another observes, in referring to the advantage resulting from the use of a "Harmony of the Gospels"—"one Gospel will thus be found to throw light on another in a hundred ways that would never otherwise be suspected. And as in that beautiful invention of modern days, in which, by combining into one focus two slightly varying aspects of a view, we gain a depth of perspective, and a solidity of form that seems to bring the very original before us, so here, by having stereoscoped into one view these four aspects of our blessed Lord, we are enabled to see greater *reality* in that Divine image which each one separately sets forth." (See Note on John xi. 1.)

The first three Gospels (which for this reason are called *synoptical*) have a marked correspondence with each other. Their verbal and material agreement is such as does not occur in any other books which have been written independently of one another. As for the Gospel of John, it is true that there are differences between it and the other three, yet is a full recognition of this contrast the first requisite for the understanding of the essential harmony of all. These very differences belong to the complete portraiture of the Saviour, which comprised the fullness of an outward presence, as well as the depth of a secret life. The synoptic Gospels contain the Gospel of the infant church; that of John the Gospel of its maturity. This Gospel is supplementary to them, for it assumes facts as known, of which it gives no account, but which are found in them: it is also independent, presenting a different aspect of our Lord's character, while its points of coincidence with the others show the working of the "self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." (1 Cor. xii. 11.) Thus is the Gospel in one sense four-fold, as the streams of Eden, and as those living creatures of the Apostle's vision; but in another sense, one. In the diversity there is unity. The very discrepancies are but deeper harmonies, and the multiformity which characterizes the Gospels written by the holy men who were "moved by the Holy Ghost," is felt to be as necessary as it was natural.

ANALYSIS.

The following may guide the student of the Gospel according to Matthew :

INTRODUCTION. i., ii.

The Royal pedigree (i. 1-17).

The Virgin's Son, the promised Saviour (18-25).

The homage (ii. 1-12).

The persecution (13-23).

(In all the words of prophets are fulfilled.)

1. THE PRELUDE. iii., iv.

(a) *The Baptist* (iii.):

The Messenger (1-6). The Message (7-12). The Recognition (13-17).

(b) *THE MESSIAH* (iv.):

The Trial (1-11). The Home (12-16). The Message (17).

The Call (18-22). The Work (23-25).

2. THE LAWGIVER AND PROPHET. v.-xiii.

(a) *The new Law in relation to the old* (v.-vii.).

(b) *The testimony of signs* (viii., ix).

- Characteristics (viii. 1-15).
- The Suppliant (Resignation, 1-4); the Intercessor (Faith, 5-13); the Restored (Service, 14, 15).
- The Lord and the Disciples (viii. 18-ix. 17).
- Self-denial (18-22).
- Power (Nature, 23-27; Spirits, 28-34; Sin, ix. 1-8).
- Mercy (9-13).
- Prudence (14-17).
- The Results (ix. 18-34).
- Faith confirmed (20-22); raised (23-26); attested (27-31).
- Unbelief hardened (32-34).
- (c) *The Commission* (ix. 36-xi.).
 - The Charge (x.).
 - The Hearers (xi.).
 - John (1-15); the People (16-19).
 - Woes (20-24); Thanksgivings (25-30).
- (d) *The Contrast* (xii.).
 - The letter and the spirit of the Law.
 - Example (1-9); Miracle (10-13).
 - The Kingdom of Satan and the Kingdom of God (22-37).
 - The sign of Jonas (38-45).
 - Natural and Spiritual Kindred (46-50).
- (e) *Parables of the Kingdom*: its rise, growth, consummation (xiii.).
- 3. THE KING. xiv.-xxv.
 - (d) *The character of the King*, compared with Temporal Dominion:
 - The feast of Herod; Death of John (xiv. 1-12).
 - The feast of Christ (Jews); the Disciples saved (13-33).
 - Hierarchical Dominion:
 - The tradition of the Elders (xv. 1-20).
 - The Syrophœnician heard (21-28).
 - The Gentiles healed and fed (29-39).
 - Truth hidden from some (xvi. 1-12), revealed to others (13-20).
 - (b) *Glimpses of the Kingdom*.
 - The prospect of suffering (xvi. 24-28).
 - The vision of glory (xvii. 1-13).
 - The secret source of strength (14-21).
 - The citizens.
 - Moral principles: Obedience: a sign (xvii. 24-27).
 - Humility, Unselfishness, Forgiveness (xviii.).
 - Social characteristics: Marriage, Children, Riches, Sacrifice (xix.).
 - Yet all without intrinsic merit (xx. 1-16).
 - (c) *The King claimed his heritage*.
 - The Journey (xx. 17-34).
 - The Triumphal Entrance (xxi. 1-17).
 - The Conflict (xxi. 18-xxii.).
 - The Sign (xxi. 18-22). The First Question (23-27). The Portraiture (28-xxii. 14). The Temptation (15-40). The Last Question (41-46).
 - The Judgment (xxiii.-xxv.).
 - The Teachers (xxiii.).
 - The City (xxiv.).
 - The World (xxv.).
- 4. DEATH THE GATE OF THE ETERNAL KINGDOM. xxvi.-xxviii.
 - (d) *The Passion* (xxvi., xxvii.).
 - Contrasts: Foreknowledge, Craft (xxvi. 1-8). Love, Treason (6-16).

- The Last Supper: Woes Foreseen and Faced (17-29).
 The Rash Promise: Power Misjudged (30-35).
 The Inward Agony (36-46).
 The Outward Desertion (37-56).
 The Confession of Christ (57-68).
 The Denial of Peter (69-75).
 The Death of Judas (xxvii. 3-10).
 The Death of Christ (11-50).
 Christ and Barabbas (15-26). Christ and the Soldiers (27-31). Christ and the
 By-standers (52-36).
 The Burial (57-61). The Watch (62-66).
 (b) *The Triumph.*
 The Rising in Glory (1-10).
 The False Report (11-15).
 The Great Commission (16-20).

SYNOPSIS OF ROBINSON'S HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS.

EVENTS CONNECTED WITH THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF OUR LORD. TIME, ABOUT THIRTEEN AND A HALF YEARS.

	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
Preface to Luke's gospel.			1:1-4	
An angel appears to Zacharias. <i>Jerusalem.</i>			1:5-25	
An angel appears to Mary. <i>Nazareth.</i>			1:26-38	
Mary visits Elizabeth. <i>Juttah.</i>			1:39-56	
Birth of John the Baptist. <i>Juttah.</i>			1:57-80	
An angel appears to Joseph. <i>Nazareth.</i>	1:18-25			
The birth of Jesus. <i>Bethlehem.</i>			2:1-7	
An angel appears to the shepherds. <i>Near Bethlehem.</i>			2:8-20	
The circumcision of Jesus, and his presentation in the temple. <i>Bethlehem.</i>			2:21-38	
<i>Jerusalem.</i>				
The magi. <i>Jerusalem. Bethlehem.</i>	2:1-12			
The flight into Egypt. Herod's cruelty. The return. <i>Bethlehem. Nazareth.</i>	2:13-23		2:39-40	
At twelve years of age Jesus goes to the Passover. <i>Jerusalem.</i>			2:41-52	
Genealogies.	1:1-17		3:23-38	

ANNOUNCEMENT AND INTRODUCTION OF OUR LORD'S PUBLIC MINISTRY. TIME, ABOUT ONE YEAR.

	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
The ministry of John the Baptist. <i>The desert. The Jordan.</i>	3:1-12	1:1-8	3:1-18	
The baptism of Jesus. <i>The Jordan.</i>	3:13-17	1:9-11	3:21-23	
The temptation. <i>Desert of Judea.</i>	4:1-11	1:12, 13	4:1-13	
Preface to John's gospel.				1:1-18
Testimony of John the Baptist to Jesus. <i>Bethabara beyond Jordan.</i>				1:19-34
Jesus gains disciples. <i>The Jordan. Galilee?</i>				1:35-51
The marriage at Cana of Galilee.				2:1-12

OUR LORD'S FIRST PASSOVER, AND THE SUBSEQUENT TRANSACTIONS UNTIL THE SECOND. TIME, ONE YEAR.

	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
At the Passover Jesus drives the traders out of the temple. <i>Jerusalem.</i>				2:13-25
Our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus. <i>Jerusalem.</i>				3:1-21
Jesus remains in Judea and baptizes. Further testimony of John the Baptist.				3:22-36
John's imprisonment.	14:3-5	6:17-20	3:19, 20	
Jesus' departure into Galilee.	4:12	1:14	4:14	4:1-3
Our Lord's discourse with the Samaritan woman. Many of the Samaritans believe on him. <i>Shechem or Neapolis.</i>				4:4-42
Jesus teaches publicly in <i>Galilee.</i>	4:17	1:14, 15	4:14, 15	4:43-45
Jesus again at Cana, where he heals the son of a nobleman lying ill at Capernaum. <i>Cana of Galilee.</i>				4:46-54
Jesus at Nazareth: he is there rejected, and fixes his abode at Capernaum.	4:13-16		4:16-31	
The call of Simon Peter and Andrew, and of James and John, with the miraculous draught of fishes. <i>Near Capernaum.</i>	4:18-22	1:16-20	5:1-11	
The healing of a demoniac in the synagogue. <i>Capernaum.</i>		1:21-28	4:31-37	
The healing of Peter's wife's mother, and many others. <i>Capernaum.</i>	8:14-17	1:29-34	4:38-41	
Jesus with his disciples goes from Capernaum throughout Galilee.	4:23-25	1:35-39	4:42-44	
The healing of a leper. <i>Galilee.</i>	8:1-4	1:40-45	5:12-16	
The healing of a paralytic. <i>Capernaum.</i>	9:2-8	2:1-12	5:17-26	
The call of Matthew. <i>Capernaum.</i>	9:9	2:13, 14	5:27, 28	

OUR LORD'S SECOND PASSOVER, AND THE SUBSEQUENT TRANSACTIONS UNTIL THE THIRD.

TIME, ONE YEAR.

	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
The Pool of Bethesda; the healing of the infirm man; and our Lord's subsequent discourse. <i>Jerusalem.</i>				5:1-47
The disciples pluck ears of grain on the Sabbath. <i>On the way to Galilee?</i>	12:1-8	2:23-23	6:1-5	
The healing of the withered hand on the Sabbath. <i>Galilee.</i>	12:9-14	3:1-6	6:6-11	
Jesus arrives at the sea of Tiberias, and is followed by multitudes. <i>Lake of Galilee.</i>	12:15-21	3:7-12		
Jesus withdraws to the mountain and chooses the twelve; the multitudes follow him. <i>Near Capernaum.</i>	10:1-4	3:13-19	6:12-19	
The sermon on the mount. <i>Near Capernaum.</i>	5:1; 8:1		6:20-49	
The healing of the centurion's servant. <i>Capernaum.</i>	8:5-13		7:1-10	
The raising of the widow's son. <i>Nain.</i>			7:11-17	
John the Baptist in prison sends disciples to Jesus. <i>Galilee. Capernaum?</i>	11:2-19		7:18-35	
Reflections of Jesus on appealing to his mighty works. <i>Capernaum.</i>	11:20-30			
While sitting at meat with a Pharisee, Jesus is anointed by a woman who had been a sinner. <i>Capernaum?</i>			7:36-50	
Jesus, with the Twelve, makes a second circuit in Galilee.			8:1-3	
The healing of a demoniac. The Scribes and Pharisees blaspheme. <i>Galilee.</i>	12:22-37	3:19-30	{ 11:14, 15 17 23	
The Scribes and Pharisees seek a sign. Our Lord's reflections. <i>Galilee.</i>	12:38-45		11:16, 24-36	
The true disciples of Christ his nearest relatives. <i>Galilee.</i>	12:46-50	3:31-35	8:19-21	
At a Pharisee's table Jesus denounces woes against the Pharisees and others. <i>Galilee.</i>			11:37-54	
Jesus discourses to his disciples and the multitude. <i>Galilee.</i>			12:1-59	
The slaughter of certain Galileans. Parable of the barren fig tree. <i>Galilee.</i>			13:1-9	
Parable of the sower. <i>Lake of Galilee. Near Capernaum?</i>	13:1-23	4:1-25	8:4-18	
Parable of the tares. Other parables. <i>Near Capernaum?</i>	13:24-33	4:26-34		
Jesus directs to cross the lake. Incidents. The tempest stilled. <i>Lake of Galilee.</i>	8:18-27	4:35-41	{ 8:22-25 9:37-62	
The two demoniacs of Gadara. <i>South-east coast of the lake of Galilee</i>	8:28-34	5:1-21	8:26-40	
Levi's Feast. <i>Capernaum.</i>	9:1	2:15-22	5:29-39	
The raising of Jairus' daughter. The woman with a bloody flux. <i>Capernaum.</i>	9:10-17		8:41-56	
Two blind men healed, and a dumb spirit cast out. <i>Capernaum.</i>	9:18-26	5:22-43		
Jesus again at Nazareth, and again rejected. <i>Galilee.</i>	9:27-34	6:1-6		
A third circuit in Galilee. The twelve instructed and sent forth. <i>Galilee.</i>	13:54-58	6:6-13	9:1-6	
Herod holds Jesus to be John the Baptist, whom he had just before beheaded. <i>Galilee? Persea.</i>	9:35-38			
The Twelve return, and Jesus retires with them across the lake. Five thousand are fed. <i>Capernaum. North-east coast of the lake of Galilee.</i>	10:1-42	6:14-16, 21-29	9:7-9	
Jesus walks upon the water. <i>Lake of Galilee. Gennesaret.</i>	14:1-12			
Our Lord's discourse to the multitude in the synagogue at Capernaum. Many disciples turn back. Peter's profession of faith. <i>Capernaum.</i>	14:13-21	6:30-44	9:10-17	6:1-14
	14:22-35	6:45-56		8:15-21
				{ 6:22-71 7:1

FROM OUR LORD'S THIRD PASSOVER UNTIL HIS FINAL DEPARTURE FROM GALILEE AT THE FESTIVAL OF TABERNACLES.

TIME, SIX MONTHS.

	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
Our Lord justifies his disciples for eating with unwashed hands. Pharisaic traditions. <i>Capernaum.</i>	15:1-20	7:1-23		
The daughter of a Syrophenician woman is healed. <i>Region of Tyre and Sidon.</i>	15:21-23	7:24-30		
A deaf and dumb man healed; also many others. Four thousand are fed. <i>The Decapolis.</i>	15:29-39	{ 7:31-37 8:1-9		
The Pharisees and Sadducees again require a sign. <i>Near Magdala.</i>	15:39	8:10-12		
The disciples cautioned against the leaven of the Pharisees, etc. <i>North-east coast of the lake of Galilee.</i>	16:1-4			
A blind man healed. <i>Bethsaida, (Julias).</i>	16:5-12	8:13-21		
Peter and the rest again profess their faith in Christ. <i>Region of Cesarea Philippi.</i>		8:22-26		
Our Lord foretells his own death and resurrection, and the trials of his followers. <i>Region of Cesarea Philippi.</i>	16:13-20	8:27-30	9:18-21	
The transfiguration. Our Lord's subsequent discourse with the three disciples. <i>Region of Cesarea Philippi.</i>	16:21-28	{ 8:31-33 9:1	9:22-27	
The healing of a demoniac whom the disciples could not heal. <i>Region of Cesarea Philippi.</i>	17:1-13	9:2-13	9:28-36	
Jesus again foretells his own death and resurrection. <i>Galilee.</i>	17:14-21	9:14-29	9:37-43	
The tribute-money miraculously provided. <i>Capernaum.</i>	17:22, 23	9:30-32	9:43-45	
The disciples contend who should be greatest. Jesus exhorts to humility, forbearance and brotherly love. <i>Capernaum.</i>	17:24-27	9:33		
The Seventy instructed and sent out. <i>Capernaum.</i>	18:1-35	9:33-50	9:46-50	
Jesus goes up to the festival of tabernacles. His final departure from Galilee. Incidents in Samaria.			10:1-16	
Ten lepers cleansed. <i>Samaria.</i>			9:51-56	7:2-10
			17:11-19	

THE FESTIVAL OF TABERNACLES, AND THE SUBSEQUENT TRANSACTIONS UNTIL OUR LORD'S ARRIVAL IN BETHANY, SIX DAYS BEFORE THE FOURTH PASSOVER.

TIME, SIX MONTHS, LESS SIX DAYS.

	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
Jesus at the festival of tabernacles. His public teaching. <i>Jerusalem.</i>				7:11-53
The woman taken in adultery. <i>Jerusalem.</i>				8:1
Further public teaching of our Lord. He reproves the unbelieving Jews, and escapes from their hands. <i>Jerusalem.</i>				8:12-59
A lawyer instructed. Love to our neighbor defined. Parable of the good Samaritan. <i>Near Jerusalem.</i>			10:25-37	

THE FESTIVAL OF TABERNACLES, AND THE SUBSEQUENT TRANSACTIONS UNTIL OUR LORD'S ARRIVAL IN BETHANY, SIX DAYS BEFORE THE FOURTH PASSOVER.—Continued.

TIME, SIX DAYS LESS SIX MONTHS.

	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
Jerusalem in the house of Martha and Mary. <i>Bethany</i> , ...			10:38-42	
The disciples again taught how to pray. <i>Near Jerusalem</i> , ...			11:1-13	
The seventy return. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...			10:17-24	
A man born blind is healed on the Sabbath. Our Lord's subsequent discourses. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...				{ 9:1-41 10:1-21
Jesus in Jerusalem at the festival of dedication. He retires beyond Jordan. <i>Jerusalem</i> . <i>Bethabara beyond Jordan</i> , ...				10:22-42
The raising of Lazarus. <i>Bethany</i> , ...				11:1-46
The counsel of Caiaphas against Jesus. He retires from Jerusalem. <i>Jerusalem</i> . <i>Ephraim</i> , ...				11:47-54
Jesus beyond Jordan is followed by multitudes. The healing of the infirm woman on the Sabbath. <i>Valley of Jordan</i> . <i>Perea</i> , ...	19:1, 2	10:1	13:10-21	
Our Lord goes teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. He is warned against Herod. <i>Perea</i> , ...			13:22-35	
Our Lord dines with a chief Pharisee on the Sabbath. Incidents. <i>Perea</i> , ...			14:1-24	
What is required of true disciples. <i>Perea</i> , ...			14:25-35	
Parable of the lost sheep, etc. Parable of the prodigal son. <i>Perea</i> , ...			15:1-32	
Parable of the unjust steward. <i>Perea</i> , ...			16:1-13	
The Pharisee reproved. Parable of the rich man and Lazarus. <i>Perea</i> , ...			16:14-31	
Jesus inculcates forbearance, faith, humility. <i>Perea</i> , ...			17:1-40	
Christ's coming will be sudden. <i>Perea</i> , ...			17:20-37	
Parables: the importunate widow; the Pharisee and publican. <i>Perea</i> , ...			18:1-14	
Precepts respecting divorce. <i>Perea</i> , ...	19:3-12	10:2-12		
Jesus receives and blesses little children. <i>Perea</i> , ...	19:13-15	10:13-16	18:15-17	
The rich young man. Parable of the laborers in the vineyard. <i>Perea</i> , ...	19:16-30	10:17-31	18:18-30	
Jesus a third time foretells his death and resurrection. <i>Perea</i> , ...	20:1-16			
James and John prefer their ambitious request. <i>Perea</i> , ...	20:17-19	10:32-34	18:31-34	
The healing of two blind men near Jericho.	20:20-28	10:35-45		{ 18:35-43 19:1
The visit to Zaccheus. Parable of the ten pounds. <i>Jericho</i> , ...	20:29-34	10:46-52	19:2-28	
Jesus arrives at Bethany six days before the Passover. <i>Bethany</i> , ...				{ 11:55-57 12:1, 9-11

OUR LORD'S PUBLIC ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM, AND THE SUBSEQUENT TRANSACTIONS BEFORE THE FOURTH PASSOVER.

TIME, FOUR DAYS.

	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
Our Lord's public entry into Jerusalem. <i>Bethany</i> . <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	{ 21:1-11 14-17	11:1-11	19:29-44	12:12-19
The barren fig-tree. The cleansing of the temple. <i>Bethany</i> . <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	21:12, 13 18, 19	11:12-19	{ 19:45-48 21:37-38	
The barren fig-tree withers away. <i>Between Bethany and Jerusalem</i> , ...	21:20-22	11:20-26		
Christ's authority questioned. Parable of the two sons. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	21:23-32	11:27-33	20:1-8	
Parable of the wicked husbandmen. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	21:33-46	12:1-12	20:9-19	
Parable of the marriage of the king's son. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	22:1-14			
Insidious question of the Pharisees; tribute to Cæsar. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	22:15-22	12:13-17	20:20-26	
Insidious questions of the Sadducees; the resurrection. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	22:23-33	12:18-27	20:27-40	
A lawyer questions Jesus. The two great commandments. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	23:1-40	12:28-34		
How is Christ the son of David? <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	23:41-46	12:35-37	20:41-44	
Warnings against the evil example of the scribes and Pharisees. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	23:1-12	12:38, 39	20:45, 46	
Woes against the scribes and Pharisees. Lamentation over Jerusalem. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	23:13-39	12:40	20:47	
The widow's mite. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...		12:41-44	21:1-4	
Certain Greeks desire to see Jesus. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...				12:29-36
Reflections upon the unbelief of the Jews. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...				12:37-50
Jesus, on taking leave of the temple, foretells its destruction, and the persecution of his disciples. <i>Jerusalem</i> . <i>Mount of Olives</i> , ...	24:1-14	13:1-13	21:5-19	
The signs of Christ's coming to destroy Jerusalem, and to put an end to the Jewish state and dispensation. <i>Mount of Olives</i> , ...	24:15-42	13:14-37	21:20-26	
Transition to Christ's final coming at the day of judgment. Exhortation to watchfulness. Parables: the ten virgins; the five talents. <i>Mount of Olives</i> , ...	24:13-51 25:1-30			
Scenes of the judgment-day. <i>Mount of Olives</i> , ...	25:31-46			
The rulers conspire. The supper at Bethany. Treachery of Judas. <i>Jerusalem</i> . <i>Bethany</i> , ...	26:1-16	14:1-11	22:1-6	12:2-8
Preparation for the Passover. <i>Bethany</i> . <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	26:17-19	14:12-16	22:7-13	

THE FOURTH PASSOVER, OUR LORD'S PASSION, AND THE ACCOMPANYING EVENTS UNTIL THE END OF THE JEWISH SABBATH.

TIME, TWO DAYS.

	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
The Passover meal. Contention among the twelve. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	26:20	14:17	{ 22:14-18 24-30	
Jesus washes the feet of his disciples. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...				13:1-20
Jesus points out the traitor. Judas withdraws. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	26:21-25	14:18-21	22:21-23	13:21-25
Jesus foretells the fall of Peter, and the dispersion of the Twelve. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	26:31-35	14:27-31	22:31-33	13:36-38
The Lord's supper. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	26:26-29	14:22-25	22:19, 20	1 Cor. 11:23-25
Jesus comforts his disciples. The Holy Spirit promised. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...				15:1-27
Christ the true vine. His disciples hated by the world. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...				16:1-33
Persecution foretold. Further promise of the Holy Spirit. Prayer in the name of Christ. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...				17:1-26
Christ's last prayer with his disciples. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...				18:1
The agony in Gethsemane. <i>Mount of Olives</i> , ...	26:30, 36-46	14:26, 32-42	22:39-46	18:2-12
Jesus betrayed and made prisoner. <i>Mount of Olives</i> , ...	26:47-56	14:43-52	22:47-53	
Jesus before Caiaphas. Peter thrice denies him. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	26:57, 58 69-75	14:53, 54 66-72	22:54-62	{ 18:13-18, 27-27
Jesus before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim. He declares himself to be the Christ; is condemned and mocked. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	26:59-68	11:55-65	22:63-71	18:19-24

THE FOURTH PASSOVER, OUR LORD'S PASSION, AND THE ACCOMPANYING EVENTS UNTIL
THE END OF THE JEWISH SABBATH.—Continued,
TIME, TWO DAYS.

	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
The Sanhedrim lead Jesus away to Pilate. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	27:1, 2	15:1-5	23:1-5	18:28-38
Christ before the Governor. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	27:11-14			
Jesus before Herod. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...			23:6-12	
Pilate seeks to release Jesus. The Jews demand Barabbas. <i>Jerusalem</i>	27:15-26	15:6-15	23:13-25	18:39, 40
Pilate delivers up Jesus to death. He is scourged and mocked. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	27:26-30	15:15-19		19:1-3
Pilate again seeks to release Jesus. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	27:30-31			19:4-16
Judas repents and hangs himself. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	27:31-34	15:20-23	23:26-33	Acts 1:18, 19
Jesus is led away to be crucified. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	27:31-34	15:24-28	23:33-34	19:16, 17
The crucifixion. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	27:35-38			19:18-24
The Jews mock at Jesus on the cross. He commends his mother } to John. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	27:39-44	15:29-32	{ 23:35-37, 39-43	19:25-27
Darkness prevails. Christ expires on the cross. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	27:45-50	15:33-37	23:44-46	19:28-30
The veil of the temple rent, and graves opened. Judgment of the } centurion. The women at the cross. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	27:51-56	15:38-41	{ 23:45, 47- 49	
The taking down from the cross. The burial. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	27:57-61	15:42-47	23:50-56	19:31-42
The watch at the sepulchre. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	27:62-66			

OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION, HIS SUBSEQUENT APPEARANCES, AND HIS ASCENSION.

TIME, FORTY DAYS.

	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
The morning of the resurrection. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	28:2-4	16:1		
Visit of the women to the sepulchre. Mary Magdalene returns. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	28:1	16:2-4	24:1-3	20:1, 2
Vision of angels in the sepulchre. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	28:5-7	16:5-7	24:4-8	
The women return to the city. Jesus meets them. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	28:9-10	16:8	24:9-11	
Peter and John run to the sepulchre. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...			24:12	20:3-10
Our Lord is seen by Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...		16:9-11		20:11-13
Report of the watch. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...	28:11-15			
Our Lord is seen by Peter. Then by two disciples on the way to Emmaus. <i>Jerusalem</i> , Emmaus, ...		16:12, 13	24:13-35	1 Cor. 15:5
Jesus appears in the midst of the apostles, Thomas being absent. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...		16:14-18	24:36-49	20:19-23
Jesus appears in the midst of the apostles, Thomas being present. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...				20:24-29
The apostles go away into Galilee. Jesus shows himself to seven of them at the sea of Tiberias. <i>Galilee</i> , ...	28:16			21:1-24
Jesus meets the apostles and above five hundred brethren on a mountain in Galilee. <i>Galilee</i> , ...	28:16-20			1 Cor. 15:6 { 1 Cor. 15:7 { Acts 1:3-8
Our Lord is seen of James; then of all the apostles. <i>Jerusalem</i> , ...				{ 20:30, 31 { 21:25
The ascension. <i>Bethany</i> , ...		16:19, 20	24:50-53	
Conclusion of John's gospel.				



A NEW MAP

OF

PALESTINE

Statute Miles

0 5 10 15 20

Roman Miles

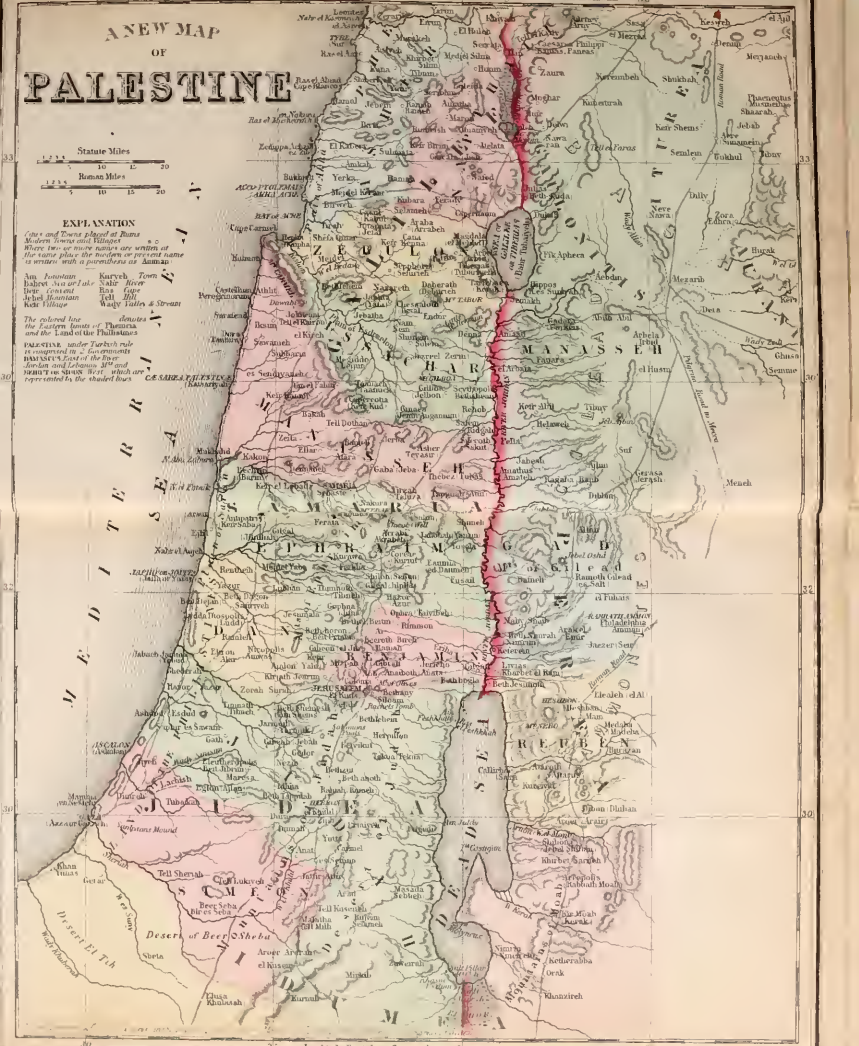
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EXPLANATION

City and Towns placed at Roman
Modern Towns and Villages * 2
Where two or more names are written at
the same place the modern or present name
is written with a parenthesis at the end
 Am Jordan
 Bahve Sea or Lake
 Deep Coast
 Jebel Mountain
 Kete Village
 Karveh Town
 Nahr River
 Ras Cape
 Tell Hill
 Wady Valley & Stream

The colored line
the Eastern limits of Phoenicia
and the Land of the Philistines

PALESTINE, under Turkish rule
is composed of 4 Governorates
DAIRYAT, East of the River
Jordan and Lebanon, all of
PHOENICIA on which River, which are
represented by the shaded lines



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW.

CHAPTER I.

¹ *The genealogy of Christ from Abraham to Joseph.* ¹⁸ *He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary when she was espoused to Joseph.* ¹⁹ *The angel satisfieth the misdeeming thoughts of Joseph, and interpreteth the names of Christ.*

THE book of the generation of Jesus Christ, ^bthe son of David, ^cthe son of Abraham.

^aLuke iii. 23; Ps. cxxxii. 11; Isa. xi. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5. ^bChap xxii. 42; John vii. 42; Acts ii. 30, xiii. 23; ^cRom. i. 3. ^dGen. xii. 3, xxii. 18; Gal. iii. 16.

THE BOOK OF THE GENERATION is an expression purely Jewish, and means "table or roll of the genealogy." The same expression occurs in this sense in Gen. v. 1, and the resemblance in the language there employed in reference to "the first man Adam" (1 Cor. xv. 45), "who is the figure of him that was to come" (Rom. v. 14), and that which is here used in regard to "the last Adam" (1 Cor. xv. 45), is intended to imply that there is a certain relation or resemblance between the Old and New Testaments, so that the one is, in many respects, the very counterpart of the other. This title (as appears from the remainder of the first verse) strictly refers to what follows, to the close of the seventeenth verse, though its force extends also to the whole book, including the history of our Lord's birth, acts, sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension. The Evangelist, designing to write a narrative of our Saviour's life, naturally began with His pedigree.

Jesus: The Old Testament begins with the account of the creation of the world; the New with that of the incarnation of Him who created the world. (John i. 3.) This name is the same with *Joshua* in Hebrew, which means *God is helper* or *deliverer*. It signifies a *Saviour*, and was given to our Lord by divine appointment (verse 21). *Christ*, in Greek, is the same with *Messiah* in Hebrew, both signifying *anointed*.

Under this title He was earnestly waited for by the Jews, and even by the Samaritans. (John iv. 25.) As under the law, kings (1 Sam. xxiv. 6, 10), priests (Lev. iv. 5, 16) and prophets (1 Kings xix. 16) were all anointed with oil, the symbol of the necessary spiritual gifts, to consecrate them to their respective offices, so Jesus was anointed for accomplishing our salvation (Luke iv. 18, 21; Acts x. 38). *Jesus* is the *Personal*, *Christ* the *Official* name of our Lord. He calls Himself *Jesus Christ* (John xvii. 3). In the Acts and Epistles this compound appellation is often found. *The Son of David*, *the Son of Abraham*, i. e., *the Son of David and of Abraham*, for the word *son* in both cases refers to Jesus Christ; and here, as often elsewhere in Scripture, it signifies *descendant* at any distance of descent. Our Lord is thus designated because, as Abraham was the *first* from whose family it was predicted that Messiah should spring (Gen. xxii. 18), so David was the *last*; and being the last, Christ is called his son, as though David had been His immediate father. As Matthew wrote more particularly for the Jews, he traces the Lord's genealogy to David the Jewish King, and to Abraham, the founder of the Jewish dispensation. That the Messiah was to descend from the royal line of David was firmly believed by the Jews. (Is. ix. 7, xi. 1; Jer. xxiii. 6.) And David's descent from Abraham was unquestionable. That even to the time of Christ the Jews had genealogical tables both of their families and tribes, is evident from Josephus, who, having given the genealogy of his family, says: "I give you the succession of our family as I found it written in the public tables." Matthew, in this genealogical

table, adopts three series of *fourteen* as a convenient mode of reckoning and as easy for reference. They are the three principal eras in the history of the Hebrews: the reign of David, the commencement of the Babylonian captivity, and the birth of the Messiah. They are as follows:

1 Abraham,	David,	Jechoniah,
2 Isaac,	Solomon,	Salathiel,
3 Jacob,	Rehoboam,	Zorobabel,
4 Judah,	Abia,	Abiud,
5 Pharez,	Asa,	Eliakim,
6 Hezrom,	Jehosaphat,	Azor,
7 Aram,	Jehoram,	Sadoc,
8 Aminadab,	Ahaziah,	Achim,
9 Naasson,	Jotham,	Eliud,
10 Salmon,	Ahaz,	Eleazar,
11 Boaz,	Hezekiah,	Matthan,
12 Obed,	Manasseh,	Jacob,
13 Jesse,	Amon,	Joseph,
14 David,	Josiah,	Jesus, who is called Christ.

In the reigns of the kings of Israel, one and the same year is often reckoned both as the last year of one king, and as the first year of his successor. It seems beyond question that Matthew has acted on the same principle, and hence David is the last of the first fourteen, and the first of the second fourteen.

"Many great volumes of history," says *Leighton*, "have been written of states and kingdoms of the earth, and lives of particular famous men, and the reading of them may delight and inform the mind; but what are they all, how empty and comfortless stuff in respect of this history! *The book of the generation of Jesus Christ*. This is the gospel, the alone good tidings to all nations and all ages; still fresh, and equally good news from one generation to another. Had not the virgin borne this Son, we must say, all of us, "good for us if we had not been born."

2. ^aAbraham begat Isaac; and ^aIsaac begat Jacob; and ^aJacob begat Judas and his brethren; ^aGen. xxi. 2, 3. ^cGen. xxv. 26. ^cGen. xxix. 35. See on Luke iii. 23-38.

Abraham: Matthew now *descends* in his enumeration, though in verse 1 he *ascended*. The fact that he begins, not from Adam, but from Abraham, does not imply the excluding of the Gentiles (comp. chap. xxviii. 19), for in Abraham all nations are

blessed. *Begat Isaac*. (See Gen. xxi. 2.) *Jacob*—(Gen. xxv. 26). *Judas*—(Gen. xxix.) the Greek method of expressing the word *Judah*. Only the fourth son of Jacob is here named, as it was from his loins that Messiah was to spring. (Gen. xlix. 10.) *And his brethren*. At several points in the genealogy there are individual matters added, not forming an essential part of the lineage, such as the clause *and his brethren* in this verse, and *Zara of Thamar* in verse 3; in *Rachab*, in verse 5, and of *her that had been the wife of Urias*, in verse 6.

3. And ^aJudas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and ^bPhares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram; ^aGen. xxxviii. 27, &c. ^bRuth iv. 18, &c.; 1 Chron. ii. 5, 9, &c.

Phares and *Zara*—a twin brother. (Gen. xxxviii. 27.) From Phares to David the genealogy is furnished in Ruth iv. 18-22. *Thamar*. Matthew mentions in the list four *women*, two of them Gentiles by birth—*Rachab* and *Ruth*. Thamar receives memorable notice in the Book of Ruth (iv. 12). *Esrom begat Aram*. In several names of the genealogy there are slight departures from the sounds of the same names in the Old Testament, on account of the different powers of the Hebrew language, and of the Greek. Thus Esrom is the same as Hezron in the Old Testament. *Aram*, verse 4, is the same as Ram in 1 Chron. ii. 10; Naasson, the same as Nahson; Booz, in verse 5, is the same as *Boaz* (Ruth iv. 21), and *Ozias*, in verse 8, is the same as *Uzziah*.

4. And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon. 5. And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;

Naasson was contemporary with Moses, and from him to David was about 492 years. Between Phares and Aminadab, also, there was a space of 240 years. From these facts it would appear that many links are passed over. *Rachab*—evidently Rahab of Jericho is meant. She is one of the "cloud of witnesses," whose faith is mentioned by Paul (Heb. xi. 31), and whose works are appealed to by James (ii. 25). For her remarkable history see Joshua ii. and vi. This is the only place in the Bible where her marriage is recorded. For the lovely history of Ruth the Moabitess, see the book in the Bible which bears her name.

6. And Jesse begat David the king; and David the King begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias.—1 Sam. xvi. 1, xvii. 12. *2 Sam. xii. 24.

David the King. David's royalty is twice mentioned here, as is the Babylonian captivity afterwards. The same title is implied after the names of Solomon and his successors as far as verse 11. David is, however, called especially *the king*, not only because he is the first king in this series, but also because his throne is given to Messiah. (See Luke i. 32.) That the record of David's royal line was preserved we are expressly told by Josephus, who says in his autobiography: "I am myself of the royal lineage by my mother." *Of her that had been the wife of Urias; literally of her (who was) Urias's.*

7. And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa; 8. And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias; 9. And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias; 10. And Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias; 11. And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

1 Chron. iii. 10, &c. *2 Kings xx. 21; 1 Chron. iii. 13. *See 1 Chron. iii. 15. 16. *2 Kings xxiv. 14-16; xxv. 11; 1 Chron. xxxvi. 20; Jer. xxvii. 20; xxxix. 9, lvii. 11, 15, 28-30; Dan. i. 2.

In verses 7 and 8 three kings are omitted—Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah. (See 1 Chron. iii. 11, 12.) The reason why these, rather than other names, are omitted, must be sought, perhaps, in religious considerations—either in the connection of those kings, through Athaliah, with the house of Ahab, in their slender right to be regarded as true links in the theocratic chain, or in some similar disqualification. There are also other omissions. In order to abbreviate a long list of names, omissions like these were common, as they are at the present day among the Arabians, who trace their descent from Abraham. Such omissions do not, of course, impair the genealogy, *as a whole*, for the principal point to be obtained is secured, that is, the tracing of the genealogy to a particular individual, and doing this in a way that cannot lead to mistakes.

Ozias was the son of Amaziah, yet it is here stated that *Joram begat Ozias*. (Verse 8.) This is in perfect keeping with the custom of the Jews, to call not only sons proper, but also grandchildren and great-grandchildren, *sons*. Accordingly, a man is said to beget a child that was by several generations removed by him. (Comp. Is. xxxix. 7.)

About the time they were carried away, &c., literally, of their migration. Reference is had not to any one captivity, but to all that took place in the time of Nebuchadnezzar. The greater captivities took place in the 1st, 8th, and 19th years, the minor captivities in the 7th, 18th, and 23d years of his reign.

12. And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel; 13. And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor; 14. And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud; 15. And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Mattathias; and Mattathias begat Jacob.

1 Chron. iii. 17, 18, 19. *Ezra iii. 2; Neh. xii. 1; Hag. i. 1.

Brought to Babylon: The Jews avoided the word "captivity" as too bitter a recollection, and our Evangelist studiously respects the national feeling. *Jechonias*, mentioned in verse 11, is called in the Old Testament *Jehoiakim*, and is to be distinguished from the Jechonias mentioned in verse 12, whose father he was. *Jechonias begat Salathiel*. (See 1 Chron. iii. 17.) This Jechonias is called in the Old Testament *Jehoiachin*, or *Jecooniah*, or *Coniah*. There is no contradiction here of the record in Jer. xxii. 30 that this man was written childless, for what follows explains in what sense this was meant, "for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David." *He was to have seed, but no reigning child.* *And Salathiel begat Zorobabel*. (See Ezra iii. 2; Neh. xii. 1; Hag. i. 1.) But it would appear from 1 Chron. iii. 19, that Zerubbabel was Salathiel's grandson, being the son of Pedaiah, whose name, for some reason unknown, is omitted. The word *begat*, as already remarked, is used in the Scriptures with a much broader application than among us. It is employed in reference to a person's remote descendants, as well as to his immediate descendants. Zorobabel (whose name means "He of the dispersion of Babylon") was governor of Judah, a famous type as well as ancestor of our Lord. (See Hag. i. 14, ii. 2.) The names in verses 13-15 are not found in the Old Testament, but were doubtless taken from the public or family registers, which the Jews kept, and their accuracy was never challenged.

16. And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. 17. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

Jacob begat Joseph, &c.: From this we

gather that we have here the genealogy of *Joseph* (who was descended from David through the legitimate royal line of the house of David) and not that of *Mary*.

Matthew says, purposely, not as in the preceding cases, "*Joseph begat Jesus*," but calls Joseph only the *husband of Mary*, of whom was born *Jesus*, &c. (See on verse 1.) As Jesus passed among the Jews for the son of Joseph, his foster-father, Divine Providence has arranged it that this foster-father of Jesus was a descendant of David. In tracing back the origin of Christ, Matthew followed the male line, because his Gospel was primarily written for the Jews, and such a lineage only with them was legal. He intended by this catalogue of names to furnish legal proof of the assertion that Jesus Christ was "the son of David, the son of Abraham." Luke, on the other hand, who wrote his gospel for the Gentiles, traced our Saviour's pedigree upward from Heli, the father of Mary. (See on Luke iii. 23-38.)

All the generations, &c. A generation may here probably denote a *period of time*, or mean of calculation, by the general (not individual) course of human life. Allowing for the general diminution of human longevity, each of these divisions may have occupied the number of fourteen periods of time, equivalent, each of them, to the ordinary continuance of a generation of mankind at the periods, respectively.

Dr. J. A. Alexander says: "The meaning cannot be that there were really, in point of fact, just fourteen generations in the several intervals here mentioned, for we know from the Old Testament that four names are omitted in the second period, and have reason to believe that others may be wanting in the third. It rather means the contrary, namely, that, although there were more generations in the actual succession, only fourteen are here given, for the sake of uniformity, in each of the three periods. So far from being a mistake or an intentional misrepresentation, it is really a caution to the reader against falling into the very mistake which some would charge upon the writer. As if he had said: "Let it be observed that this is not a complete list of the generations between Abraham and Christ, but that

some names are omitted, so as to leave fourteen in each great division of the history of Israel." It was a common practice with the Jews to distribute genealogies into divisions, each containing some favorite or mystical number, and, in order to do this, generations were either repeated or left out.

Some of the names in the catalogue of our Lord's ancestors remind us of shameful and sad histories. It includes all sorts of men, kings, heroes, shepherds, mechanics, heathens, sinners, prophets, poets, sages, and they become poorer and obscurer as they approach Christ. Being in the line from which the Messiah was to come did not necessarily make one righteous, nor was the character of Jesus in the least defiled by the depravity of some of His ancestors. Those who take pride in their ancestry should remember this

Whatever difficulties may now exist in relation to the genealogical tables of Matthew and Luke (see on Luke iii. 23-38), it is certain that the early enemies of Christianity, both Jews and Gentiles, many of whom were acute, learned, and able, found no difficulty with these tables. This shows that at a time when it was easy to understand these tables they were believed to be correct. Had they contained error, they would undoubtedly have been assailed and exposed.

From this list of names we learn, 1. That God always keeps His word. His promise concerning a Saviour (Gen. xii. 3; Isai. xi. 1) was literally fulfilled. Christians should remember this lesson, and take comfort. Their Father in heaven will be true to all His engagements. (2 Tim. ii. 13.) 2. The greatness of the mercy and compassion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Think how defiled and unclean our nature is, and then think what a condescension it was in Him to be born of a woman, and "made in the likeness of sinful flesh!" 3. That no one who partakes of human nature can be beyond the reach of Christ's sympathy and compassion. However numerous and aggravated our sins may have been, they cannot shut us out of heaven, if we repent and believe the Gospel. 4. That the two dispensations under which God has revealed Himself are the same. "The genealogy of Christ," as has well been said, "serves

to connect Jesus and His teachings with all God's revelations and promises that had been given before. It binds all generations together in one moral system, showing us that there is for all generations one God and one religion, whose principles do not change. It proclaims that it has come, not to tell men of an unknown God, but of Him who made a covenant with Abraham and an oath unto Isaac, and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and unto Israel for an everlasting covenant; the same God to whom David poured out of his Psalms of praise, the same God whose will, whose principles of government, all the prophets had made known."

18. ¶ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.—Luke i. 27. ¶ Luke i. 35.

The Evangelist now proceeds to furnish in the history of the Saviour's birth the proofs of His Divine *Incarnation*; that is, His embodiment in the flesh. *Birth* here denotes both the *conception* and the *nativity* of Christ. *On this wise*, thus, or, in the following manner—an intimation that it was not in the ordinary and natural way. By becoming incarnate, Jesus could—1, explain and recommend holiness to us by His life as well as His doctrines; 2, render satisfaction to the Divine law in the nature in which the debt had been contracted; 3, be a merciful and faithful high priest and mediator between God and man (Heb. ii. 17, iv. 15), and 4, having authority as God, and being visible as man, He could be a proper person to judge the world. *His Mother Mary*. The sacred history records but few incidents of the life of Mary after the infancy of the Messiah. (See John ii. 3; Mark iii. 20; John xix. 25–27; Acts i. 14.) A veil is drawn over her character and history, as though with the design to reprove that wretched idolatry of which she was made the subject when Christianity became corrupt and paganized.

Enough has been given us by the Evangelists to show that she was a woman of great excellence; but they have not given us the least possible ground for supposing that she was without actual sin—an opinion that became very general about

six hundred years ago—or that she was conceived without sin ("Immaculate Conception")—a notion which originated a little later, and was formally decreed in 1854 as an article of belief for the entire Roman Catholic world. *Was espoused to Joseph*. No woman of Israel was married unless she had been first betrothed. Some time elapsed before she was taken home to the house of her husband. (See Deut. xx. 7; Judg. xiv. 7, 8.) The espousal of Mary to Joseph was for the safety of Christ, who, having afterward to flee into Egypt, had His reputed father to take care of Him, and for the credit and reputation of Mary, God would have His people free from the least suspicion of evil. Joseph was of regal descent (verse 20), but he resided in the small and not very reputable town of Nazareth, in the occupation of a carpenter. (Chap. xiii. 55.) *Before they came together*—before they entered into the full relation of man and wife—*she was found with child*, was discovered to be; no doubt Mary disclosed to Joseph her condition, which she had concealed from every one else. *Of the Holy Ghost*: So that the Lord, being the child of a purely human mother and of a Divine Father, should at once be the Son of Man and the Son of God—the God-man. *Ghost* is derived from the Saxon word *gast*, and signifies *Spirit*. *Holy Ghost* is, therefore, precisely synonymous with *Holy Spirit*. The events here recorded are profoundly mysterious. They are truths which we have not mind enough to fathom. "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." (1 Tim. iii. 16.) Let us not attempt to explain things which are above our feeble reason. We cannot comprehend how the soul and body are united in a man and so make one person; we should not therefore speculate as to how the Divine and human nature were united in Jesus so as to make but one person, but believe the precious truth with reverence. Let us often meditate upon this single event in the history of our race that bridges over the stupendous chasm between God and man. Considered with purity of intention, no fact recorded in the Bible has greater power to bring the soul near to its Maker.

19. Then Joseph, her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.—Deut. xxiv. 1.

The phrase *just man* may imply Joseph's kindness and tenderness, as well as his integrity. He did not think it consistent with his character to retain one as his wife who appeared to have broken her conjugal faith. And he was minded to put Mary away secretly, because he was unwilling to publish the matter, and expose to infamy, and subject to the punishment which the law permitted in the case of such as broke the marriage vow (Lev. xx. 10; John viii. 5), one to whom he had been tenderly attached, and in whose piety everything else had led him to confide. Joseph's conduct here is a beautiful example of godly wisdom and tender consideration for others. Though he saw "the appearance of evil," he did nothing rashly. He waited patiently to have the line of duty made clear. (See Isa. xxviii. 16.)

20. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

*Luke i. 35. *Luke i. 31. †Acts iv. 12; v. 31, xliii. 23, 33.

Joseph reflected what course to pursue, but was not left long in doubt. *The angel of the Lord*, doubtless the Angel Gabriel, who had already conveyed wondrous tidings to Zacharias, and to Mary (Luke i. 19, 26, 27), appeared unto him in a dream. Though dreams are generally the vain vagaries of our sleeping hours, which no sensible man usually regards, yet God has often made them the means of communicating warnings and directions. (See Gen. xx. 3; xxviii. 12; xxxi. 11, 24; Num. xii. 6; 1 Kings iii. 5.) The Joseph of the New Testament, like the Joseph of the Old Testament, uniformly received his revelations in dreams. *Saying, Joseph.* In visions, those to whom they come are generally addressed by name, as acquaintances. (Acts ix. 4, 10; x. 3, 13.) *Thou Son of David*—a man simple in character, but illustrious by descent. *Fear not*—do not doubt or hesitate to take unto thee—to the companionship of life and board, *Mary, thy wife*; among the Jews the betrothed bore the title of wife. *That which is conceived in her, the*

child yet unborn is usually spoken of in the neuter gender. *Is of the Holy Ghost.* (Comp. Luke i. 35.) By this we are to understand simply that Divine power was imparted to the human person of the virgin, from which a being of perfect holiness should be conceived and born, blending the Divine and the human natures. *Shall bring forth a son.* There is something very delightful in the idea that the Saviour was first presented as an *infant* in our world. It proves at once that His errand was one of mercy. *Thou shalt call*—the second person. Thus the office of a father is committed to Joseph. Matthew speaks most of Joseph. Afterward, when the truth was generally known, the first place was given to Mary. (Comp. Luke i. 31.) *His name JESUS.* (See on verse 1.) The reason for giving the name Jesus to the Son of Man was peculiar: *for he shall save his people from their sins*—the lost sheep of the house of Israel first, then, on the breaking down of the middle wall of partition, "the redeemed unto God by his blood," out of "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. (Rev. v. 9.) As if it had been said—"Others have been called saviours because they have rescued the body; they were temporal deliverers, they saved the Jews from the Egyptians, the Philistines, the Midianites. But this child is called a Saviour for a nobler reason. He rescues the soul—He is an eternal Deliverer." The proper Deity of Christ is written as with a sunbeam here. *He* is emphatic—"He, and no other"—"He personally, and by personal acts." Jesus saves His people from their sins: 1. By price, and thus He redeems. By the shedding of His blood we are ransomed, and by His death we live. "He has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." 2. By power, and thus He renews. The peace He gives has purity *with* it, and purity *in* it. Those whom He pardons He sanctifies. He saves them from the *love* of sin; they not only avoid sin, but abhor it. He delivers them from the bondage of it. Sin shall not have dominion over them, for they are not under the law, but under grace. If Jesus is to save his people *from* their sins, how awfully deceived are those who hope to be saved *in* their sins! This

message from God to Joseph, according with his former confidence in the piety of Mary, might well lead him to acknowledge the hand of God, and regard the dream as a special event, arranged for relieving his mind, and for leading him in the path of duty.

22. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23. Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.—Isa. vii. 14.

All this includes the whole narrative (from verse 18) of the events of miraculous conception and birth. *That it might be fulfilled.* What God declares shall take place, must of necessity have a fulfillment. (See Luke xxii. 37.) Prophecies relating to Jesus *were fulfilled*, not only in His own acts, but in events which occurred to Him without His agency. *Spoken of the Lord by the Prophet*, rather, “Spoken by the Lord, through,” &c. Isaiah is the prophet here spoken of (vii. 14). This is the first of the many ancient prophecies which Matthew notices as fulfilled in the history of our blessed Lord. It had been pronounced about 750 years before, and yields to none, in its wondrous precision and clearness. A *virgin*—it should be “the virgin,” meaning that particular virgin destined to this unparalleled distinction. *And they shall call*—He shall be known and recognized—such shall be His universal appellation. *His name Emmanuel.* *Emmanu* means “with us;” *el* means “God.” What precious truths are here suggested! 1. We know, in consequence of the revelations made by Christ, that God is so with us, so near to us, that our very existence is every moment upheld by Him. 2. We know from the incarnation and doctrine of Christ that God is with us, not as individuals merely, but with our world, in the offers of His saving grace. 3. In Christ we see that God is with us in our very nature, to accomplish our redemption. 4. We are assured that, though ascended into heaven, He is still “God with us,” with us by the invisible and mighty influence which He exerts. 5. We are thus reminded that God is with us, in condescension and special grace, during the whole course of discipline to which He subjects us. Is Christ our Emmanuel? God with us? Then let us

take care that we are with Him—coming to Him habitually in acts of faith and love—walking with Him, and before Him—so shall He be to us all, and in all, the strength of our heart, and our portion forever.

24. Then Joseph being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

Joseph, having fully awoke, and all his difficulties now removed, the marriage was consummated, probably immediately, or very soon after the dream. With what deep and reverential joy would this now be done on his part; and what balm would this minister to his betrothed one, who had till now lain under suspicions of all others the most trying to a chaste and holy woman—suspicions, too, arising from what, though to her an honor unparalleled, was to all around her wholly unknown!

25. And knew her not till she had brought forth ^{her} first-born son: and he called his name JESUS.

*Exod. xiii. 2; Luke ii. 7, 21.

The virginity of Mary before the birth of Jesus is directly asserted. The words *till* and *first-born* do not necessarily imply that she had other children afterward. When we affirm a certain state of things *until* a given point, we may intend our affirmation to cover the time previous to the point, without pretending to affirm, imply, or even know what took place after that point. We have examples of this in Gen. xxviii. 15; Deut. xxxiv. 6; 1 Sam. xv. 35; 2 Sam. vi. 23. *Until*, and equivalents in other languages, affirm and deny nothing beyond the point of time which they are used to designate, but leave the result to be discovered in some other way. The Greek interpreters assert this to be the usage of the Greek word employed in this case, and refer for proof to Gen. viii. 7; Ps. cx. 1, to which others have added, Isa. xlii. 3, as quoted in Matt. xii. 20, where the meaning cannot be that after He has sent forth judgment unto victory He will begin to break the bruised reed and quench the smoking flax. So too in Tim. iv. 13, Paul cannot mean to say that after he comes Timothy must cease to read, exhort, and teach. As to the word “first-born,” many affirm that it is, in the Old Testament, properly applied to the *only-born*; that is, it is applied to any child whose birth has

been preceded by no other, whether succeeded by any other or not. The Mosaic law prescribed the sanctification of the "first-born" (Ex. xii. 2), and this first-born was still so called, whether succeeded by subsequent children or not. Referring to

the question now under view, one of the ancients says, "what the virgin was afterward is of small concern to the mystery, therefore not to be inquired after." *He called* (that is Joseph) *his name* JESUS. (See on verse 21.)

1. What is said of "the Book of Generation?" 2. What is meant by the title "Jesus Christ?" 3. To whom does Matthew trace the Lord's genealogy? 4. Why does he thus trace it? 5. How is the genealogical table arranged? 6. What does *Leighton* say of the Book of the Generation? &c. 7. What is said of the omissions in verses 7 and 8? 8. What is said about "all generations," &c., v. 17? 9. What do we learn from the list of the names given? 10. What does the Evangelist proceed to show? 11. What ends could Jesus accomplish by becoming incarnate? 12. What angel appeared to Joseph? 13. What did he say to him? 14. How does Jesus save His people from their sins? 15. What is said of verses 22 and 23? 16. What course did Joseph pursue after rising from his sleep?

CHAPTER. II.

1 *The wise men out of the east are directed to Christ by a star.* 11 *They worship him, and offer their presents.* 14 *Joseph fleeth into Egypt, with Jesus and his mother:* 16 *Herod slayeth the children:* 20 *himself dieth.* 23 *Christ is brought back again into Galilee to Nazareth.*

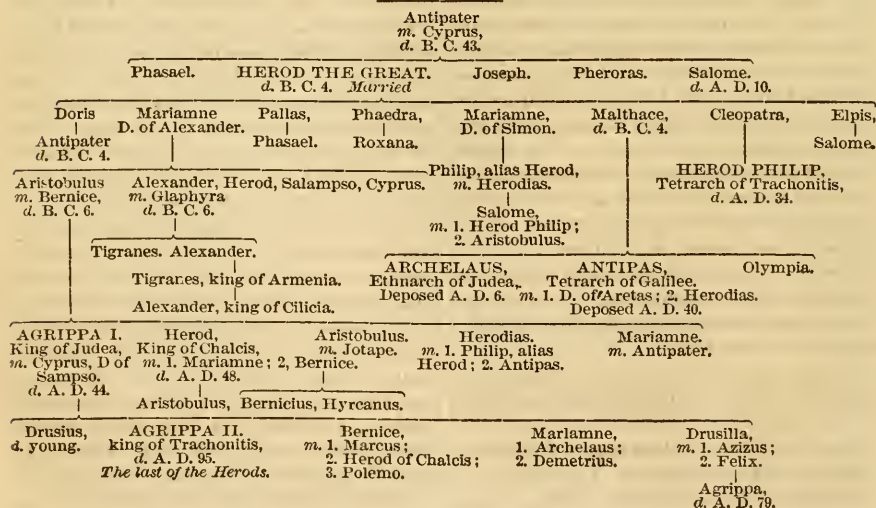
NOW, when *Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

*Luke ii. 4, 6, 7. *Gen. x. 30, xxv. 6; 1 Kings iv. 30

When Jesus was born. (See on Luke ii. 8.)
Bethlehem of Judea—Judea was the southern of the three provinces into which Palestine was divided. The name is derived from the name of the tribe of Judah. "It em-

bodied 'the original territories of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, together with Dan and Simeon; being almost the same with the old kingdom of Judah, and about one hundred miles in length, and sixty in breadth.'" *Herod the King*. This monarch was surnamed *the great*, to distinguish him from three others of the same name, who subsequently reigned, in whole or part, over the Jewish nation. He was the second son of Antipater, who was appointed procurator of Judea by Julius Cesar, B. C. 47.

THE FAMILY OF HERODS.



Wise men. The word thus translated is, in the original, *magi*, a word which is, however, not Greek, but a foreign oriental term, adopted by the Evangelist and other writers in Greek, as an appellation. We have no authentic account of these wise men, but there must, of course, have been more than one. There is reason to believe that they were men of rank, wealth, and learning. *From the east.* Their country was eastward of Jerusalem, but whether it was Arabia, or Persia, or some other country which lay to the east, is not certainly known. *There came wise men.* The number of the wise men is not given. Men have shown their desire to be "wise above what is written" by affirming that there were three; that they were kings; and that their names were Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar; that Gaspar presented the gold, Melchior the frankincense, and Balthazar the myrrh. In the Greek church is the utterly baseless tradition that the magi had "a retinue of one thousand men, having left behind them on the further bank of the Euphrates an army of seven thousand." *To Jerusalem.* They knew for certain that the Messiah was now born, and that He had been born in the land of Judea, but with the particular place of His birth they were yet unacquainted, and where, as to this, were they likelier to obtain the needed information than in Jerusalem, the capital of the country? How do their spirit and conduct, in cheerfully submitting to the expense and fatigue of such a journey to do homage to Jesus, rebuke those who, living amidst Christian privileges, yet do not appreciate them, and are unwilling to make any sacrifices in order to enjoy them. It would be well for all professing Christians if they were more ready to follow these wise men's example. Where is our self-denial? What pains do we take about our souls? What diligence do we show about following Christ? What does our religion cost us? These are serious questions; they deserve serious consideration.

2. Saying, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen this star in the east, and are come to worship him."—Luke ii. 11. "Num. xxiv. 17; Isa. lx. 3.

Where is he, &c. How strong their faith! "The (one) born already," as the past participle in the Greek denotes. They assume

the fact of His nativity as certain, and merely inquire for the place, as something not revealed or ascertainable from astronomical phenomena. *Schlegel* mentions, in his *Philosophy of History*, that the Buddhist missionaries traveling to China met Chinese sages going to seek the Messiah, about the year 33, A. D. Verse 11 shows that these magi deemed this "King of the Jews" to be *their* king also. *For we have seen his star in the east;* rather, *we in the East* (i. e., dwelling in the East) *have seen His star.* *His star*—His *exclusively*. This star must plainly mean some new appearance in the sky, which they, whose profession (as is well known) led them peculiarly to the study of astronomy, had observed in the heavens. Any appearance of a body of light in the air is called by the Greek and Latin authors a *star*. The eminent astronomer *Kepler* has shown that in the year 747 from the building of Rome a very remarkable three-fold conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the sign of *Pisces* occurred, first on May 20th, and again November 12th, and he was of opinion that this conjunction formed the star of the magi. During the interval of some six months, in which the planets remained very near together, there would have been time sufficient for the wise men to make their journey from Chaldea to Jerusalem, including the time necessary to make preparations for it. But why did the men associate with the appearance of a star the idea that One had been born who was destined to be King of the Jews? 1. Jews having been dispersed through eastern countries, the magi could not have failed to learn something of the expectation which they had so warmly cherished relative to the coming of a great Deliverer. 2. It is well known that the opinion had obtained great currency through a considerable part of the East, that not far from that time some one would appear among the Jews who would effect a great change in the world. *Suetonius* and *Tacitus*, Roman historians, testify this. 3. The magi may have been specially illuminated from heaven, for, after they had found the object of their search, they were warned by God in a dream concerning their return. 4. There seems to be nothing unreasona-

ble in the supposition that they were acquainted with Balaam's prophecy: *There shall come a star out of Jacob*, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. (Num. xxiv. 17.) Christ claims this very title as His own. (Rev. xxii. 16.) *To worship Him*—to indicate veneration, homage, submission, by prostration of the face to the ground. (Gen. xix. 1, xlii. 6.) The word "worship" is often used in the Old and New Testaments where real adoration is not meant. It is, however, well remarked by *Dr. Alexander*, that a mere civil homage could not well be the sole object of these magi, and would have been wholly out of place upon the part of Herod. (See verse 8.) God spoke to these wise men in the glittering alphabet with which their studies made them conversant. Happy will the time be when all business shall be regarded as a medium through which God is speaking of higher and holier interests—when the merchant shall be reminded by his calling of the pearl of great price; the farmer, that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap; the builder, that there is a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; the minister of justice, that there is a throne of justice before which all shall appear; and when science shall show its true relation to Jesus—astronomy pointing to the Star of Bethlehem, geology to the Rock of Ages, and botany to the "Plant of Renown," "the Rose of Sharon" and the "Lily of the Valley."

3. When Herod the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Herod, now seventy years old, was troubled, as were also the inhabitants of the city, because they apprehended that in Jesus, whom they expected to come as a temporal prince, a rival had appeared, who would sooner or later take possession of the kingdom—an apprehension the more painful, because, as Josephus tells us, the Pharisees a short time before foretold that the kingdom was about to be taken from the family of Herod.

4. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

^{e2} Chron. xxxvi. 14. ^{f2} Chron. xxxiv. 13. ^g Mal. ii. 7.

The class of the *chief priests* included the high priest for the time being, together

with all who had previously filled this office. The *scribes* were at first merely transcribers of the law and synagogue-readers, afterwards interpreters of the law, both civil and religious, and so both lawyers and divines. Herod knew that the coming of Messiah was expected, but he knew not the place where He should be born, hence he convened the authorized interpreters of Scripture.

5. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet, 6. ^bAnd thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

^aMic. v. 2. ^cJohn vii. 42. ^dRev. ii. 27.

Bethlehem of Judea. (See on verse 1.) Here was an involuntary testimony to Jesus from the highest ecclesiastical authority, which yet at length condemned Him to die. Let us beware of resting satisfied with head knowledge. It is an excellent thing when rightly used, but a man may have much of it, and yet perish everlastingly. *Written by the prophet.* (Mi. v. 2.) The slight verbal difference between the verse as given by Matthew, and as originally written by Micah, may be sufficiently explained, either by the probability that the verse was quoted from the Septuagint, or the fact that Matthew doubtless intended merely to give the idea conveyed by the prophet. *Art not the least* is put, by a common figure of speech, for *art among the greatest.* *Shall rule*, literally feed. (See Ps. xxiii. lxxx. i.) *Israel, i. e.,* Israelites, all the tribes.

The passage of prophesy in this verse is a most signal one, for the following reasons:

1. It was the uniform practice of the ancient Jews agreeing with Herod's Sanhedrim to apply it to the Messiah. 2. It brings to a point a whole series of converging prophecies from the Edenic prediction of the seed of the woman, through the line of Shem to that of Abraham, and that of Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David, and finally to Bethlehem, the city of David. 3. This pointing to Bethlehem made more conspicuous the fact that Jesus was of the royal line of David, so completing the evidence presented in Matthew's genealogy. 4. The predicted birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, of the line of David, and so of the tribe of Judah, settles the point that the Messiah *has come.* Not only was it predicted that

Messiah should appear during the second temple (which is now no more), but the tribeship of Judah and the lineage of David are lost. All traces of the royal line disappeared at the fall of Jerusalem and the dispersion of their race. 5. No infidel can say that these prophecies were forged by Christians, or were made to suit the event, for the records are preserved by our opponents, the Jews. The Hebrews keep our library of proofs. Judaism furnishes the prophecy; Christianity furnishes the fulfillment, and how will infidelity explain the agreement?

7. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

Herod lost no time in his efforts to remove the cause of his alarm. His sending for the magi privately is a proof of his treachery. In his inquiries of the wise men with care as to the time of the star's beginning, we perceive his craft, and their artless, unsuspecting character.

8. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

Herod did not believe the report of the wise men as true, though he considered it possible. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that he did not immediately go with them. *That I may come and worship him also.* The cunning of the bloody hypocrite! Wicked men often cloak their most atrocious designs under the pretense of zeal for religion and for the honor of God. But God can cause even the wrath of men to work out His sovereign will.

9. When they had heard the king, they departed, and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

Immediately on leaving the despot's palace, the wise men set out on their journey. The star, or meteor, which they had seen in their own land now re-appeared, and came so lowly from the skies as to move horizontally before them, until it rested and shone steadily above the very house where the child was, which probably (as is common in villages) had no house contiguous, and therefore might be easily marked by the situation of the overhanging luminous body. The magi have set an example worthy to be imitated by all the wise men of this world. Like the magi, these ought not to be ashamed

to seek Christ and to bow to Him. Genuine philosophy leads to Christ. Science should be the handmaid of religion. Learning and religion are perfectly consistent with each other, yet without the light of faith all our knowledge is fragmentary, and without the Word of God all the stars of heaven leave us in the dark. But whoever follows the light he has, however faint it may be, is brought, by God's grace, to the full knowledge of the truth. Without the Word of God and the enlightening influence of His Spirit, Christ and His kingdom cannot be found. God's word is the star that points to Christ, and if we follow it we shall infallibly come to Christ. (2 Peter i. 19; 2 Tim. iii. 17.) There is a deep significance in the homage of the Magians. For it, in fact, was but a specimen and type of that which science has been doing ever since. The mind of Christ has not only entered into the temple, and made it the house of prayer: it has entered into the temple of science, and purified the spirit of philosophy. This is its spirit now, as expounded by its chief interpreter: "Man, the interpreter of nature, knows nothing, and can do nothing, except that which nature teaches him." What is this but science bending before the Child, becoming child-like, and, instead of projecting its own fancies upon God's Word, listening reverently to hear what it has to teach him? In a similar spirit, too, spoke the greatest of philosophers, in words quoted in every child's book: "I am but a child picking up pebbles on the shore of the sea of truth."

10. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

The exuberant transport they experienced at recovering sight of the star indicates that they had not left their Eastern home from curiosity, but were acting under a strong impulse, to which the mere desire of doing homage to external pomp or power could not have given birth.

11. ¶ And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.—Ps. lxxii. 10; Isa. ix. 6.

Into the house. The reason why the parents had sought shelter in a stable existed no longer. The greater part of the people who had come to Bethlehem to be taxed

had left again, and in this way the holy family had succeeded in finding more convenient lodgings. The progressive growth from the joy of the wise men in seeing the star, to their joy in seeing the child Himself, is sweetly expressed. Joseph is not here mentioned, probably because he was only the reputed father of the child. *Flu down and worshipped him.* Bowing and prostration is the Eastern manner of doing obeisance to kings, but, clearly, the worship which these star-guided strangers came so far, inquired so eagerly, and rejoiced so earnestly to pay, was a lofty, spiritual homage. (See on ver. 2.) The gifts offered were productions of their own country. *Gold.* The first installment of what the Gentiles will give for the advancement of Christianity. *Frankincense.* A species of fragrant resin that exudes from a tree. It is a native product of Arabia Felix, and hence called *Odor Arabicus*. In the Mosaic ceremonial frankincense was used as an ingredient in the perfume or incense that was to be placed before the Lord (Ex. xxx. 34), and as an accompaniment to the meat-offering (Lev. ii. 1, 16, vi. 15, xxiv. 7; Num. v. 15). Its use in these cases arose from its fragrant odor when burnt, in which respect the incense was a symbol of the Divine name, and its diffusion an emblem of the publishing abroad of that name (Mal. i. 11; Song i. 3); and from this, as prayer is a calling on God's name, the incense came to be an emblem of prayer. (Ps. cxli. 2; Lev. i. 10; Rev. v. 8, viii. 3, 4.) In this symbolical representation the burning of the frankincense was a celebration of the holiness of Jehovah. *Myrrh.* This substance is the exudation of a little-known tree, found in Arabia, but much more extensively in Abyssinia. It formed an article of the earliest commerce, and was used for various purposes. (See Ex. xxx. 23; Ps. xlv. 8; Song of Sol. iv. 6, v. 15, 13; Mark xv. 23.) It was employed in embalming the bodies of the dead. Herodotus, speaking of the practice of embalming among the Egyptians, says: "They then fill the body with powder of pure myrrh, cassia and other perfumes, except frankincense. (See John xix. 39.) According to the opinion of some ancient fathers concerning these

gifts, the faith of the wise men must have been very great, for they represent the *incense* as offered to our Saviour as God, the *gold* to have been paid as tribute to a king, and the *myrrh* (a principal ingredient used in embalming) brought as an acknowledgment that He was to die for men. Others interpret the same gifts very differently, and take them to signify the three spiritual offerings which we must all present to heaven, through Jesus Christ—the incense to denote piety toward God, the gold charity toward our fellow-creatures, and the myrrh purity of soul and body, it being highly efficacious in preserving from corruption. We are concerned to honor Christ, as well as to be saved by Him. We must not only *seek* Him, but *serve* Him. It will be observed that Mary was not an object of worship to the magi. If she had been conceived without sin, as the Church of Rome has now decided, why should she not then have been worshiped as well as now? for she was then already the mother of the adorable King and Saviour.

12. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.—^aChap. i. 20.

It would seem that they had thought of returning to Herod, but a warning from God to them, in a dream, either separately or through one of their number, determined them to choose a road which led in another direction. It is worthy of remark that everything in this wonderful visit of the wise men to the infant Saviour is related with the greatest plainness, brevity and simplicity, without any of that ostentation and parade which we so often meet with in other authors. A heathen writer would have put a long and eloquent speech into the mouth of the magi, and would have provided the parents of the infant with a suitable answer. In all the evangelical histories, indeed, there is a mild and passionless equanimity, a quiet dignity, which marks the guidance and superintendence of a Spirit truly Divine. There is not a word, not a hint of extravagance or exaggeration, or unbecoming heat and intemperance. The writers never wonder, though they have wonderful things to tell of. They never fret or rage, though they have intolerable wrongs to

set forth. All they do is to give a plain and temperate record of facts.

13. And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, *Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.*

^aPs. ciii. 20; Heb. i. 14.

The visit of the magi was followed by the flight into Egypt. Special strengthenings of faith are followed by sore trials. How easily can God defeat the plans of the wicked. (See Job v. 12, 13; Ps. ii. 4.) *The young child and his mother, not thy wife and child.* Greater regard is paid to the child than to His mother. Egypt was at this time a Roman province, and many Jews lived there. By retiring to it, they would be beyond Herod's jurisdiction, and would find sympathy from the resident Jews. The Egyptian government was tolerant toward Jews. "The paintings and sculptures of the monuments indicate a very high degree of personal safety, showing us that the people of all ranks commonly went unarmed, and without military protection." *For Herod will seek, &c.* God sees the yet unformed purpose in the heart. (Ps. cxxxix. 1.) Our Lord's early flight from a cruel enemy pointed to the prediction of Him as "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." What wonderful proofs of God's watchful care over His people will be revealed in another world. (Ps. xxxiv. 7.) Greatness and riches are a perilous possession for the soul. They know not what they seek who seek to have them. They lead men into many temptations.

14. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: 15. And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, *Out of Egypt have I called my son.*

^aHosea xi. 1.

Faith gave wings to Joseph's obedience, and instantly vanquished all his fears, teaching us, that when our direction is clear, our compliance should be speedy. In times of difficulty and danger it is neither unwarrantable nor unbecoming to preserve our lives by flight. *By night*, when least notice would be taken of the movement. Although we have so many promises of safety and deliverance, yet we must not put God upon working miracles for our preservation, when it may be obtained in the use of means. Herod died

about one year after the flight to Egypt. *That it might be fulfilled, &c.* The prophecy is quoted from Hosea, xi. 1. Abraham's descendants, when they were in Egypt, were called God's *son*. (Ex. iv. 22, 23.) CHRIST was the promised seed (Gal. iii. 16), in whom God's promises to Abraham had their *real* fulfillment. What was typically spoken of the children of Israel was therefore actually fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ, who alone could properly be called God's *son*. As the infancy of that nation was cradled in Egypt, so was it with *His* infancy. In both cases God sent a *Joseph* "to preserve life" (Gen. xlv. 5), and in both cases "there arose up a new king" (Ex. i. 8), and in both cases "the Lord called His son" out of Egypt.

16. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

^aGen. xlix. 7; 2 Kings viii. 12; Prov. xxviii. 15, 17; Isa. xxvi. 21; Hosea x. 14; Rev. xvii. 6.

Though Herod regarded himself as deceived by the magi, this was far from their disposition, yet they did indeed account the king's authority naught before God's. *Exceeding wroth.* Having played the fox before, he acts the lion now. As Pharaoh commanded that the male children should be drowned, through fear that Israel was becoming "more and mightier" than the Egyptians, so Herod slew the children of Bethlehem, from fear that Christ should become king instead of himself. *According to the time, &c.* The time indicated by the wise men was perhaps a little beyond a year: Herod, therefore, fixed two years as the limit. Bethlehem was rather an inconsiderable town in numbers. Its present population is about three hundred; if we suppose it to have been at that time one thousand, the number of male children inhumanly sacrificed was probably about fifty. This event has been regarded by infidels and sceptics as entirely improbable. It has been especially objected that the massacre has not been reported by Josephus. But Josephus, if he had ever heard of it, would not have regarded the massacre of so small a number of infants as demanding notice amid the great number of terrible crimes of which Herod had been guilty. As to the improbability that so atrocious

an act could have been ordered, it is sufficient to remark that it sinks into insignificance when considered by the side of a crime which the monster planned almost in the act of dying. Causing all the principal men of Jerusalem to be shut up in the Hippodrome, he requested his sister Salome and her husband to give orders to put them to death immediately after his decease, that he might have "the honor of a memorable mourning." His character had been so hateful to the Jews that he feared they would give him no "such mourning as men usually expect at a king's death." (*Josephus*.) The death of the infants of Bethlehem sent sorrow through the little village and its borders; the death of the infant Jesus would have made everlasting the sorrows of a world.

17. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by ⁶Jeremy the prophet, saying, 18. In ⁷Ramah was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, ⁸Rachael weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

⁶Jer. xxxi. 15. ⁷Jer. xxxi. 15.

The Evangelist does not say "that it might be fulfilled," but "then was fulfilled." It was a fulfillment of the words, though not the event immediately predicted. *Ramah* was a village in the tribe of Benjamin, near Bethlehem, and a few miles north of Jerusalem. *Rachael*, one of Israel's wives, and mother of Joseph and Benjamin. (Gen. xxx. 22-24.) As to her death and burial, see Gen. xxxv. 16-19. As when the Jewish captives were formerly collected by Nebuzaradan on the plains of Ramah, and carried thence to Babylon, the prophet (Jer. xxxi. 15) by a bold and striking figure introduces Rachael, as rising from her grave, and deploring the sufferings of her posterity, so here the Evangelist, deeply affected in recording the tragic scenes, brings forward again the wife of the patriarch, as a distressed mother, weeping inconsolably, because of the sanguinary massacre of her children. "It is," says *Westcott*, "through the Evangelists that the Holy Spirit has afforded us a true insight into the inner meaning of the prophets, who were the *historians* of the elder dispensation, as in the Epistles he has set forth the anti-types of the ancient law. That is surely a meagre theology and unscholarly-like criticism which finds nothing more than a fanciful adaptation

in the Scriptures quoted in the opening chapter of St. Matthew."

Because they are not—no longer living, taken away. "This," says one, "was the scene on earth. How different were the scenes then witnessed in heaven! How many happy spirits then entered together into glory."

19. ¹But when Herod was dead, behold an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, 20. Saying, ²Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: ³for they are dead which sought the young child's life.

¹Jer. xxxi. 15. ²Ex. iv. 19.

When Herod was dead. The rulers of millions have no power to retain life when the hour of their departure comes. The murderer of helpless infants must himself die. Christians should never be greatly moved by the persecution of man, remembering that "the triumphing of the wicked is but short." "What has become of the Pharaohs, and Neros, and Diocletians, who at one time fiercely persecuted the people of God? Where is the enmity of Charles the Ninth of France, and Bloody Mary of England? They did their utmost to cast the truth down to the ground. But the truth rose again from the earth, and still lives, and they are dead, and mouldering in the grave. Let not the heart of any believer fail. Death is a mighty leveler, and can take any mountain out of the way of Christ's Church." God seldom suffers persecutors to pass in quiet to their graves; they rarely die the common death of all men. Herod was seized with his last illness when he was sixty-nine years old, and his disease was of a most excruciating and loathsome kind. *An angel*, most probably the same that appeared on former occasions. (See Note on chap. i. 20; ii. 13.) *Saying, Arise, &c.* We are to expect that God will in some way direct His people, in perplexity, respecting the path of duty. (Prov. iii. 6.) God's promise to Joseph to bring him word (v. 13) is here fulfilled. *The land of Israel*, meaning the Holy Land at large, the particular promise being not as yet indicated. *They are dead, &c.*—a Scriptural expression which must have been familiar to Joseph. (Ex. iv. 19.) It seems that some one beside Herod sought to destroy Jesus; perhaps it was Herod's eldest son, Antipater, who was influenced by the same motive as his

father. He died a few months before Herod, but not a natural death.

21. And he arose, and took the child and its mother, and came into the land of Israel.

Joseph felt that he needed the same authority for returning to his own country as he had for quitting it. Our Lord's stay in Egypt could not have been many months in duration.

22. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea, in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee.

*Chap. iii. 13; Luke ii. 39.

Joseph heard of the reign of Archelaus after he had reached the land of Israel. Herod the Great had ten wives. Archelaus was his son by his fourth wife—Malthece, who was a Samaritan. *He was afraid*, &c. The fear of Joseph may be taken as an expression of the popular distrust of Archelaus, which was amply justified by the continued tyranny and disorder of his nine years' reign. *Notwithstanding, being warned*, &c. As this was the fourth revelation to Joseph, it is evident that a very special providence watched over the life of the Divine child. *He turned aside*. Observe how God's warrant and direction quieted Joseph's mind, resolved his doubts, removed his fears, and made him readily comply with the Divine command. *Galilee* was one of the three provinces into which Palestine was divided in the time of our Lord. Galilee was beyond the jurisdiction of Archelaus, and was at this time under the rule of Herod Antipas, who was of a more generous and humane disposition than his brother Archelaus.

23. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

*John i. 45. *Judg. xlii. 5; 1 Sam. i. 16.

Nazareth is a town of Lower Galilee, within the territory of Zebulun. *He shall be called a Nazarene*. As the Evangelist does not intimate that any one prophet in particular had used this expression concerning the Messiah, and as Nazareth was odious to the people of Judea, so that to be a Nazarene implied reproach, he may be understood as saying that what he is about to express accorded with prophetic declarations concerning Him, such as Ps. xxii. 6,

&c., lxix. 9; Isa. lii. 53; Zech. xi. 12, 13. See Matt. xxi. 11; Acts ii. 22, iv. 10. *Prof. Day*, of Yale College, prefers the explanation that the Messiah is described, in Isa. xi. 1, as a *Netzer* (that is, a shoot, sprout, of Jesse), "the proper name of Nazareth." Thus the Messiah was represented as "a humble, despised descendant of the decayed royal family." But we prefer the former explanation. Did Jesus bear so despised a name as "a Nazarene?" Ought we to be proud when our great Lord was so humble? We are disposed to be ashamed of the plainness of our family, or circumstances, or education, and we are anxious to conceal such things from the world. This pride is very sinful, and comes to us from our first parents, who wished to be as gods. But Jesus has set His people an example of suffering contempt. What would we not give to know more of that home at Nazareth, where thirty long years of the sinless life of Jesus were spent? But no! it is buried in silence. And why? The silence of Holy Scripture is often as instructive as its revelations. Let us therefore learn what this mysterious silence teaches. 1. A lesson: That God's ways are not as man's ways—that whatever is most Divine is most secret in its growth, as with the seed that groweth secretly, we know not how, as with the hidden life of grace within the Christian's heart, so with the Messiah in His silent home at Nazareth. "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing." 2. A warning: That the kind of knowledge we most crave after is not always the kind of knowledge that is best for us. It is said of those who had a knowledge of Christ's daily life, "for neither did His brethren believe on Him." Let Bible students, in their curious antiquarian researches, ever remember this. To know all about Christ is one thing—to *know Christ* is quite another thing. Let us beware, lest, by dwelling too minutely and exclusively on the earthly surroundings of our Lord, we dim to ourselves the glory of His Divine person. It was not flesh and blood which revealed to Peter that in Jesus of Nazareth he beheld the Son of the living God.

1. What is said of Bethlehem? 2. Describe Herod. 3. What of the wise men? 4. What is meant by the star they saw? 5. In what sense did they come to worship the infant Saviour? 6. Why was Herod troubled? 7. What did he do? 8. What did the chief priests and scribes say to him? 9. State the reasons why the prophecy in v. 5 is a signal one. 10. What further did Herod do? 11. What is said of the wise men? 12. Explain the gifts they presented. 13. Why did they not return to Herod? 14. What did the angel say to Joseph? 15. What course did Joseph pursue? 16. What atrocity did Herod perpetrate? 17. What occurred after Herod's death? 18. What is said about Christ dwelling in Nazareth?

CHAPTER III.

1 *John preacheth: his office: life, and baptism. 7 He reprehendeth the Pharisees; 13 and baptizeth Christ in Jordan.*

IN those days came ^aJohn the Baptist, preaching ^bin the wilderness of Judea.

^aMark i. 4, 15; Luke iii. 2, 3; John i. 28. ^bJosh. xiv. 10.

In those days—while Jesus was dwelling at Nazareth, where the last chapter left Him. Yet between the two chapters an interval of nearly thirty years has transpired. How our Lord spent His time, during His residence at Nazareth, we are not, except in general, informed. (See Luke ii. 41–52; Matt. ii. 23, xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3.) The Evangelists in their manner of writing seemed to have complied with the Saviour's intention in His manner of living. He would not have lived so long in secret if He had desired to be known openly. It was suitable that He should know, by experience, how to sympathize with human beings in the ordinary circumstances of life, as well as with respect to their eternal interests. (Heb. ii. 11, 14, 17, 18.) Those who are preparing for the work of the ministry ought not to push themselves forward with undue haste to that holy office.

Came. (See chap. xvii. 10–13, where reference is had to the prophecy, Matt. iv. 5.) The name *John* signifies “the gift or mercy of the Lord.” He was the son of Zacharias, the aged priest, and Elizabeth, and was born about six months before Christ. (See Luke i. 5–25, 57–80.) Some maintain that John was called *the Baptist*, or baptizer, to distinguish him from John the Evangelist; others, because he admitted the Jews into the number of his disciples by the external rite of baptism; others still, because he was the *first* baptizer. *Preaching*, i. e., proclaiming, or heralding, in a loud voice. *In the wilderness of Judea*, so called because it commenced in the territory of Judea. From Tekoah, six miles

south of Bethlehem, it extended to the east as far as the Persian Gulf, and very far to the northward along the river Euphrates. The term “wilderness,” in Scripture, is applied to a district which was not regularly cultivated and inhabited, but was used for pasturage. It is God's prerogative to send forth the preachers of the Gospel when, where, and to what people He pleases, and none must refuse to go where he is directed.

². And saying, repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.—Dan. ii. 44; chap. iv. 17, and x. 7.

The Jews had at this time become exceedingly wicked. This is the testimony of their own historian, Josephus. John, therefore, as it had been predicted he should (Mal. iv. 5, 6), called upon them to *repent*. This word signifies that true reformation of heart and life which would be adapted to the design of the Saviour's coming, and be a suitable preparation for it. Though John did not say, “Repent and believe the Gospel,” which our Saviour did (chap. iv. 17), yet he preached the Gospel (Mark i. 2; John i. 7), for his office, chiefly, was to make Christ known, who, when He should come, was to be the great preacher of the Gospel. A state of penitence is but a preparatory state, from which we must pass into a higher. We must, by faith, “Behold the Lamb of God.” True repentance is a change of mind and heart. A man who really repents feels grieved because he has offended God, and he longs and strives to serve Him better in time to come. *For the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* This sublime phrase, used in none of the other Gospels, but occurring in this peculiarly Jewish Gospel nearly thirty times, was fitted at once both to meet the national expectations and to turn them into the right channel. A kingdom for which *repentance* was the proper preparation,

belooved to be essentially *spiritual*. The phrase indicated the commencement of the Messianic or Gospel dispensation. As Christ is the King, so His Gospel is a law, and His dispensation is a kingdom. This kingdom was then *at hand*, the king was about to appear, to collect followers, finish His work, ascend His throne, abrogate the legal dispensation, terminate the national covenant of Israel, admit the Gentiles into the Church, and introduce the dispensation of Christianity.

3. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*"

^aIsa. xl. 3; Mark i. 3; Luke iii. 4; John i. 33. ^cLuke i. 76.

Esaias, the Greek method of expressing the name of *Isaiah*. *For this is he*, &c. The quotation, which is from Isa. xl. 3, is made by the Evangelist, and not by the Baptist. In its primary historical application the passage contains a summons to prepare the way of Jehovah, who was about to bring back His people from exile. The application of it by the Evangelist shows that, in his mind, the advent of Christ was that of Jehovah Himself, and the true deliverance of God's children from bondage. John was a *voice*, that conveys the mind of the speaker, and then vanishes: he declared the mind of God concerning His Son, and then ended his ministry. The preacher is only the voice of Jesus Christ, as it were, a voice not to be seen, but only to be heard. *Prepare ye the way*, &c., an allusion to the practice of eastern monarchs, who, whenever they entered upon an expedition, sent harbingers before them, to call upon the people, along the proposed route, to prepare the way before them, open the passes, level the ways, and remove all impediments. The way of the Lord is prepared, and His paths made straight, when everything is removed out of the minds of men that opposes itself to the admission of Divine truth, such as prejudice, blindness, pride, obstinacy, self-conceit, vanity, worldliness, sensuality, and vain philosophy.

4. And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

^aMark i. 6. ^c2 Kings i. 8; Zech. xiii. 4. ^bLev. xi. 22. ^d1 Sam. xiv. 25, 26.

The same John—a remarkable personal

description. *Raiment of camel's hair*, a coarse kind of cloth, wrought of the long and stiff bristles of the camel. Such a garment was worn by Elijah. (2 Kings i. 8. See also Zech. xiii. 4.) *Leathern girdle*, a strap of untanned hide, fastened round the body with clasps. Elijah also wore such a girdle. (2 Kings i. 8.) A girdle was an important part of dress in the east, to remedy the inconvenience from the loose nature of the principal garments worn. *His meat*, &c. Locusts prevail in Arabia, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Persia. "Their numbers are so incredible that rivers have been blocked and many square miles covered by them, the stench of their decaying bodies infecting the air for hundreds of miles." Armies have been stopped in their course by locusts. Arabs say that it is written "in good Arabic on their wings that they are God's avengers." It was formerly asserted by some that the locusts which John ate were not insects, but the long, sweet pods of the locust tree, "*St. John's Bread.*" But the Mosaic law (Lev. 11. 22) permitted locusts as an article of food. They are used for food at the present time, "the legs and wings being pulled off, the bodies fried in oil, and are considered a delicacy; they are sometimes dried in the sun, pounded up, and used as a flour for making bread. In many towns in Arabia there are shops where locusts are sold by measure." John's drink is known from Luke i. 15. *Wild honey*, most probably the honey deposited by bees in the clefts of rocks and in the hollow of trees. (See Ps. lxxxi. 18; Deut. xxxii. 13; Judg. xiv. 8; 1 Sam. xiv. 25-27.) The mortified spirit and conduct of John were peculiarly suited to that severe ministry of the law, and work of humbling reformation, by which he was to prepare the Jews for receiving the expected Messiah. An exterior garb of poverty may be consistent with rare excellence in the sight of God. Ministers of the Gospel are not to affect gaiety in apparel, or delicacy in diet; but having the necessary comforts and conveniences of life, to be therewith content.

5. ^aThen went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan,

^bMark i. 5; Luke iii. 7.

Never was preacher, for the time, more

successful than was John. At his voice from the wilderness the heart of the whole nation was stirred. The news of his appearing, preaching, and baptism, spread quickly through the land, and from every quarter—from the metropolitan centre to the extremities of the Jordan province, the cry of this great preacher of repentance and herald of the approaching Messiah brought trooping penitents and eager expectants of all ranks and sects.

6. ¹And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.—¹Acts xix. 4, 18.

John baptized all his disciples, whether they were Jews or Gentiles, who had been baptized as proselytes to the religion of the Jews, and without distinction of previous character. *Jordan*, the chief river of Palestine, running from north to south, and dividing the Holy Land into two parts, of which the larger and more important lay on the west. *Confessing their sins*. Not that every one confessed his individual sins, but that they confessed publicly and fully their guilt before God. The confession seems to have been similar to those recorded in Ezra ix, Nehemiah ix, and Daniel ix. There is no doubt that John preached faith in the coming Messiah, as revealed in prophecy (see v. 11), yet the prerequisite for this baptism was the confession of sin and its renunciation. His doctrine of repentance was not that which terminates in mere emotion and external humiliation, it was spiritual and humbling. His baptism, which, like his ministry, was a transition-process, or connecting link between the Old and New Dispensations, was an appropriation and concentration into a single rite of all the lustrations and washings of the Old Testament dispensation, and thereby became the emblem of the Holy Spirit; of regeneration.

7. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, ¹O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

¹Chap. xii. 34, xxiii. 33: Lev. iii. 7, 8, 9. ²Rom. v. 9; 1 Thes. i. 10.

The *Pharisees* were the most celebrated of all the Jewish sects. As a class their religious profession was vain and hollow, and many of them indulged themselves in cruelty, dishonesty and oppression, though, on the other hand, there appear to have

been among them individuals of probity, and even of genuine piety. The *Sadducees*. This sect took its rise about two or three hundred years before the birth of Christ. It derived its name from Zadok, or Sadoc, a disciple of Antigonus. It is very strange that the Sadducees presented themselves also as candidates for baptism; they did so, undoubtedly, in order to increase their popularity. Josephus says that they often followed the principles of the Pharisees against their own convictions, in order to rival them in popularity. *Generation of vipers*. The Baptist did not preach elegant sermons, to please his hearers; he spoke plainly, faithfully. This phrase denotes persons at once deceitful and malicious. (Isa. xiv. 29, lix. 5; Ps. lviii. 5; see on Luke iii. 7.) The expression would convey to an Israelite the idea of representatives of pernicious doctrines and principles. To treat a sinner harshly in order to humble him is not to insult him. *Who hath warned you*—"given you the hint," as the idea is—to flee from the wrath to come? This refers to God's punitive justice, His righteous displeasure against sin. (Rom. i. 8; Eph. ii. 3.) This wrath is called *coming* wrath, for, though as a merited sentence it lies on the sinner already, not until the judgment of the great day will he experience its effects without mixture and without hope. (See 1 Thes. i. 10.) These were stern words to address to "the most straitest sect" of the Jewish religion (Acts xxvi. 5), but our Saviour employed terms of even greater severity toward them. (Chap. xxiii. 13-33.) Doubtless among their number were some sincere persons, but, as a body, they must have been proud, uncharitable and self-righteous, of a character wholly unlike that which God approves.

8. Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance:

Dangerous as was their condition, yet was it not desperate; hence, after the sharp reproof given, this seasonable exhortation was added. *Fruits*—implying abundance—*meet for repentance*—suitable, proper, consistent with repentance. A profession of repentance, unless accompanied by a reformation of life, is utterly valueless. (Chap. vii. 20.) God requires of us real works, and such as are (in some measure) proportioned to our sins. (See

Acts xxvi. 20.) Paul was far enough from teaching that works are a ground of justification. But John, standing in the twilight of Christianity, and Paul, standing in the light of its full-orbed splendor, alike taught the necessity of evincing the genuineness of our repentance by bringing forth the fruits of holiness.

9. And think not to say within yourselves, "We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

John viii. 33, 39; Acts xiii. 26; Rom. iv. 1, 4, 6.

"Do not comfort yourselves by saying to one another, and in your hearts, that your descent from Abraham will excuse you from the duty of repentance, for God is able, if necessary, *out of these stones* (pointing probably to the stones of the Jordan), the most unlikely material, to create a people like to Abraham in faith and obedience." (Comp. Rom. iv. 9, 6, 7; Gal. iv.; John viii. 39, 40.) The piety of our ancestors, or of our relatives, will not avail for our salvation. Men, and especially the self-righteous, rake together every pretext to claim God as theirs, without repentance. Ministers of Christ should endeavor to drive hypocrites and self-deceived persons from their vain confidence.

10. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.

Chap. vii. 19; Luke xiii. 7, 9; John xv. 6.

The axe is laid, &c. (See on Luke iii. 9.) The excision hinted at in the preceding verse, which was to cut off the rebellious Jews from the promises and privileges granted to the true seed of Abraham, is here represented as about to take place. The representation is that of a woodman, who, before he begins to fell a tree, lays the sharp edge of his axe to the place where he means to give his first blow, giving warning, as it were, that he is about to strike. *The axe* is here a figure for Divine judgment. *At the root*, expressing utter destruction. It was not to be a simply organic destruction, but individual also. *Therefore*—an inference from what precedes. *Every tree*—every impenitent individual. The punishment will equally descend on all. *Which bringeth not forth good fruit*—that is, right or acceptable to God, and salutary, useful to the doer and to others. The sin here specified is the sin of *omission*. The neglects of duty are

as dangerous and destructive as the positive acts of sin. *Is hewn down*, means strictly *cut out*, and is so translated in Rom. ii. 24. It here denotes the complete excision of the tree. *And cast into the fire*—a description of the element made use of to consume the tree, and representing, as a figure, the wrath of God, already mentioned in v. 7, or its ruinous effect upon the unforgiven sinner. (Comp. chap. xxv. 46; Heb. vi. 8, xii. 29.) It is not unsuitable for ministers of the Gospel to press repentance and holiness of life upon their hearers from arguments of terror.

11. "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

Mark i. 8; Luke iii. 16; John i. 15, 26, 33; Acts i. 5, and xi. 16, and xix. 24. *Isa.* iv. 4, and xlv. 3; *Mal.* iii. 2; Acts ii. 2, 3, 4; 1 Cor. xii. 13.

John depreciates not so much his baptism as himself. He teaches that his was a symbolical and temporary mission as the forerunner, to prepare for the higher mission of the Messiah. (See on Luke iii. 16.) *Unto repentance, i. e.*, as a solemn ratifying profession of having exercised repentance, and of the obligation to repentance. *He that cometh after me*, immediately following me: this expression would be understood as referring to the Messiah. *Is mightier than I*, more exalted in all that pertains to personal worth or official dignity, authority and power. *Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear*. To unloose a person's sandals and carry them after him was considered by the Jews, Greeks, and Romans, the most servile and degrading of all menial employments; yet John regarded the performance of this service for Christ as an honor of which he was utterly unworthy. The coming One was the King; he himself was nothing more than a servant. Two things are evident: 1. John did not seek for honor, emolument, or fame, nor was he ambitious of being at the head of a sect. 2. He must have considered Christ as the Lord God who was to come as a shepherd with a strong hand, whose reward was with Him and His work before Him. On no other supposition can we rationally account for the manner in which he here speaks of Christ.

He shall baptize you—abundantly impart (Titus iii. 6; Acts ii. 3, 4, 17, and x. 44), and

shall thereby show Himself the *mightier*. With the *Holy Ghost*, with the effusions of the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. xii. 13.) The term *Holy Spirit* is preferable to the term *Holy Ghost*, as the word *ghost* is attended with unpleasant associations in many minds. And with *fire*. The word "with" is not in the original. The reference is to the fiery character of the Spirit's operations upon the souls of our Lord's disciples—searching, dross-consuming, cleansing, refining, sublimating. The descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, in the form of fiery tongues lighting on the Apostles, with the effects produced on their minds and by their ministry, was a remarkable fulfillment of this prediction. We need to be sent direct to Christ. We must not rest in our union with the church, regular use of the sacraments, or diligent attendance on the preached Word. Forgiveness of sin is not the only thing necessary to salvation; we need also the baptizing of our hearts by the Holy Spirit. There must not only be the work of Christ *for* us, but the work of the Holy Spirit *in* us.

12. *Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

*Mal. iii. 3. *Mal. iv. 1; chap. xiii. 30.

The same truth is here enforced as in v. 10, though in another aspect. (See on Luke iii. 17.) The fruitless tree among fruitful ones is recognized at once, and the distinction easily perceived. Not so with the confused heap of grain and chaff which lies together on the farmer's thrashing-floor. But though the converted and unconverted are mingled in the visible church, sinners will not be overlooked in the crowd, under the Messiah's discriminating and adjudging process. *Whose and his*, thrice used in this verse with emphasis, show the power of Christ. The fan was a winnowing shovel, with which the grain, as it came from the thrashing floor, was thrown up against the wind, in order that the chaff might be blown aside, and the wheat cleansed. *Fan*. The representations of the Scriptures (Isa. xxx. 24; Jer. iv. 11) relative to the ancient process of separating the chaff from the wheat have been strikingly confirmed by discoveries in Egypt. Monuments and tombs have revealed the entire process of plowing,

sowing, reaping, thrashing, and winnowing. The grain was tossed up in the wind with shovels or with fans—"their precise difference is very doubtful." By the *fan* is meant the Gospel. It is calculated to separate the good from the evil by the love to Christ which it excites, and the sacrifices it demands. It will separate the chaff from the wheat in the day of judgment, it being the law by which all shall be judged, and declared worthy or unworthy of admission into eternal life. (See John xii. 48; 2 Thess. i. 8-10.) (Is) *in his hand*, in readiness for use. *Thoroughly purge his floor*; not destroy, but cleanse, or clear off, his thrashing-floor, i. e., his visible Church. The thrashing-floor was in some elevated part of the field. It was of a circular form, thirty or forty paces in diameter, having the ground beaten down and leveled.

Gather, collect, or bring together, first from its dispersion at the harvest, and then from its mixture with the chaff and other refuse, at the thrashing. *His wheat*, that belonging to Him, which implies its value—true and penitent believers, the precious, pure produce of God's husbandry. *Into the garner*, literally, a place of laying by or up, a granary, or store-house, called, in chap. xiii. 30, 43, "the kingdom of their Father." The granaries of the East are often excavations in the earth in which the grain is buried, frequently for the sake of concealment, either from an enemy or an oppressive government. *Chaff*—this is held of no account, though sometimes not unlike wheat. *Burn up with unquenchable fire*—an eternal fire. Singular is the strength of this apparent contradiction of figures: to be *burnt up*, with a *fire that is unquenchable*, the one expressing the utter destruction of all that constitutes one's true life; the other, the *continued consciousness of existence* in that awful condition. The words *unquenchable fire* are absolutely inconsistent with all the views of the restoration of the wicked, and however the phrase of being *consumed like chaff* might seem to favor the doctrine of their *annihilation*, the epithet of *unquenchable* given to this *fire*, or more exactly *unquenched*, i. e., never quenched or put out, is so far from proving this doctrine that it

cannot, by any easy and just interpretation, be reconciled with it. (See Mark i. 7, 8; ix. 43, 45; Luke, iii. 9, 16, 17.) We need to be reminded that there is a hell as well as a heaven, and a final separation coming. We are fearfully apt to forget this. We talk of the love and mercy of God, and we do not remember sufficiently His justice and holiness. Terrible, but inevitable separation!

13. ¶ "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him."
 Mark i. 9; Luke iii. 21. Chap. ii. 22.

Then cometh Jesus, &c. (See on Luke iii. 21.) The baptism of Christ was His first step, when He entered on His public ministry. The precise spot on the banks of the Jordan where John was now occupied is not stated. Jesus comes to His servant—the greater comes meekly to the less. His design, no doubt, was to put honor upon the ministry of John. *To be baptized of him.* Being free from sin, Jesus could not repent, and He needed no forgiveness, regeneration or newness of life, yet, as He took upon Him our nature, and was made sin for us, being made in the likeness of sinful flesh, He condescended to observe all the rites and ceremonies imposed by the law upon those whom He came to redeem; besides, as He was now to be inaugurated to His priestly office, He received the rite of baptism as a solemn introduction to His most sacred work and offices, of which John's testimony, the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the voice from heaven, were so many notifications. (See Ex. xxix. 1-37.) Jesus clothes Himself with us and our sins, that He may clothe us with Himself and His righteousness.

14. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

How holy and lovely is that contest which arises, on either side, from nothing but humility! Though John had probably seen Jesus but little, yet often enough, as His life could not have been altogether retired, to have awakened within him the presentiment which now deepened to conviction, that He was the Messiah. As John saw Him approaching, in all gentleness and humility, to the baptism of repentance, he saw shining through this

deep humility the high majesty of the Holy One; and that he had an inward token or discernment of this, constituted his own dignity. The Baptist's reason, then, for seeking to dissuade Christ from receiving baptism was three-fold: 1. He knew that He needed it not, as he had a prophetic or Divine certitude concerning the Messiahship of Jesus. 2. He had a deep consciousness of his own unworthiness, and that of any mortal man, to administer this ordinance to the Saviour. 3. He feared that the people, seeing Christ baptized, should apprehend Him to be a sinner, needing the baptism of repentance as well as themselves.

15. And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

Suffer it to be so now. Gently the Baptist declines; gently the Saviour insists. He could command; He only requests. *Thus it becometh us, &c.* It was God's will that *all men* should be baptized, and therefore it was necessary that Jesus, when He was a man, should be baptized, for He came to do *all* God's commands, that by *His* obedience many might be made righteous. (See Notes on v. 13.) In acts of deepest humility the Son of God watches over the right of His own majesty. (John xiii. 7, &c., xiv. 30, xviii. 5, xx. 36.) The Saviour followed the custom of the priests at their induction to their office. (Ex. xxix. 4.) He is an example of ready obedience to the Divine will. "Whatever," says an eminent scholar, "may be the full depth of meaning in this language of our Lord, so much as this at least we are to understand by it, that had He omitted this act of obedience, He would have left incomplete that perfect righteousness which in our nature He has wrought out. If aught that it became Him to fulfill had been left unfulfilled, something essential would have been wanting." *Then he suffered him*—with true humility, yielding to higher authority than his own impressions of propriety. We should cherish an humble reverence for Divine ordinances, looking on them as *God's*. "What," says one, "though he that teaches be less knowing and less spiritual than thou that hearest? one, that might rather learn of *thee*? Yet the appointment of God obliges thee to

attend to His ministry as humbly, and with as much regard, as if He were an angel."

16. *And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.

*Mark i. 10. *Isa. xl. 2, and xlii. 1; Luke iii. 22; John, i. 32, 33.

Straightway—immediately. *Out of the water.* Rev. Dr. Whedon, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, says: "*How* He was baptized is not said. His coming out of the water aids us not in guessing how, for the preposition properly signifies *from*. Nor, if Jesus waded into and out of the water, would it in the least aid the matter. Thousands in ancient and modern times have been baptized by affusion, as they are represented in ancient pictures, standing or kneeling in the bed of a stream. But, at any rate, the mode of this baptism was such as to make it the symbol and picture of the spiritual baptism which forthwith descended upon Him in dove-like form." Rev. J. J. Owen, D. D., of the Presbyterian Church, remarks: "*Out of the water*, more literally, *away from the water*, i. e., from the margin or bank, on which He stood while receiving the rite, for had the idea *out of the water* been intended, the preposition *ek*, instead of *apo*, would have been used. Much less admissible is the notion that complete immersion is here implied, for what necessity in that case for the word *immediately*, as though the person baptized either could or would desire to remain under or in water any length of time." On the contrary, the Rev. Henry J. Ripley, of the Baptist Church, observes: "The preposition here translated *out of* has the more general signification of the word *from*, and would be suitable, whether the sacred writer meant to say that Jesus came *out from* the water, that is, from within the river to the shore; or, that he came *from* the water, that is, retired from the bank of the river to another place. This preposition, then, in itself furnishes no decision in respect to the manner of the ordinance. But that the rendering *out of* is correct, appears from the facts, that persons to be baptized went to a *river*; that the proper meaning of the word *baptize* is to *immerse*; and that in Acts viii. 39 the preposition translated *out of* is, in the original, the very one which would be selected to ex-

press the coming up *out of the water*, after a person had been baptized. In the case of Jesus, as in the instance recorded in Acts viii. 39, it was after He had been baptized that He came up out of, or from, the water."

We cannot but think that on all sides too much importance is attached to the mere *mode* of baptism. If it was essential to the validity of the ordinance, would it not have been more distinctly revealed? At all events, the diversity of opinion in regard to it is not likely soon to cease.

And lo! a strange and great event. *The heavens were opened unto him*, i. e., *cloven or rent*. This cannot possibly denote a flash of lightning, or the shining of the stars, or a sudden clearing of the sky, or anything whatever but an apparent separation or division of the visible expanse, as if to afford passage to the form and voice which are mentioned in the next verse. He that had by His power parted the waters, to make a way through them to Canaan, now by His power parted the air, to open a correspondence with the heavenly Canaan. Thus was it shown that heaven, which was closed and shut against us for our sins, is now opened unto us by Christ's undertaking for us. Compare the similar expressions of Isaiah lxiv. 1; Ezek. i. 1; John i. 52; Acts vii. 56. In all these cases the essential idea suggested by the version is that of renewed communication and extraordinary gifts from heaven to earth.

And he saw; Jesus. (Mark i. 10.) John, also. (John i. 32.) Probably others who were present participated in the vision. The conjunction of the voice (which those present doubtless heard) and the appearance, seems, indeed, to indicate that both were intended to be witnessed by all present. *The Spirit of God descending like a dove.* A visible form is evidently intended. "In a bodily shape like a dove" (Luke iii. 22); that is, the Spirit invested itself with a dove form. Here we have a striking illustration of the Incarnation. As the Holy Spirit, the third person in the Trinity, assumes the bodily form of a dove by way of self-manifestation to the eye of men, what difficulty is there in supposing that the second person of the Trinity should become God manifest in the flesh in a human form? The Spirit descended upon

Christ as the promised gift of His great office. (Isa. lxi. 1.) The form of a dove may have been assumed because that bird is the emblem of meekness, gentleness, innocence, attributes which were so conspicuous in our Divine Master. This form would also indicate the spirit of Christ's ministry, and, as the dove, with an olive branch, flew to the ark, showing the waters of the flood to have abated, so this was the symbolical testimony of the Father, and the Spirit, at His baptism, which agreed with the angels' song at His birth, *Peace on earth*, &c. Some suppose that in the selection of this form there was a reference to the dove's hovering and brooding motion, used in Gen. i. 2, according to an ancient Jewish exposition, to describe the generative or productive agency of the Divine Spirit in the first creation. Others suppose there was a reference to the sacrificial use of this bird, as prescribed or permitted by the ritual in certain cases. (Gen. xv. 9; Lev. xiv. 22; xxi. 6; Luke ii. 24.) *And lighting upon Him.* It is said in John i. 32, "abode upon Him." We must not suppose that our Lord at this particular time first received the grace of the Holy Ghost—the Spirit dwelt in Jesus "without measure" from the very time of His Incarnation.

17. *And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

³John xii. 28. ⁴Ps. ii. 7; Isa. xlii. 1; chap. xii. 8, xvii. 5; Matt. i. 22; Luke ix. 35; Eph. i. 6; Col. i. 13; 2 Peter i. 17.

A voice from heaven, not visionary or imaginary, but a literal and real sound, corresponding to the bodily appearance by which it was preceded. We read of no voice from heaven before this, except at the giving of the law on Sinai. *This is my beloved Son.* We have here—1. *The nearness of Christ's relation.* He is the Father's Son, in respect of His eternal generation, in respect of His miraculous conception, and by particular designation to hold the office of mediator. The words *My Son* are applied to the Messiah in the promise made to David (2 Sam. vii. 14), and in his own prophetic Psalm, founded on it. (Ps. ii. 7.) Hence the *Son of God* became one of His standing designations. (Matt. iv. 3, 6, viii. 29, xiv. 33, xxvi. 63, xxvii. 40, 54.) The filial relation thus ascribed to the Messiah, far from excluding, presupposes His eternal Sonship. 2. *The endearedness of Christ's person*—"be-

loved Son." Jesus is elsewhere called "God's dear Son." The Divine love here affirmed is not to be deemed as the ground or cause, but the effect or co-eternal adjunct of the Sonship here ascribed to Christ. The Father loves the Son on account of that independent, absolute perfection of which both are equally possessed, and He loves Him on the ground of that most intimate relation which subsists between them, as in some way distinct, though in essence one, and of which the relation of sonship is the fittest analogy to be found among men. *Dr. Alexander*, in reference to this clause, and that immediately preceding it, says: "There is no tautology in these two clauses, but the first describes our Lord as the beloved Son of God from all eternity, the second as the object of His infinite complacency and approbation as the Son of man, the Mediator, the Messiah. In this voluntarily-assumed or adopted character the Son of God was recognized and set forth at His baptism." (Isa. xlii. 1.) The preposition "in" indicates especially the object of the Father's good pleasure, and all persons and all things in the Son. The verb meaning to be *well pleased* is employed when one is pleased by what he or another has or does. The Father here proclaims that He accepts Christ as the mediator between God and man. There is a rich mine of comfort in these words for all Christ's believing people. In themselves, and in their own doings, they see nothing to please God. They are daily sensible of weakness, shortcoming and imperfection in their ways. But let them recollect that the Father regards them as members of His beloved Son Jesus Christ. They are clothed in Christ's righteousness, and invested with his merit. They are, as our persons and services only can be, "accepted in the Beloved." In the baptism of our Lord the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is demonstrated. *Three distinct persons* are here represented: God the Holy Ghost "in a bodily shape like a dove," God the Son ascending from the waters of Jordan, and God the Father, "whom no man hath seen or can see," manifesting Himself by the voice from heaven—the three Persons but one God of the Christian Trinity, co-essential, co-equal, co-eternal.

1. What "days" are meant? 2. What is said of John the Baptist? 3. What of the wilderness of Judea? 4. What did John preach? 5. What is repentance? 6. What is said of "the kingdom of heaven?" 7. Which prophecy is referred to in verse 3? Explain it. 8. Describe John's raiment and food. Was he successful as a preacher? 9. What was the prerequisite for his baptism? 10. What *was* John's baptism? 11. What did he say to the Pharisees? 12. What was the wrath to come? 13. Explain "the wrath to come." 14. What are the fruits mentioned in verse 8? 15. Explain the caution in verse 9. 16. What representation is made in verse 10? 17. What testimony does John bear to Christ? 18. What is meant by being baptized with the Holy Ghost? 19. What is meant by the "fan" in Christ's hand? 20. Explain "wheat" and "chaff;" also "unquenchable fire." 21. What did Jesus come to John for? 22. Why did John forbid Him to be baptized? 23. What is the import of Christ's answer? 24. What followed the baptism of Christ? 25. What is said of the Spirit? 26. What of the voice? 27. Explain "My beloved Son," &c.

CHAPTER IV.

¹ Christ fasteth, and is tempted. ¹¹ The angels minister unto him. ¹³ He dwelleth in Capernaum, ¹⁷ beginneth to preach, ¹⁸ calleth Peter, and Andrew, ²¹ James, and John, ²³ and healeth all the diseased.

THEN was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

^aMark i. 12, &c.; Luke iv. 1, &c. ^bSee 1 Kings xviii. 12; Ez. iii. 14, viii. 3, and xi. 1, 24, and xl. 2 and xlii. 5; Acts viii. 39.

The deeply mysterious passage of our Lord's history, with which this chapter commences, is like the mystery of His holy incarnation, far beyond our understanding. It is full of truths only partially revealed, and can never be understood by us more than in part. Still, although like many other parts of Scripture, it draws the veil where the eye of a vain curiosity would pry too far, it leaves all that open to our contemplation from which useful lessons of admonition and comfort may be drawn, and the spiritual profit to be derived from it will be in proportion to the child-like, humble, teachable spirit with which it is approached and regarded. The manifestation of the Son of God in the flesh being the wonder of all wonders, it was to be looked for that this should be surrounded by a group of secondary wonders in His life. What would indeed be startling and perplexing would be the absence of every thing supernatural from such a life—the fact that He whose name is "wonderful" (Isa. ix. 6) should never, either by what He did, or what was done in respect of Him, have testified that there was any difference between Himself and the other children of men. (See Heb. iv. 15, and ii. 18.)

Then. This word not merely designates succession of time; it denotes rather the Divine order in which the events of the

Saviour's life followed one another "Then," immediately after our Lord's baptism (Mark i. 12), as if to remind us that this life is from the very first a scene of trial, and to teach us that we may expect to be assailed by Satan when we have received the greatest enlargements from heaven, either at the sacrament or in prayer, or in any other way. "Then," immediately before He entered on His public ministry, thus showing that Satan desired to suppress the Gospel in the beginning, and that we may expect to be assailed by him when we purpose honoring God in any particular undertaking or course, and are nearest the performance. *Led up of the Spirit*, undoubtedly the Spirit of God. (See Rom. i. 4; Heb. ix. 14.) The Spirit *impelled* Jesus to go where inclination would not have induced Him; but, at the same time, He was led up of His own free will. As to tempting, in the sense of alluring to sin, God is incapable of it. (James i. 13.) In the sense, however, of trying and displaying character, He, as the judge of the earth, is and must be, whilst this life of probation lasts, pledged to continue the application of the probe and the crucible to human character. So he tried Abraham's faith by asking the sacrifice of Isaac; and Israel in the wilderness, to prove them, and to know what was in their hearts. We should not court danger. Let us do all we can in order that the trial may be spared us, and if this cannot be, then we shall meet it with the freedom which springs from a good conscience, and with the strength which accompanies humility, under the sustaining assurance that the devil can never tempt us but by the leave of our Heavenly

Father, and never beyond the extent which He permits. (See Job ii.)

Into the Wilderness. Tradition finds this wilderness in the desolate region east of Jerusalem, overlooking the valley of the Jordan. The mountain which the same tradition makes the immediate scene of the "temptation" that ensued, is from this tradition called *Quarantania*. A modern traveler thus describes the scene on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho: "After pursuing our way for an hour or two down the rugged ravine which forms the road, we turned to the left, and ascended into the desolate and blackened mountains of the 'Wilderness of Judea,' the scene of John the Baptist's ministration and of our Lord's temptation. Of all places in the world, it is naturally fittest for the centre and kingdom of Satan the destroyer; for, as Maundrell says, 'it is a most miserable, dry, barren place, consisting of high, rocky mountains, so torn and disordered as if the earth had suffered some great convulsion, in which its very bowels had been turned outward.' This fearful wilderness, not ten miles east of Jerusalem, has always been the abode of violence and misery. The very road on which we passed was the scene of our Lord's parable of the Good Samaritan. About half way between Jerusalem and Jericho we passed the crumbling walls of a large khan, with immense cisterns. Following the rugged road, often through avenues cut in the rock, we came, by two o'clock, to the eastern edge of the wilderness which overlooks the plain of Jericho, clad in deep green verdure, caused by the fertilizing streams of the Fountain of Elisha. Beyond it deep in the valley, and as yet invisible, flowed the Jordan, while the view beyond was closed by the dark masses of the mountains of Moab, inviting the eye of the pilgrim to select *Nebo* and *Pisgah*. I paused on the brow of the mountain, near the well-preserved remains of a Roman aqueduct, which once supplied water to the city of Jericho, and gazed upon this wide and gloomy panorama encircling the rich green plain which lay spread out far away below me. Immediately around was the dreary wilderness already described; to the right, in their deep, sunken bed, lay

the still waters of the Dead Sea; far to the left, the mountains of the wilderness projected into the Jordan, and closed the plain to the north. In that direction, just above the Fountain of Elisha, rose above the rest the dark, thunder-scathed head of Mount *Quarantania*, which tradition assigns as an 'exceeding high mountain,' from which Satan showed our Lord 'all the kingdoms of this world.' Its summit seems inaccessible, yet a little chapel is perched upon it, and its side next the Jordan is cut into caverns and chambers, in which we saw at night the flitting taper of the hermit, or of the pilgrim doing penance during Lent."

Notice the evident relation, partly of coincidence and partly of contrast, between the temptation of the first Adam and that of the second, one of which is placed at the beginning of the Old Testament, and the other at the opening of the New. Adam was tempted in Eden ("a place of delights"), Jesus, in the wilderness. Adam, amidst the abundance of all things; Jesus, in want and in hunger. Adam, through the senses, and by the allurements of self-exaltation, and covetousness of gifts which he did not possess. Christ, to satisfy His hunger by a miracle, to display His Divine nature, by suspending the laws which govern our state, to which He had made Himself subject, and to forsake His Father for the offer of earthly greatness. Adam was tempted once and fell. Jesus was tempted three times, we should rather say, for forty days, and He resisted. We may be tempted in all places. We may escape the company of our fellow-men, but how will we escape Satan, and our own heart? Solitude is, perhaps, the fittest scene for temptation.

To be tempted of the devil—the diabolus or accuser. (Job i.; Rev. xii. 10.) The allusions to his fall from a state of purity are numerous and pointed. (See John viii. 44; Jude 6; 2 Peter ii. 4.) In the Old Testament he is called *Satan*. (Job i. 6-12.) The devil is not "a symbolical person," or "the principle of evil personified," but a being, active; and malicious being. He is called by personal names, such as "Belial," "tempter," "adversary," "deceiver," "liar," &c. We have no more

right to reduce Satan to figure than we have Christ, nay, God Himself. If there are good bodiless spirits, there may be bad. It is no more contrary to the nature of God's government that there should be a Satan than that there should be a Nimrod, a Nero, a Tamerlane, or a Mohammed. The primary signification of the word "tempt," is to *make trial of* one, to *test* his principles; the secondary sense, to *tempt* one to commit sin. Christ was God, and at the same time as truly man, of a human body and a reasonable soul. These two natures, profoundly mysterious though it be to us, were joined in the unity of one person, and constituted the one Christ. But the natures of Christ are not to be confounded; they are distinct, though His person is one. The attack of the devil was made upon the human soul, upon Christ in His character of Messiah, or the "servant" of God, an office which He designed to assume. That Jesus was not tempted by any inward temptation, by any, even the remotest solicitation or tendency to evil from the inner man, is evident from His own declaration (John xiv. 30), and from the facts that He had just been pronounced "full of the Holy Ghost" (Luke iv. 1), as well as that it is said (Heb. iv. 15), that He "was in all points tempted like as we are, *yet without sin*," which could not have been, if there had been anything in Him which more or less responded to the suggestions of the tempter, inasmuch as sin moves in the region of desires quite as really as in that of external acts. At the same time we are to believe that Jesus was truly and really tempted. Such things were presented to Him as were adapted to induce Him to sin, and as in any other case might have captivated the mind, and eternally ruined the soul of the tempted. This much is certain, that "He suffered being tempted." (Heb. ii. 18.) He had, by a mystery we cannot penetrate, all the pain of a struggle to undergo, and it was by obedience in the face of difficulty, by a high and sustained exercise of principle in the face of allurements, and by the force of dutiful sentiment rising superior to all that the tempter and the world could muster up to oppose it, that He achieved

His glorious victory. (See on Luke iv. 2.) Learn, 1. That it is no sin to be tempted. 2. That nothing can convert temptation into a sin but the consent of our own will. 3. That whilst temptation is the common lot of humanity, extraordinary temptations constitute the privilege of the best. (James, i. 12; iv. 7; 1 Pet. v. 9.)

2. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights he was an hungered.

Fasted, entirely abstained from food. (See Luke iv. 2.) *Forty days and forty nights*. This fasting was doubtless miraculous or superhuman. Of precisely the same length were the fasts of Moses (Deut. ix. 9) and Elijah (1 Kings xix. 8.) Moses was founder of a dispensation, Elijah was restorer, and Jesus was both founder and restorer. Some see a relation between the forty days of our Lord's temptation and the forty years of Israel's trial in the wilderness, His fast being as much a witness against their carnal appetites (for it was in the indulgence of these that they sinned continually—Ex. xv. 23, 24, xvi. 2, 3, xvii. 2, 3; Num. xi. 4, 33) as a witness against Adam's. There seems to have been something mystical in the number "forty," which we can not explain. (See Gen. vii. 4, 12; Num. xiv. 33; Deut. ix. 45, xxv. 3; Ezek. iv. 6, xxix. 11; Jonah iii. 4; 2 Cor. xi. 24.) Jesus passed forty days before He began His public ministry; forty days, as if for preparation, before His ascension; and from the time of His death to the final destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans was forty years. Fasts are evidently of Divine authority. (See Josh. vii. 6; Judg. xx. 26; Ex. xxiv. 18; 2 Sam. xii. 16; 1 Kings xix. 8; Matt. vi. 18, ix. 15; Acts xiii. 3; 1 Cor. vii. 5.) They are one of the outward means which may be profitably employed to humble and chasten the soul, and train it anew to the love and pursuit of holy and spiritual joys. How far or how long a person should abstain from food depends on circumstances. The great end to be kept in view is humiliation *for* sin, and abstinence *from* sin. *He was afterward an hungered*—the same as our modern word *hungry*. During the days of His fasting Jesus was doubtless in a state of ecstasy, or wholly absorbed by spiritual realities, so as to be insensible to hunger. The in-

stances of a Spinoza and a Newton show how powerful thought may suspend the demands of appetite. After such a fast hunger must necessarily have made itself felt with unexampled power, and the more so probably from the combat with the Prince of Darkness. Satan, who doubtless had been heedfully watching an opportunity to assail Jesus at disadvantage, sought to make the want of food the occasion of His sinning by the unlawful creation of food. When the people of God are sorely distressed, or when their children are dying, or when they know not how to provide them with food, or when they are disappointed or unkindly treated, then the malicious fiend insinuates hard thoughts of God into the mind.

3. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

Came to Him. The temptation evidently embraces two stages: the one continuing throughout the forty days' fast, the other (which embraces the temptations here enumerated), at the conclusion of that period. *He said*, having now probably a visible form, not terrifying, but as a friend, and perhaps as an "angel of light." (2 Cor. ii. 14.) *If thou be, &c.* Doubtless Satan was in some doubt about Christ's Divine Lordship; though he saw many concurrent proofs of it, yet he thought possibly it might be otherwise, and therefore tries. And as he expresses his own doubt, so he suggests the doubt to our Saviour. This language of Satan implies three things: 1. That if the Son of God had come He must be the expected Messiah; 2. that the Messiah could not be any lower personage than the Son of God himself; 3. that the greatest miracles might be expected to be wrought by Him. *Command, speak, in order that*—this effect is to be produced by a creative utterance; *these stones*, probably pointing to loaf-like stones on the ground before them, *be made*, changed into, *bread*. How artful the suggestion! There is no severer physical want than hunger (unless thirst be greater)—none that occasions severer pangs—none that more tempts to extreme resources for its gratification. In trouble, when our Heavenly Father seems to be giving us a stone instead of bread, the tempter suggests that by over-reaching, or equivocation, a

short measure, or an unjust balance, we turn the stone into bread. This temptation, and the two which follow, are compared by some to the three-fold bait presented to Eve (Gen. iii. 6), in which the fruit being good for *food*, appealed to the appetite, and being pleasant to the *eye*, pleased the sense of beauty; and being represented as being able to *make her as the Gods*, so awakened her ambition. Others see in them the three-fold description of unholy lusts by the Apostle. (1 John i. 16.) He who would selfishly seek to convert stone into bread will in reality convert bread into stone. Satan watches for the distress of man, to make it an occasion for transforming him into a beast of prey and a wicked spirit.

4. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.—Deut. viii. 3.

Had Christ yielded to Satan's proposition at this time, it would have been a positive non-compliance with the appointment of His Father, for His situation in the wilderness, distant from the supplies of food, was not of His own choosing—He was led by the Spirit into it. Besides, if He had done so, this would not only have impaired the perfection of His suffering obedience, but would have made it quite useless to us as an example, for we have not the miraculous power that He had ever in readiness to be exerted in the hour of calamity. It would have been a miracle, not in public, but in private, and not intended for convincing men, but for gratifying the great enemy of mankind. All our Lord's miracles were wrought for the benefit of others, not one for His own gratification. *And said.* How blessed an example of the infinite forbearance and self-denial, the meekness and wisdom of our Lord! He brings no railing accusation against the destroyer. *It is written.* No eulogium on Scripture could be more decided or impressive than this, that He who inspired it quotes it as the rule of His faith and life. Christ ever and again conquers by the Word of God: 1. By His first quotation over false doctrine; 2. By His second quotation over a false interpretation of Scripture; 3. By His third quotation over false and assumed authority. *Man shall not live, &c.* The text quoted is from Deut. viii. 3, and was

addressed by Moses to the Israelites, when reminding them that, though God had suffered them to hunger, He had fed them miraculously with manna, to show that He had other methods of sustaining man than by bread alone. The Word of God is more than bread; bread, which is the ordinary means, cannot keep us alive, when God chooses that we shall die; but God can keep us alive without bread, when He chooses that we shall live. (See John iv. 34.) Man needs aliment for his *soul* as well as the *body*, and that aliment is the Divine Word. Whether it be His instructive, consoling, or preceptive word, it is by that *every word* proceeding from the mouth of God that man's soul liveth. Every question of duty is settled by the authority of God, and from that there is no appeal. We should make ourselves well acquainted with our Bible—store our minds with its passages, for they constitute the material armor by which we wrestle with the enemies of our salvation. (Eph. vi. 11, &c; 2 Tim. iii. 19.)

5. Then the devil taketh him up ⁵into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, *Ne. xi. 1, 18; Isa. xlviii. 2 and to lii. 1; chap. xxvii. 53; Rev. x. 2.

This temptation is the third and last in Luke, who follows a doctrinal order. The true historical order is evidently here given. *Then*—with what marvelous skill the Tempter shifts the whole line of his assault! He had just urged the Lord to a distrust of His Father's love; now he urges Him to put that love to the proof in a way of his own choosing, and not of God's appointing. We are in danger of being tempted both to distrust and presumption. *Taketh him up*, doubtless by His own permission, but in a mysterious manner which is not revealed, but left for the exercise of a reverent curiosity. *Into the holy city*, Jerusalem, so-called, in spite of many a wickedness, as being the seat of the theocracy, the place where the temple was situated, and the public worship of God was performed. (Comp. Isa. xlviii. 2, lii. 1; Dan. ix. 24; Rev. xi. 2; Matt. v. 35.) *Setteth him*, literally, *made Him stand*, not by force, for such the devil cannot exercise, besides, he had not yet dropt the mask, and shown himself the evil one. *On a pinnacle of the temple*. The temple was

that immense building on the top of Mount Moriah, which had been rebuilt and adorned till it rivaled that of Solomon on the same site. The "pinnacle," or wing, as the word means, was probably Herod's royal gallery, overhanging the ravine of Kedron, at the valley of Hinnom, an immense tower, of about 700 feet, built on the very edge of this precipice, from the top of which, as any one looked, according to Josephus, "he would become dizzy, his eyes being unable to reach so vast a depth." Satan surrounds himself with holy things, conducts Jesus to the holy city and the holy temple, and encourages Him by the Holy Word of God to throw Himself fearlessly down. The evil one is perhaps *most* busy in the believer's closet, in the church, at the communion table. As in the material, so also in the spiritual world, high places are slippery places, where the head is in danger of becoming dizzy, and of betraying us into a fall.

6. And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written, *He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.—Ps. xci. 11, 12.

In the former temptation Satan would have Jesus doubt if He was the Son of God; in this temptation, he would remind Him of the doubts which the Jews entertained of His Lordship. "Now is your opportunity for scattering all their doubts: throw yourself boldly from this elevation, with a pomp of angels upholding and upbearing thee; and proclaim by this one act the strength of your faith, the completeness of your dependence, and the crowd of worshipers who throng the temple beneath will at once acknowledge thee as the Christ, and make its courts resound with hosannas, and bid thee welcome as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world."

The subtlety of Satan in this temptation is evident from the fact that he knew that our Lord's errand into this world was, that He might persuade sinners to believe in Him, and thus have life through His name, as well as because the temptation was an appeal to the very inmost and most powerful and pervading emotion of the heart of the Son of God, his love to the poor, perishing sinners of Jerusalem, over whom His compassionate soul yearned, as was

attested by the tears which He afterward shed over them. Many persons, says one, in looking down a precipice from a great height, as at Niagara Falls, are conscious of a bewilderment and a dazing in which they are tempted to throw themselves down the precipice. If this is a constitutional peculiarity of men, we see in the form of the second temptation the peculiar subtlety of "the serpent." What place is too sacred for Satan to enter? If the devil led Jesus to so holy a place as the house of God, is it surprising that he leads some professors of religion into the ball-room and the theatre? It is a precious truth that the devil has no power to injure till one shall have first "cast one's self down." He can persuade to the act, but he has no power himself to achieve it. *For it is written.* "What is this I see?" says an old writer, "Satan himself, with a Bible under his arm, and a text in his mouth."* As Jesus has repulsed him by the Word of God, he now turns that sword of the Spirit against his conqueror. The Old Testament has been quoted by Jesus, just now, by Gabriel (Luke i. 18), by God (1 Sam. ii. 30), and here, in solemn mimicry, by Satan. So that neither God, Christ, nor angels allow that slight regard for the Holy Book in which modern rationalism indulges. *He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, &c.* The quotation is from Ps. xci. 11. Though this Psalm is written not concerning the Son of God in particular, but the faithful generally, yet there was no misquoting it in applying the promise which it contains, as Satan now does, to Christ, since He is the Head of the faithful. There is a lie, however, now, in the application of the words of truth. One little clause is left out, which would have altered the whole character of the quotation, viz.: "to keep thee in all thy ways." That to which the Lord was now challenged was not "a way" appointed by His Heavenly Father for His treading, and in which as such He might be sure that He

would not stumble (John xi. 9, 10), but a precipice from which He would have wantonly chosen to fling Himself down, and the promise of being kept in *all his ways* no one has a right to take to himself who has exchanged his appointed ways for any such headlong precipices as that now suggested to the Lord. A garbled text of Scripture has often been made to support a false doctrine and sanction a wrong practice.

7. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."—Deut. vi. 16.

Our Lord again answers in the language of Scripture, from Deut. vi. 16. The word of the Law which He quotes contains no contradiction of the devil's quotation from the Psalm, but a rectification of the misuse which the evil one had made of it. *Tempt*, to demand further evidence of what is already made sufficiently plain. (Comp. Ex. xvii. 2, 7; Num. xiv. 22; Ps. lxxviii. 18, and cvi. 14.) If our Lord had cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple He would have demanded a needless miracle, publicly to prove Himself "the Son of God," and would have put Himself in expectation of our interposition for which He had no warrant, and thus would have "tempted the Lord." Making trial, by the sinner, of the patience and forbearance of God, is tempting Him; so is tampering with sin, in hope that grace will be given to resist it; so is going into evil company, making haste to be rich, and going out of Providence from a restless desire of change. We should have an enlarged acquaintance with the Bible, so as to be able to bring to bear against the enemy a special truth for each special temptation.

8. Again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

Again. Mark the perseverance of Satan: he is twice defeated, but will make a third effort. *Taketh him.* (See on v. 5, and Luke iv. 5.) *An exceeding high mountain.* It is impossible to say with *certainty what* mountain was the scene of this, the third temptation. (See notes on verse 1.) *And sheweth him, &c.* (See on Luke iv. 5.) It is not said our Lord really *beheld* the world's kingdoms, only that Satan *showed*, that is, *pointed them out*, for the word asserts nothing

*Compare Shakspeare, *Merchant of Venice*, Act 1, Scene 8, where Antonio says to Bassanio:

"The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.
An evil soul, producing holy witness;
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek;
A goodly apple rotten at the heart;
O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!"

more. Perhaps Judea and its tetrarchies are meant; they are sometimes termed "the kingdoms," as Judea is sometimes denominated "the world." Or the neighboring countries may have been presented to Jesus as a specimen of the world. Or some visionary representation may have been made to His mind to assist the mountain scene. *And the glory of them;* nature's beauty and art's magnificence, the pride of power, the *éclat* of riches, the splendor of luxury, the vanity of honors, the intoxication of pleasures, and all those earthly pomps which excite so violently man's desires, were crowded into that stupendous vision. (See Isa. xxxix. 2; Matt. vi. 29; Rev. xxi. 25, 26.)

9. And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

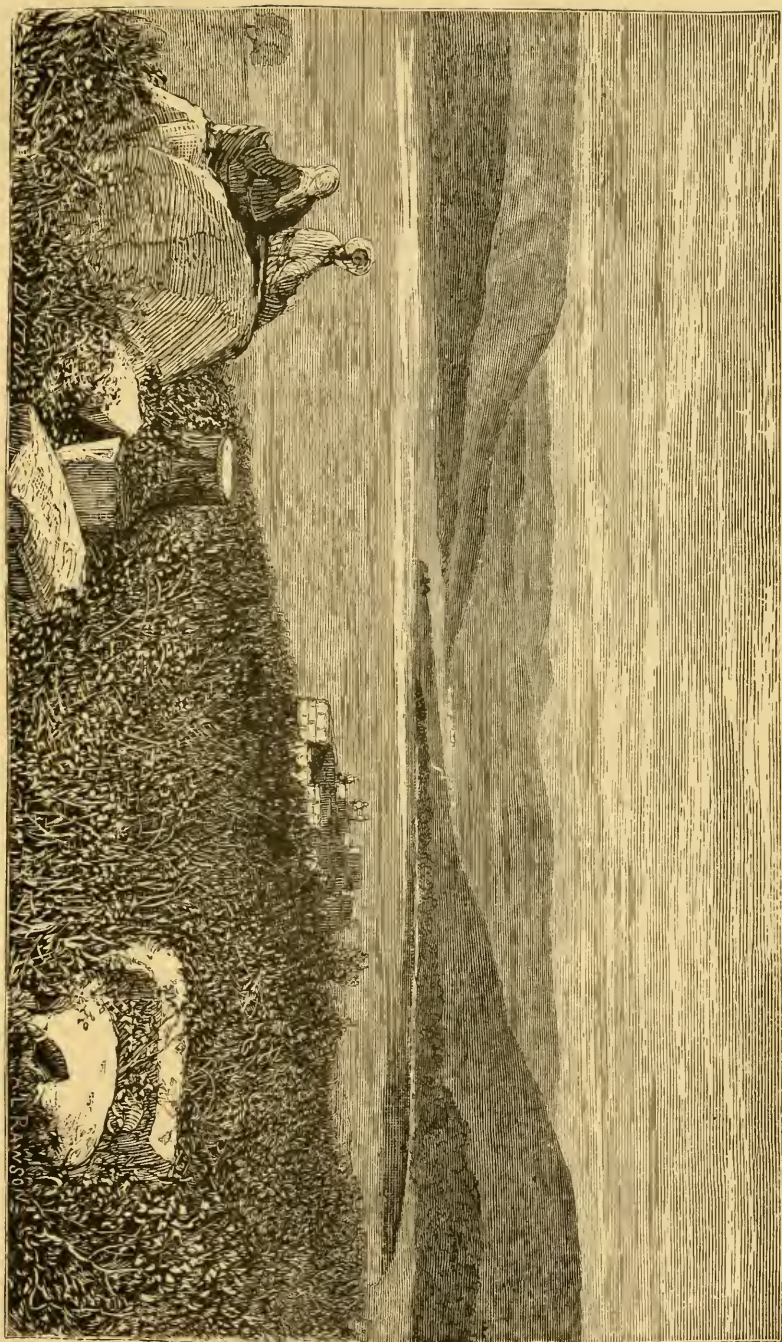
Saith unto him. Of course he spoke under no serpentine or bestial shape, but in a form, to the utmost of his power, able to fascinate by his blandishments, or suborn by menace and terror. *All these things, &c.* The right to give is here assumed by the devil, but falsely. True, he is denominated "the god and prince of this world" (John xii. 31; Cor. iv. 4), and "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. ii. 2), yet this does not imply lawful power or dominion. God has delegated to him no such authority as he here impliedly claims, and in this, as in all his vain promises and assertions, he shows himself to be the father of lies. (John viii. 44.) *If thou wilt fall down, &c.,* referring to obedience, vassalage, of which bodily homage is the symbol. Here is comfort for Christians who are pained by the suggestion of blasphemous thoughts, that Satan had the reckless audacity to make such a horrid proposition to our Lord. Satan tempts by ruling ambition, as in the case of Alexander, Cesar and Napoleon. And how the poor fools were betrayed! Alexander died of drunkenness, Cesar was stabbed in the Senate house by a friend, and Napoleon died in exile at St. Helena. Such an odious alliance is proposed by the devil to the moral, pious young man, when, seized with the hope of making a brilliant fortune, it is suggested that he have recourse to lies, deceit, injury to neighbors, Sabbath-breaking, and to the pious young lady whose hand is sought by

a young man of wealth, but a stranger to piety, and one to whom she cannot be united without endangering her faith, and to the gifted young minister who is tempted to obtain the applause of men, and obtain a lucrative position, by accommodating truth to the fastidiousness of the age, or join in the frivolity of its pleasures. How unutterably paltry the bribes for which we are so often contented to barter all! (See Gen. xxv. 34; Josh. vii. 21; 2 Kings v. 23; Matt. xxvi. 15.)

10. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Deut. iv. 23, x. 20; Josh. xxiv. 14; 1 Sam. vii. 3.

The most wicked and monstrous proposal of the empire of the world on the condition of a compact with the devil, met with an indignant and abhorrent repulse. *Then—at once.* As Jesus did not trifle, or delay, or make any parrying with temptation, how much more necessary is it for us to be prompt and decisive in our measures with it! *Get thee hence, Satan, begone,* avault, out of my sight. Here Satan was disclosed. The pretended angel of light, who calls for worship, is, by our Lord's stern and stinging repulse, transformed back into himself. When an infamous proposal is made to any one, indignation is not merely justifiable, but is required, is of the essence of a true righteousness. *It is written.* (See notes on verses 4, 7.) *Thou shalt worship, &c.—*quoted from Deut. vi. 16. *Him only—* this was the key of all. There could not be two masters—no divided empire. The kingdom must either be wholly spiritual, that is, of God, or wholly temporal, that is, of the devil, and there can be no question *which* it should be. This verse, compared with other similar passages of Scripture, proves the Divinity of Christ. The worship and service due to God cannot be given to a creature without the guilt of idolatry. Since then, God requires "that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father" (John v. 23; see also Heb. i. 6), and since Christians "serve the Lord Christ" (Col. iii. 24), He cannot be a creature, but must be truly God. He who would prevent us from serving God, and persuade us to serve the world, is Satan, so far as we are concerned.



CAPERNAUM.

11. Then the devil leaveth him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.—¹Heb. i. 14.

Such was the final issue of this great and momentous conflict. The tempter, baffled in every endeavor, withdrew; and never did quit a foe with such lacerated and infuriated soul. The devil is a coward; he needs only resistance, and he runs. (James iv. 7.) *And behold, angels came and ministered unto him.* Blessed contrast! a retreating devil, and approaching angels to minister to the mysterious necessity of the Son of man. In the wilderness of Sinai, "man did eat angels' food." In this desert, the Son of Man, the very author of the salvation to the heirs of which the angels are sent forth to minister; "the true bread which came down from heaven," was strengthened with the bread of God. The mere passing away of a season of temptation is a refreshment, like the waking up out of a troubled dream, and finding it to be without reality. Jesus, as has well been said, has conquered not for Him self only, but for all his people. In many a man's life there is a *turning point* at which the soul leaps madly into the embrace of the evil one, or becomes so confirmed in love and faith that disloyalty to God is made well-nigh impossible. Judas is an example of the former; Peter of the latter. Temptation, however, cannot be expected to cease in the present life; and, as in the case of the Israelites on their journey from Egypt to Canaan, *the real giants may come last.* God's word is security, not against attacks from the devil, but against defeat. When devils go, then angels come. "This know," *Leighton* beautifully observes, "that our Lord is tender of us, and will inlay our painful conflicts with sweet comforts. And these, in a high degree, usually follow hard encounters patiently and stoutly sustained. Oh, the sweet issue our Lord gives to many a sad battle of weak Christians, wherein they possibly thought once that all was lost, and that they never should hold out, and come through it! But never think so. We shall come through all, and the day shall be ours." (See on Luke iv. 13.)

12. ¹Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee;

²Mark i. 14; Luke iii. 20, iv. 14, 31; John iv. 43.

To obtain a correct and connected view

of our Saviour's history, the Evangelists must be compared together, as one gives a more full account than another. What happened between the last verse and the present may be found in John's Gospel, from chap. i. 19, to chap. iv. 43. For an account of John's imprisonment, see xiv. 3-5, &c.; Mark vi. 17-20; Luke iii. 19, 20. *Into Galilee*, where He had formerly resided, and whence He had come to be baptized of John. (Chap. iii. 13.) Perhaps in now going to Galilee, Christ wished to take advantage of any sympathetic excitement that might have been produced in John's favor by the unjust persecution of Herod.

13. And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea-coast, in the borders of Zebulon and Nephthalim:

Departing into Galilee, our Lord took Nazareth in His way. (See Luke iv. 16-30.) *Leaving Nazareth*—"not being honored in His own country," *He came and dwelt in Capernaum*, a thriving commercial place, which was situated near the N. W. corner of the sea of Genesareth (John vi. 17), in the confines of the tribes of Zebulon and Nephthalim.

14. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 15. ¹The land of Zebulon, and the land of Nephthalim, *by the way of the sea*, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; 16. ²The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.—¹Isa. ix. 1, 2. ²Isa. xlii. 7; Luke ii. 32.

This quotation is made from Isa. ix. 1, 2. Although in these the prophet seems also to have had in view the oppression of the Assyrians, under which at that time Northern Palestine groaned, the passages are strictly Messianic in their meaning. The prophecy is now raised to its higher sense. Its meaning is this: "*Once* the tribes of Zebulon and Nephthalim were *debased*, (because, being situated on the borders of Canaan, they were exposed to the invasions of the enemy), but afterwards they were made *glorious*." How? by the Saviour's presence and preaching. Our Lord's going into that region, and making it the principal scene of His labors, naturally recalled to mind this prophecy, as then receiving a part of its fulfillment. The region which had been the first to suffer captivity was the first to enjoy the light of that truth which maketh free. (John viii. 32, 36.) The slight difference in orthography between Zebulon and

Nephthalim in the Old and New Testaments, results from their difference of sound in the Hebrew and Greek, by which, in transferring them from one language to another, the orthography would be made to conform with the word as spoken. *Galilee of the Gentiles.* Upper Galilee, where Gentiles were more numerous.

17. *From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

*Mark i. 14, 15. *Chap. iii. 2, x. 7.

From that time, the time that John was cast into prison. Christ had before this time preached, but not in so public and continuous a manner as afterwards. *To preach.* In humbling Himself to the work of preaching, Jesus has highly exalted it. No office so honorable as that of the preacher. The darkest days of the Church have been those when it was lightly esteemed. *And to say, Repent, &c.* Our Lord commences His preaching with the same words which the Forerunner had already uttered, though the call to repent has now a higher meaning than when first uttered by the Baptist. (See chap. iii. 2, and notes on the verse.) Repentance is grief for having committed sin, and turning away from it with abhorrence, accompanied with sincere endeavors, in reliance on God's grace, to live in humble and holy obedience to the Divine commands. It is the *beginning* of religion, but must never cease upon earth. *Phillip Henry* said, "Repentance shall follow me to the gates of heaven." *Rorland Hill* observed, that if he could regret anything when he entered heaven, it would be that he should no more shed the penitential tear. Observe the *for* between the two phrases, which is the true link between the preaching which demands and the promise which bestows. The desire for the kingdom of heaven should be the motive of repentance. No true repentance can spring merely from the terror of the law. How sweet the invitation Jesus gives—the offer of pardon to a repenting sinner! but how much more that of a kingdom! a kingdom of righteousness here, and of glory hereafter.

18. *And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

*Mark i. 16, 17, 18; Luke v. 2. *John i. 42.

Walking—passing from place to place, in the exercise of His ministry. *Sea of Galilee*, so called because the province of Galilee

bordered its western side. It was also called Lake of Gennesaret (Luke v. 1), from the plain which lay "at its north-western angle," and Sea of Tiberias (John vi. 1), from the city of that name, which stood on the western side. *Saw two brethren, Simon called Peter* (or Cephas), Peter being the Greek word for a stone, and Cephas being the Syriac for the same. (John i. 42.)

Andrew. A purely Greek name, which, however, occurs among the Jews at a later period. This was not the first meeting of our Lord with the two brothers, for while in attendance upon John's ministry, they had already enjoyed an interview with Jesus (John i. 40–42), and afterwards they seem to have returned to Galilee, and remained with Him as His disciples (John ii. 2, 11–12), of this call a fuller account is given in Luke v. 1–11. Their casting a net into the sea, which shows they were just about to commence their daily labor, is mentioned to bring out the significance of their instantly following Christ. *For they were fishers*, a business which formed a large share of the occupation of the dwellers upon the shores of Lake Gennesaret. It was the will of God to choose men by whose instrumentality He intended to remodel the world, out of the humbler class, that no flesh might glory in His presence, and the excellency of the power appear to be of God, and not of men. (See 1 Cor. i. 27, ii. 4, 5.) But as these men enjoyed the extraordinary illumination of the Holy Spirit, no argument can now be drawn from this in favor of an unlearned ministry.

19. And he said unto them, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.—*Luke v. 10, 11.

Follow me, rather, *come ye after me*, i. e., in the sense of becoming His servants and messengers. We must distinguish, 1, between their preliminary call, implying discipleship in general and adoption of Christ's cause, but without any special obligation (John i. 35, &c.). 2, their selection (here made—see also Luke, v. 4) as continuous and regular followers of the Lord, and, 3, the choice of twelve to be Apostles. (Matt. x. 2–4.) Jesus gradually prepares His people for service and trial. As in mental training, so in spiritual, there is an education, a general progressive dis-

cipline. The call of Jesus to follow him is, 1, a call to faith; 2, a call to labor; 3, a call to suffering and cross-bearing; 4, a call to our blessed home. *I will make you fishers of men*, raising them from a lower to a higher *fishing*, as David was from a lower to a higher *feeding*. (Ps. lvi. 70-72.) They were to retain their nets, but souls were to be the nobler prey. Jesus here promises to qualify them for their new work, and to give them success. Diligent effort is our part, the blessing is Christ's. (See Luke v. 10.) As Simon and Andrew were called by Jesus when engaged in their usual vocation, and God called Moses, David, and Amos from the sheep-fold, Gideon from the thrashing floor, Elisha from the plow; we see that God honors and consecrates daily industry, and that there is a beautiful harmony between laborious ardor in our earthly employments and religious earnestness.

20. *And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.—Mark x. 28; Luke xviii. 28.

The call from Jesus to these men was an effectual one. Though not promised any temporal rewards, and called to a more laborious service than they were accustomed to, *straightway*, immediately, without deliberating, without conferring with flesh and blood, without reasoning on maxims of expediency, they *left their nets*, which had hitherto been the means of their livelihood, to rot on the sand, and *followed Jesus*, with a fidelity and constancy never surpassed. Beautiful instance of prompt and self-sacrificing obedience! Let us strive to imitate this model, so that, if not called to give up that state of life to which God has already called us, we may at least honor Jesus by bearing meekly little crosses, by exhibiting in the quiet of our own homesteads the lovely, submissive, patient spirit of the cross-bearing disciples.

21. †And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets: and he called them. 22. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

*Mark i. 19, 20; Luke v. 10.

Jesus, proceeding a little distance, found James and John at their own station or place of anchorage. (See on Luke v. 14.) It is inferred from this passage that James was the elder brother of John. *Other two*

brethren. The selection of two *pairs* of brothers on this occasion, by Christ, to be in constant attendance upon Him, was, perhaps, so ordered that each of them might have the comfort of being supported and counseled by a brother engaged in the same work, or, perhaps, in order that all His ministers, to the end of time, should thus be reminded that they should be bound together in the blessed bonds of concord and tenderness. *In a ship*, a small fishing vessel. *Mending their nets*, either preparing them for work, or repairing them after work. "Ministers," says Henry, "should be always teaching or studying; they may always find something to do. Mending their nets is, in its season, as necessary as fishing." The death of Zebedee is recognized in chap. xx. 20. *Called them*. (See on v. 19.) James and John, with a like spirit of prompt and cheerful obedience to that of Simon and Andrew, left the ship with their father and hired servants (Mark i. 20), and followed Jesus. Religion is not contemplation, but action. Where there is no way left but either to forsake parents or Christ, we are to part with father and mother rather than with the Saviour. But the narrative seems to imply that Zebedee gave his consent to the course his sons pursued. If we are to win others for the Lord, we ourselves must have been first won by Him. A minister must be called of God. Let us not only call ourselves brethren, but prove ourselves such. The first step in the conquest of the world was taken when Jesus summoned the four Apostles (v. 18) to become fishers of men to all the world.

23. †And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of diseases among the people.

†Chap. ix. 5; Mark i. 21, 39; Luke iv. 15, 41. *Chap. xxiv. 14. *Mark i. 34.

To preserve the continuity of the narrative, we must here turn to Mark i. 21-8, Luke iv. 31-37, and Matt. viii. 14-17. John remained stationary, Jesus *went about*. It was by going about that He in so short a ministry accomplished so much good. He is our example in diligence in service, as well as watchfulness in prayer. *All Galilee*. This was Christ's first Galilean circuit. The phrase probably implies only Upper Galilee, but may be regarded as giving a

summary or general view of our Lord's activity throughout Galilee. The number of towns and villages which Galilee contained is estimated by Josephus at 204, and the population of each, upon an average, at not less than 15,000 souls. *Teaching in their synagogues*—these were scattered throughout the villages of Judea, as churches are among us. *Preaching, &c.* This means announcing the joyful news of the reign of God, that is, of the Messiah's having come. Preaching should always bear the impress of the love of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, and of power, and be adapted to the wants of the age. *Sickness*, a disease of the whole body, such as fevers, inflammatory diseases, &c. *Disease*, any incipient malady causing softness and general debility. *Among the people*, even those were healed whose diseases were a matter of public notoriety. Jesus conferred temporal as well as spiritual blessings. His curing diseases gave an earnest and foreshadow of that blessed era when all sickness shall be ended.

24. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

Syria, through which the rumor of our Lord's miracles was circulated, with more or less clearness, seems to have comprehended in its widest limits all the country lying between the Mediterranean and the Euphrates. *They brought, &c.* As far as faith in His miraculous power extended they brought such sufferers to Him. *Sick*, all that were ailing, or unwell, *that were taken, &c.*; this is a distinct class, referring to those attacked with acute diseases, *possessed with devils*, that were demonized. *Lunatic*. This word, which means *moon-struck*, signifies insane persons whose case is supposed to be aggravated by the influence of the moon. *Palsy*. Under this general name many infirmities were comprehended: 1. Apoplexy, a paralytic shock which affected the whole body; 2. Hemiplegy, which paralyzed only one side of the body; 3. Paraplegy, which paralyzed all the parts below the neck; 4. Catalepsy, a contraction of the muscles in the whole, or in a part of the body; 5. The cramp, with which, when the limbs were attacked, they remained immovable, sometimes

turned in, and sometimes out, in the same position as when they were first seized. Of many of the miracles here mentioned in the mass, a particular description is afterward given in the Gospels. *And he healed them.* These healings were at once the Saviour's credentials and illustrations of "the joyful tidings" which he proclaimed, as He healed all manner of diseases, so He could forgive all manner of sins.

25. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan.

Mark, iii. 7.

Even at this stage of our Lord's ministry multitudes externally followed Him. Some accompanied Him from place to place to enjoy His instruction; others, doubtless, to gratify their curiosity in witnessing His wonderful works. The multitudes were drawn in the first instance from Galilee itself, and swelled by others coming from different quarters. "Like John, Jesus produced by His preaching a general impression upon the people, but in a higher measure. John remained stationary; Jesus went about; John announced the wrath to come; Jesus brought to light the life-giving power of the Gospel; John displayed only one miracle, that of self-renunciation and the moral greatness of a true prophet as exhibited in his own history; he did no wonders, while it appeared as the inmost and distinguishing characteristic of Christ's life to work miracles of healing, of deliverance, of comfort, and of salvation. To John the people flocked in numbers, again to return to their homes, while of those who betook themselves to Jesus, many remained to follow Him whithersoever He went." *Decapolis* was a district lying chiefly on the east side of the Jordan. It contained ten cities. Hence its name. "This region, once so populous and prosperous, from which multitudes flocked to hear the Saviour, and through which multitudes followed his footsteps, is now almost without an inhabitant. Six out of the ten cities are completely ruined and deserted." *From beyond Jordan*—from the Greek word *πέραν*, *peran*, signifying *beyond*, the country beyond Jordan was called Perea. This name in its largest sense was applied to the whole strip of territory lying east of the Jordan, and bounded on

the east by mountains, which divided it from Arabia Deserta. In its narrower sense, it designated the territory east of the Jordan, toward the south. According

to Josephus, its northern limit was at Pella, its southern at Macheron, its east at Philadelphia, its west the Jordan.

1. What is said about our Lord's temptation? 2. When, and where, did it occur? 3. Explain "led up of the Spirit." 4. What evidence is there that the devil is an active and malicious being? 5. In what sense was Jesus "tempted?" 6. How long did He abstain from food? 7. What is peculiar about the number "forty?" 8. What is said about fasting? 9. How many stages does the temptation embrace? 10. State what they are? 11. What was Christ's answer to the first temptation? 12. In what did the second temptation consist? 13. How was it met? Explain the answer to it. 14. What is it to tempt God? 15. What was the third temptation? 16. What mountain is referred to? 17. What did Christ reply to the third temptation? 18. What followed? 19. Why did Jesus depart into Galilee? 20. Why, and where, was John imprisoned? 21. Why did Christ dwell in Capernaum? 22. How did He commence His preaching? 23. What is said of Simon and Andrew? 24. What of James and John? 25. What did Jesus subsequently do?

CHAPTER V.

Christ beginneth his sermon in the mount: 3 declaring who are blessed, 13 who are the salt of the earth, 14 the light of the world, the city on the hill, 15 the candle: 17 that he came to fulfil the law. 21 What it is to kill, 27 to commit adultery, 33 to swear: 38 exhorteth to suffer wrong, 44 to love even our enemies, 48 and to labor after perfectness.

Having by His miracles established His Divine authority, and acquired, of course, a right to the attention of His hearers, and a powerful influence over their minds, our Lord proceeded to instruct them in what is commonly called His Sermon on the Mount—contained in this and the two following chapters. It is the longest of His public discourses recorded. It contains a greater variety of new, important and excellent moral precepts than is anywhere to be found in the same compass. "The richness and beauty of the gems sparkling through it," said the illustrious Webster, "prove them to belong to the treasury of heaven." Luke has also (vi. 20-49) presented the same discourse substantially, though in a smaller compass, his greater brevity being probably explicable by his repetition of the like sentiments in other passages of his Gospel. That the discourse recorded by him, and that which is here given, are identical, most harmonists and interpreters assume. Both begin with the same blessings, and end with the same striking parable concerning the difference

between hearing and doing. Between this common beginning and ending, it is true, there is much in Matthew which Luke does not give, and some passages in Luke which do not appear in Matthew, yet it is also true that the passages common to the two Evangelists are perfectly identical in substance, follow in the same order, and contain those truths which are of universal concern to the disciples of Christ in every age. Besides, both discourses mark the same period in our Lord's ministry, when His fame had brought multitudes around Him; both Evangelists represent our Saviour, directly after the discourse, as entering Capernaum, and both record the healing of the centurion's servant as at once following upon His return to that city.

This sermon may be viewed as consisting of ten divisions. The first (ch. v. 3-12) consists of beatitudes, in the first and fourth of which we recognize Him who invites men to Himself (Matt. xi. 29, 30), describing the Christian life from its commencement to its termination. The second (vs. 13-16) calls for the manifestation of that life, for the good of man, unto the glory of God. The third (vs. 17-20) points to the truth and importance of that whereby the life Divine is nourished, the word of righteousness as fulfilled by Christ. The fourth (vs. 21-48) presents a contrast be-

tween the law, as viewed by them "of old time," and the truth of the Word as revealed by Him who introduces us into the perfect law of liberty. The fifth (ch. vi. 1-18) warns against formalism, and directs to the true manner of serving or worshipping God, our Father, "who seeth in secret." The sixth (vs. 19-34) shows the reasonableness of faith in God, and exposes the folly of that worldly wisdom which is most destructive to the spiritual life. The seventh (ch. vii. 1-6) forbids presumption in judging, and also the prostituting of that which is holy. The eighth (vs. 7-14) invites us to pray, giving the assurance of a favorable answer. We are then told more fully as to what, and of whom, we are to ask. Then we have the golden rule, the practical use of the Law and the Prophets, as read in the light of the Gospel. Then, as to where we are to knock—it is "at the strait gate." We must practice self-denial if we would fully participate in the blessings of the life everlasting. The ninth (vs. 15-20) bids us beware of false prophets, and tells us how they, as well as the true witnesses, may be known, and intimates that, however men may deceive others now, the faithful Judge will give a true witness hereafter. The tenth (vs. 21-7) tells us that nothing can stand the trial, except that which is in truth built upon the Rock. It is only as standing in the grace of God that faith can endure the trials to which it is, and will be, subjected.

AND seeing the multitudes, ^{he} went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:—²Mark iii. 13.

The multitudes—spoken of in chap. iv. 25, and who awaited His descent from the mountain, whither He had retired to pray, and to choose the Twelve (Luke vi. 17). A *mountain*, an eminence which, as being still, solemn, and impressive, was a suitable place to impart instruction. As the Old Law had been promulgated on Sinai, it was proper that the New Law should be delivered on a mountain also.

What mountain this is not stated by either Evangelist. *Dr. Jamieson* says: "It was an eminence a few miles distance from the city of Tiberias, which rises to an elevation of from 200 to 300 feet, well fitted by its conical shape to accommodate

the dense multitudes that covered its sloping sides, and commanding an extensive prospect, of which the preacher might avail Himself, in His usual manner, for the purposes of moral instruction." He also adds, that "we have only, by an effort of imagination, to place ourselves amid the listening group on the Mount of Beatitudes, in order to see and feel that many things of which the allusions in the sermon seem remote and obscure, *sprang* happily out of the circumstances, and came home to the hearers with all the force and vividness of an appeal to the senses.

"Below lay in calm and majestic beauty the Lake Tiberias, on whose broad surface many of those who surrounded our Lord were in the habit of prosecuting their daily toils, and from whose valuable fisheries they procured their ordinary food for themselves and their families. Before them was a wide prospect of a cultivated land; here adorned with a carpet of luxuriant herbage, to which the moisture of morning had given a recent freshness, but which noon would see fading beneath the scorching beams of the sun, and fit only to be mowed down for fuel; and there, covered with the large and fleecy breed of Palestine, browsing at pleasure, unconscious of the danger which might await them at night-fall, if their ravenous enemy should find his way into the fold, through the ill-disguise of some mangled wool-skin of the flock; here, intersected by a hedge-row of thorns and thistles, that formed the impervious boundary of the fields; and there, by walls on which the creeping branches of the vine and fig-tree clung for support, under the weight of their mellow produce; while, in yonder open thrashing-floor, swept by the gentle breeze, the farmer was winnowing the last remnants of his crop, and pressing down the heaps of grain into the well-shaken sacks.

"It seems to have been spring, too, when Nature was bursting the fetters of her winter's sleep, and new life and animation pervaded the whole range of the animal and vegetable kingdom. The husbandman was preparing his fields with the salt manure, previous to committing his seed to their grateful bosom; the flowers of Palestine were beginning to strew the plains,

and to display their brilliant and gorgeous beauties; the trees in the adjoining gardens were unfolding their early blossoms, and delighting the spectators with the promise that they would each bring forth "fruit after their kinds;" while the feathered tribe were skimming on sportive wing around, and warbling their wood-notes wild among the branches.

"The city of Bethulia rose in the distance, whose flat roofs, beaming with the effulgence of the orient sun, made it an object too conspicuous to be hid from any beholder. On the sides of its rocky platform were seen the deep and rugged bed of the land-flood, that had rolled its impetuous stream, carrying devastation to the hamlet along with it; and, at the bottom, a few paltry cottages raised their humble heads, through whose mud-built and flimsy walls the hand of the midnight plunderer could easily work his way; while, to complete the picture, at one part might be faintly heard sending forth their interminable howl the dogs of Tiberias, the pest of that and every other city of the East; and at a farther bend of the lake, were the towns of the Gadarenes, infamous for the breeding of swine—the idea of both of which animals was associated in the mind of every Jew, with all the abominations of insatiable voracity, and the grossest uncleanness.

"These various objects in the landscape around him, as probably seen from the eminence on which he stood, our Lord enlisted, with singular beauty, into the service of this admirable discourse."

"According to *tradition*, the 'Mount of Beatitudes' lies a little west of the Sea of Galilee, and is a square-shaped hill, about sixty feet in height, with two tops, called the *Horns of Hattin*, from the village of Hattin, at its base. The platform at the top is evidently suitable for the collection of a multitude, and corresponds precisely to the 'level place' (Luke vi. 17) to which Jesus would 'come down' as from one of its higher horns to address the people."

When he was set. This was the usual posture of eminent teachers among the Jews. (See Luke iv. 20.) *His disciples came unto him*—already a large circle, more or less attracted and subdued by His preaching and mira-

cles, in addition to the smaller band of devoted adherents.

2. And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

This graphic mode of representation excites interest in the words spoken. (Comp. Job iii. 1, xxxii. 20; Acts viii. 35, x. 34.) Disciples and people solemnly waited for the first word which, under God's heaven, with His eye upon the holy land 'upon earth, and after such a preparation for such preaching as had never before been heard among men, Jesus would proceed to utter. From this expression Luther derives the following advice to preachers: "Stand boldly forward, open thy mouth and begin; have soon done." According to him, the preacher is to learn from it a lesson of bold and fearless speaking: "speak out plainly, respect and spare no man, let the arrow hit where it may."

In relation to the Beatitudes which follow, let the following things be noted: 1. They possess the air of paradox, placing happiness in dispositions and circumstances which men generally deem incompatible with it. 2. They commonly admit limitations from other parts of Scripture. 3. They do not relate so directly, if at all, to the manner in which men are to obtain happiness, as to the character of those who are really happy. 4. The dispositions they represent are not amiable, natural tempers, but modes of thought and feeling produced by the Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of the faith of the truth. 5. They are all linked together as by a golden chain, and are to be found, though doubtless with a great variety of degree, in every man who has been born again. 6. They are stated separately, that we may apply ourselves the more particularly to them severally. 7. The things they promise, instead of being mere arbitrary rewards, in each case grow out of the characters to which they are attached, and in their complete form are but the appropriate coronation of them.

3. Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

* Luke vi. 20. See Ps. li. 17; Prov. xvi. 19, xxix. 23; Isa. lvii. 15, lxvi. 2.

The first sermon of Jesus, instead of denouncing wrath or threatening punishment, dawns in benedictions. *The poor in*

spirit. Reference is had here, not to external situation, but to disposition and character. It is true that the poor are for the most part in a better preparation of mind to receive and embrace the Gospel than the rich are (1 Cor. i. 26; James ii. 5), but poverty will save no man. It is the inner heart that makes the outer state, not the outer state that guarantees the inner heart. There are noble hearts clothed in rags; there are mean and vulgar ones clothed in purple and in fine linen every day. It is what we are *in our own estimation* that is here intended. Those who are poor in spirit not only have a sense of spiritual want, but a lowly frame of heart, not swelled either with desires, or delight, or conceit of any worldly advantage, or self-excellency. Whether rich or poor, they do not trust in their own righteousness, wisdom, strength or inherent graces. • *Blessed are*. The word translated "blessed" has not in the original, down to verse 11, either *are* or *shall be* connected with it, although the translation gives it correctly enough for the obvious sense. The words are not an opinion or a prayer, but a simple *proclamation*. Our Lord here truly speaks with authority. As happiness is higher than pleasure, so blessedness is higher than happiness. The poor in spirit are blessed, because their humility empties their hearts of every rival, and makes the Lord Jesus Christ truly precious to them. It makes them content in that state in which God has placed them. It adorns their character. The promise of grace is made to them. (Isa. lvii. 15; Zeph. iii. 12; Prov. iii. 34; James iv. 6.) *Theirs is the kingdom of heaven*; they have now all the blessings and privileges of the kingdom on earth, and hereafter shall enjoy the dignity and happiness of the kingdom of glory, as "kings and priests unto God."

4. ^aBlessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

^bIsa. lxi. 2, 3; Luke vi. 21; John xvi. 20; 2 Cor. i. 7, Rev. xxi. 4.

This promise is only given to such mourning as springs from poverty of spirit, for what our Lord here preached presupposes the work of the law and the discipline of preparatory grace upon the soul. Happy are they who "sorrow for sin after a godly sort," for they are comforted with

a sense of free and full forgiveness through faith in Christ—who mourn at the consciousness of the remains of sin in their hearts, for their weeping moments are their most welcome, and never are they more at home than when looking on Him whom they have pierced, and mourning for Him—who mourn over the moral state of the world (Ezek. ix. 4; Ps. cxix. 158), and "weep with them who weep" (Rom. xii. 15), for they are comforted by the assurance that a period is hastening onward when God shall be universally glorified, and the reasons of all prevailing disorder and sorrow cleared up—who mourn that they can do so little good, for they are comforted by the precious promise, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy"—who mourn over their afflictions, for they are made to know that they have the sympathy of Jesus, that God is thus training them up to higher holiness, and that soon their mourning will be ended. (Rev. vii. 13-17. See Isa. lxi. 1-3, xxx. 18; John xvi. 7, xiv. 16-26.) The profitableness of preaching is not to be measured by the degrees of comfort which it affords us. Sometimes conviction may be more necessary for us than comfort.

5. ^aBlessed are the meek: for ^bthey shall inherit the earth.—^cPs. xxxvii. 11. ^dSee Rom. iv. 13.

It is easy to see the connection between this beatitude and those which precede it. If those who are poor in spirit, and mourners, are found humbled and broken with the beginning of such a disposition, so shall they, when comforted by their *reception* of consolation, advance yet further in this meekness of soul. Meekness in relation to God is a prompt submission of ourselves to His wisdom and will, and that, not only to believe what He teaches, and undertake what He enjoins, but also with patience and cheerfulness to suffer what He is pleased to inflict. In relation to men, it consists in general in a quiet, peaceable, courteous and friendly disposition and deportment towards all those with whom we have anything to do, and that, whether they be our superiors, inferiors or equals, whether they be our friends or enemies, or indifferently affected toward us. Meekness is opposed to anything like a morose, silent and sulky temper, and to

the spirit of revenge. Yet it is perfectly compatible with a just defense of one's rights when this really becomes necessary, with the indignation purely manifested against sin. *They shall inherit the earth, i. e.,* those things which are, without question, the greatest *blessings* upon earth, calmness and composure of spirit, tranquility, cheerfulness, peace and comfort of mind. The meek are excluded from no rational pleasure, no legitimate delight; and as they are more exempt from anxiety and pain than other men, their sum total of happiness is greater. If piety could even command for His disciples the whole that earth can now give, would Christ on that account have called them *blessed*? Would He not rather have warned them to beware of the deceitfulness of riches, and the abundance of honors thus likely to flow into their bosom? The promise of *inheriting* the earth, therefore, must, in its fullest sense, have reference to the "*new Heavens*," and that "*new earth*," of which Peter speaks (2 Peter iii. 13), and for which the saints of God are ever looking. (See Rom. viii. 19-22; Matt. xix. 28; Col. iii. 4; Heb. ix. 28; Rev. xxv. 1, 7; v. 9, 10; xx. 1-5; xxi.)

6. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.
(Is. lv. 1, and lxx. 13.)

Verses 3, 4 and 5 have expressed, under various forms, the sense of want; this verse intimates the *object* of that want. For the manner in which the term righteousness is used in the Old Testament, especially in the prophecies with regard to the Messiah, see Dan. ix. 24; Is. xlv. 12, 13; li. 5, 6; lvi. 1. The phrase here denotes holiness, uprightness in the most extensive sense, in heart and life, toward God and man. Hunger and thirst are expressive metaphors of ardent desire. (See Amos viii. 11; Ps. xxxiv. 11; xlii. 1; Isa. lv. 1; lxx. 13; lxxix. 10; John iv. 34; vi. 35; vii. 37.) As these are the keenest of our appetites, the figures denote those whose deepest cravings are after spiritual blessings. (Gen. xlix. 18; Ps. cxix. 20.) It is not *happiness*, in itself and first of all that they long for, but *righteousness*. It is ours to desire it, it is for God to give it. Those are called blessed, not who *possess* this righteousness, but who *desire* it. They

are blessed, because they are sure to obtain what they so earnestly seek, and because their intense desire for righteousness is evidence that they are, or will be, in a gracious state. (See Ps. cvii. 9; cxlvi. 7; lxxv. 5; xxii. 27; Isa. xli. 17); but mainly because *they shall be filled, i. e.,* satisfied. Christians in this world receive of Christ's fullness, grace for grace. Even here they see in themselves, day by day, that improvement which they thirst for, and hereafter, awaking up after God's likeness, they shall be satisfied with it. (Ps. xvii. 15.) Their salvation shall be complete and everlasting. Their present longing is the dilating of the vessel that it may contain the more.

7. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
(Ps. xlii. 1; chapter vi. 14; Mark xi. 25; 2 Tim. i. 16; Heb. vi. 10; James ii. 13.)

From this verse the discourse is addressed, not, as hitherto, to those who *desire*, but to those who *possess*. There follow three virtues of possession: pity, purity and peace. The very first grace that grows, like a beautiful spring flower, on the ground of righteousness now received, is the grace of mercy. We must not confound with this that principle of compassion which God has planted in all men towards their fellow-beings, and which, when it is cherished by an enlightened conscience, is productive of great and good effects to society, but which, after all, is a mere instinctive feeling, is no proper object of moral approbation, and is frequently found in conjunction with principles and habits most decidedly condemned by the Divine law. The merciful spirit to which the promise is annexed is an effect of the grace of God, or of love written upon the fleshly tables of the heart. (See Matt. v. 23; Eph. iv. 32.) It is more than a feeling; it is an operative principle, regarding, with active beneficence, both the bodies and the souls of men—their temporal and eternal interests. It looks not at the merit of the sufferer, but his misery. The merciful are *blessed* in the very possession of this disposition, for it is an approach to the character of God (Mi. vii. 18), it constitutes one of the great evidences so frequently given in the Scriptures of Christian character, and it has special benedictions prom-

ised to it. (Ps. xxxvii. 26; Isa. lviii. 6-11; Matt. vi. 12, 14, 15, xviii. 21-35; Mark xi. 25, 26, &c.) *For they shall obtain mercy.* The display of a merciful disposition is calculated to excite kind feelings on the part of all who witness such displays. Those whom the Saviour here describes shall obtain mercy from God, in this world and at the day of final retribution. (2 Tim. i. 18; also, 2 Sam. xxii. 26; Prov. xix. 17; Ps. xli. 1-3; Matt. vi. 14; Heb. vi. 10.) Let it be carefully noted that our merciful disposition is not the ground on which we obtain mercy. Our Lord's design is not to explain the foundation on which the hope of mercy is to rest, but to delineate the character of His genuine disciples. The mercy obtained is, according to what has been beautifully called the gracious requital of the kingdom of God, the recompense of grace to those who are faithful to what they have received. Divine mercy must, from its very nature, be free; to speak of obtaining it, therefore, as some do, by what they call deeds of charity, is contradiction and absurdity.

8. ^bBlessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.
^cPs. xv. 2, and xxiv. 4; Heb. xii. 14. ^d1 Cor. xiii. 12; 1 James iii. 2, 3.

As the mercy noticed in the preceding verse is not that false kindness which goes hand in hand with the most unbridled indulgence of one's own flesh, therefore purity of heart is next spoken of as the test of true mercy. Purity of heart consists in that steady direction of the soul toward the divine life which excludes every other object from the homage of the heart. It implies a life pure in the inmost tendency and direction of the heart, because it is entirely set upon what is eternally and absolutely pure. The pure in heart are such as, having been regenerated by the Holy Ghost (John iii. 9), are influenced by the fear and love of God in their habitual conduct. "Their hearts are sanctified by faith" (Acts xv. 9), and "sprinkled from an evil conscience." (Heb. x. 22.) They do not aim merely at outward correctness, but at inward holiness. They are the sincerely upright and pious, whose hearts correspond to their outward profession of love to God. *For they shall see God.* They shall see God in life's trials, in life's pros-

perity, in all His providential dealings, in all creation, specially in the sacred page, and in ordinances. When the heart is clean, the eye is clear. Congeniality of character is requisite to the appreciation of character. When purity makes us like God, then can we realize and see His countenance. This vision of God commences when the eye of the soul opens (Eph. i. 18); it is perfected when in eternity we shall see Him face to face. (Ps. xxiv. 4; Heb. xii. 14; 1 Cor. xiii. 12; 1 John iii. 2, v. 3.) In the East it was reckoned the highest privilege and happiness of a subject to be admitted into that splendid circle which surrounded the person of their sovereign. The Hindoos often speak, too, of devout persons having been favored with a *sight* of their guardian deity. *Ward* tells a story, in which a sage is represented as being refused the *sight* of Jugunnat'hu, as he stood charged with many most immoral and sanguinary deeds. These circumstances will show the force and beauty of the expression, "*see God.*"

9. Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God.

The word translated *peace-makers*, denotes not only one who makes peace between others, but who is also himself of a peaceful and quiet temper; who studies peace, follows after peace, and after all those things which make for peace. Christians are careful not to offend any; they do not take those occasions of quarreling which may be offered to them; they are easily reconciled in case any quarrel has happened between them and others. They endeavor (so far as they may without incurring blame) to compose and reconcile the differences of other men. They seek to diffuse peace among the nations, and in the church, by bringing Christianity to its proper loving tone. (Gen. xiii. 7, 8; Ex. ii. 13, comp. Ps. lxxii. 7; cxxii. 6; Isa. ii. 4, xl. 6-9; Luke vi. 27; Acts vii. 26; James iii. 16.) They do not, however, seek peace by a compromise with sin, or the sacrifice of truth and duty. The blessedness of the peace-makers follows the blessedness of the pure in heart, as if peace were the blossom that grows upon the stem of purity. No peace is real, except it be based on principle. *For they shall be called the*

children of God, *i. e.*, they shall be the objects of God's parental care, shall be like Him in the possession of His peaceful, heavenly temper. (2 Cor. xiii. 11; see Hos. i. 10.) This is the last description of the high aim of discipleship, beyond which there is no higher step to be taken, for this makes disciples as their Lord. (Isa. ix. 6; Luke ii. 14.) The promise will be fully realized only with the perfected glory of the children of God as joint heirs with Christ. (Rom. viii. 17.)

10. ¹⁰ Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹² 2 Cor. iv. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 12; 1 Peter iii. 14.

Though ye also suffer for righteousness' sake, yet are ye and shall ye be blessed notwithstanding. (1 Peter iii. 14.) Christ did not conceal from His followers that they would be *persecuted*. How must the history of the coming ages have stood before Him when He spoke these words! (1 Cor. iv. 9-13; 2 Cor. xi. 23-7; Heb. xi. 36-38.) *For righteousness' sake* is equivalent to: for the belief and profession of Christianity, and for the performance of Christian duty. (Luke vi. 22.) "It is," as *Augustine* says, "not the punishment, but the cause, which makes the martyr." (See 2 Chron. xviii. 7; John iii. 20.) *Blessed are they*. They drink of the same cup which their Master drank. They are confessing Him before men, and He will confess them before His Father and the angels. (1 Peter iv. 13, 14; 2 Tim. ii. 12; Phil. i. 29; Rev. xx. 4, xi. 18.) *For theirs is the kingdom of heaven*. The kingdom of heaven is transcendently elevated above all the transitory circumstances of this lower world. (Rev. i. 6; 1 Peter xi. 9; Heb. xii. 28.) The promise given in verse 3 is repeated here. Thus does our Lord set the seal to His discourse, making the first and eighth beatitudes like the corresponding clasps at the two extremities of a chain, where every bead is a blessing. The particular form of the opposition which wicked and worldly men make to the cause of Christ will depend on circumstances, but in all countries and in all ages it exists.

11. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.—Luke vi. 22. ¹¹ 1 Peter iv. 14.

This verse is a further explanation of verse 10, as is evident from the absence of

the promise here, that having been already given there. The persecution is traced in three stages: *Revile you*, or, abuse you to your face, in opposition to backbiting. (See Mark xv. 32.) *Persecute you*. The persecution in verse 10 signifies that of the hand; this, of the tongue, as calumny, &c. *All manner of evil*, literally, *every evil word: i. e.*, every kind of charge or accusation. *Falsely*, in wanton falsehood and slander, whatever their wicked malice conceive. All this must be done *falsely* and for *Christ's sake*, in order to bring us within the terms of the blessing. Slander is a part of the martyr's portion. No man was ever yet put to death as a *good* man. The word *falsely* applies in sense to all the words expressive of persecution and reproach. *For my sake*. Christ here identifies Himself and His cause with that of righteousness, binding up the cause of righteousness in the world with the reception of Himself. He is righteousness incarnate. (See Mark i. 24; Matt. iii. 14; Rev. iii. 7.) *Blessed*—amid all their sufferings they would be supported by the peace of God and the hope of glory.

12. ¹² Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

¹³ Luke vi. 23; Acts v. 41. Rom. v. 3; James i. 2; 1 Peter iv. 13. ¹⁴ Neh. ix. 26; Matt. xxiii. 34, 37; Acts vii. 52; 1 Thes. ii. 15.

The encouragement here given to *rejoice, and be exceeding glad*, is a further amplification of the substance of the promise in verse 10. This phrase means "exult," as if the Saviour would have the inward transport of such as were faithful to Him, to overpower and absorb the sense of all the affronts and sufferings to which they would be exposed. (Rom. v. 3; 2 Cor. iv. 17, James i. 2; Heb. x. 34; 1 John v. 4, 5; Rev. ii. 10.) *For great, &c.* Here is the reason for this joy—the greatness of the reward, corresponding to the severity of the ordeal of persecution through which they were to pass. The measure of enjoyment in the heavenly state will be regulated according to the degree of labor and suffering in the service of Christ. Eternal life is a *reward*, not because God owes us it for our works' sake (for we can *deserve* nothing from Him; see Rom. vi. 23), but because by it He graciously recompenses to us all our labor and pain, even as the

inheritance of a father and all his goods are given to his son, and are an ample recompense for his obedience; yet does he not inherit them on account of his deserts, but because his father, as a father, vouchsafes to make him his heir. "It is inconceivable," says *Tholuck*, "that man can render by his virtues any service to God, any more than in taking a draught of the fountain the thirsty traveler renders that fountain a service." (See Rom. iv. 4; Luke xvii. 10.) *In heaven.* The allusion is to the future, but it is not implied that the reward exists only in the future, rather, that "the glory" (John xvii. 22), present and insured now, shall then be openly made manifest. (Col. iii. 3, 4.) How "great" that reward will be, who can tell? (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3; 1 Thes. iv. 14; Rev. iii. 21; vii. 9-17.) *For so persecuted, &c.* There is here graciously given to our weak faith another ground of joy in persecution. If our sufferings for Christ's sake are great—like those of the *prophets*—those distinguished servants of God, like their's, our reward in heaven is also great. How animating the consciousness of fighting in fellowship with so great a company of the children of light! (See Gen. xxxvii. 8, 18-28; xlix. 26; 1 Kings xviii. 4, xxii. 8-27; 2 Chron. xxii. 20; Neh. ix. 26; Luke xiii. 34; Acts vii. 51; 1 Thes. ii. 14; Heb. xii. 36-8.)

13. "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.—*Mal. ix. 50; Luke xiv. 34, 35.*

The gifts of grace which have been received should exhibit and approve themselves. The strength which God has vouchsafed to the disciples for a high purpose must be by them sacredly preserved. Ye—who have been described in verses 3-10, and who have been addressed in verses 11, 12. The children of God, through Christ, because they bear God's truth livingly within them, are the salt of the earth—it is thus made *their* salt, just as in verse 16 it is also said—*your* light. *Salt of the earth.* Mankind, under the unrestrained workings of their own evil nature, are entirely corrupt. (Gen. vi. 11, 12, viii. 21; Ps. xiv. 2, 3; Isa. i. 5, 6; Eph. ii. 1-3; Job xiv. 4, xv. 15, 16; John iii. 6; Rom. viii. 8; Titus iii. 2, 3.) In the time

of Christ the whole world, with scarcely an exception, was a mass of moral rottenness—in a state of which animal matter tending to, undergoing the process of dissolution, is a striking figure. It will be noted that Christ calls those, whom He addresses, the salt of the earth, solely with reference to their destination with regard to other men. The distinctive peculiarities of salt are, that it seasons, purifies, arrests decay and preserves from it. (Job vi. 6; 2 Kings 11, 20.) The use of the term, in these senses, occurs in many of the proverbs and symbols of the ancients. The course of the human race, apart from Christianity, is always downward: all its civilization ends in barbarism. Christians are here characterized as a power of life. To serve the purpose of their being they must mingle themselves with society. They have a divine virtue, not for selfish monopoly, but for continuous diffusion. Knowing the truth, they are bound to make it known to others—salting and seasoning everything around them by instruction and example. Their obligation to do good corresponds with the closeness of the relation in which they stand to the individuals who are the proper objects of their Christian benevolence. The gospel must be disseminated by them through the world. Our Lord here intimates that the benignant influence of His religion was to pervade the whole earth. Only for the sake of the children of God who prevent its judgment and coöperate unto salvation, is the earth preserved, though corrupt and full of uncleanness. *But if the salt.* After referring to Mark ix. 50, in which our Lord uses the expression, "have salt in yourselves." *Stier* remarks: "In this view, whether salt ever does lose its saline property—about which there is a difference of opinion—is a question of no moment here. The question is not, can or do the saints ever totally lose that grace which makes them a blessing to their fellow-men? but what is to be the issue of that Christianity which is found wanting in those elements which can alone stay the corruption and season the tastelessness of an all-pervading carnality?" *It is thenceforth, &c.* It is certain that a Christianity that ceases to diffuse itself is a Christianity

that ceases to be real. The heart of grace, like the heart of nature, ceases to beat when it ceases to circulate the tide that is committed to it. The Christian who disgraces his religion by his conduct is useless. "There is nothing more trodden on than one who wishes to be esteemed divine, and is not."

11. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.—Prov. iv. 8; Phil. ii. 15.

The two figures by which, in this and the preceding verse, the function of Christians is represented, are not essentially different. As a spiritual salt they are to season humanity and preserve it from moral corruption, and as a spiritual light they are to be to humanity what the physical sun is to the world. Salt operates *internally* in the mass with which it comes in contact; the sunlight operates *externally*, irradiating all that it reaches. It fertilizes, guides, cheers. Ye. (See on v. 13.) How dark this world would be without a Christ, a Gospel, a Holy Spirit, and a Church! Light, as the medium through which objects are discerned by the eye, figuratively denotes the truth in God's revealed Word. Christians are not, like the sun, self-luminous, but like the moon and planets, though in themselves opaque bodies, receive their rays from a primal source. They are light-bearers. (Mal. iv. 2; John v. 35, viii. 12, ix. 5, xii. 35; Eph. v. 8; 1 Thes. v. 5; Phil. ii. 15.) If we have grace, it must be *seen*. In virtue of the dignity of their distinction, Christians dare not withdraw from the world. They should not merely be as lights; they should, in Christ, concentrate their efforts, so as to be one great light, for the enlightenment of the world. They should attach themselves to the assemblies of the saints, for the purpose of unitedly and openly exhibiting the light. (Heb. x. 23-25.) A city, &c. This apposite simile might have been suggested by some city in sight. Some think it was Bethulia, visible from the "Mount of Beatitudes," on an eminence. The cities of Judea, as well as other countries, in ancient times, were built mostly upon hills. The Church of God is no secret institution, like the heathen mysteries. Being set on "the holy hill of Zion," it should be as a central and elevated city, with its spires sparkling in ris-

ing and setting suns, seen from afar, visible to all the world. Christ's followers cannot shun the observation of those around them—they are looked at with the closest scrutiny by their fellow-men. Where light really is, and continues to be, it must from its very nature shine forth.

15. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick: and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

Mark iv. 21; Luke viii. 16, and xi. 33.

Candle denotes any movable artificial light, whether candle, lamp or lantern, though the first is entitled to the preference, from long familiarity. *Bushel*. This was a Roman measure, called *modius*. The fact that this measure really came nearer to our *peck* than our *bushel*, can have no effect upon the meaning of the passage, which would be the same if the word used had been *basket*, *box*, or *bed* (as it is in Mark iv. 21). A *candlestick*, or, more exactly, the candlestick, *i. e.*, the one found of course in every house. There is a reasoning here from the *less* to the *greater*. As in a house a candle is not lighted for the purpose of concealing it, but with the object of giving light to those in the house, so the light of the Apostles and disciples was kindled as the light of Christ, not to be covered up, but for the sake of men walking in darkness. The Scripture, and particularly the Gospel, is our candle. It is the Spirit of God which has lighted and placed it on the candlestick of the church, that the light of it might be seen by all. The neglect of this light will be a heavy charge against many at the last day. To forbid or discourage the reading of the Bible, or to oppose its circulation, is a heinous sin. "Man's worst bushel upon the light of God," says one, "is the dealing out too richly or too sparingly the bread and pay for the ministry in the church."

16. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven.—1 Peter ii. 12. John xv. 8; 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

It is not said, we must wish ourselves to shine, but, as the translation well expresses it, *let*, freely, without covering or hindrance, *our light*, that which has by grace been given to us, shine according to its own nature and the will of Him who kindled it. So shine, by making a profession of the truth, and exhibiting, in our

temper and behavior, its native effects in making us holy and happy. As if our Lord had said, *It will of itself shine*, if you cover it not. *Before men*, as the explanation of the expressions "earth" and "world," even before the men who persecute and revile you, for this must be your only retaliation—love and truth for hatred and lies. The man who professes to value the light of the gospel must take care that he is not selfish in the use of it. He must strive to make others acquainted with the truths which he finds good for himself. *That they may see your good works*, &c., may acknowledge God as your father, and may be drawn to Him themselves in the spirit and relation of children. Our Lord refers to the *life*, because the good word without the good work is of no avail. External deportment is the only means by which men can judge of character. Isolated works or *deeds* do not properly *shine*, they are rather as flashes in the night, which make the darkness appear the darker; but the entire and persistent *doing* of all works of pure light and love is a bright light upon the candlestick. We are not to do anything to glorify *ourselves*, but everything to get glory to God. It is God who is glorified in His Saints. The holy and useful lives of Christians reflect praise on the religion which they profess, and thus cause honor to be paid to God. The name *Father* seeks to attract us, and the words, "which is in heaven," direct our thoughts to the difference between earthly fathers and this Father. The religious spirit of all nations has, by an unconscious symbolism, regarded the ether, in its depth and repose, in its boundlessness and unchangeableness, as the dwelling place of Deity. This is also the idea of the writers of the Old Testament, although at the same time they take care to give the strongest expression to the truth that God is omnipresent, and is raised above space. (1 Tim. viii. 27; 2 Chron. ii. 6; Ps. cxxxix. 7; Jer. xxiii. 23.)

17. ¶ "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil."
"Rom. iii. 21, and x. 4; Gal. iii. 24.

It might appear to some of our Lord's disciples as if He intended to set aside the religion which had been taught by Moses and the Prophets, and to introduce an en-

tirely new state of things. Against this He here guards them. *Think not*, by no means be deluded into imagining. *That I am come*, not, *I am born*; our Lord therefore existed before He *came*. This is a Messianic form of expression. (See chap. xi. 3; Luke vii. 19.) *To destroy, unloose, dissolve, or abrogate*. The law or the prophets, the writings of the Old Testament, as divided into the law of Moses, or the Pentateuch, and the prophetic books, and the rest of the Old Testament. (Comp. Matt. xii. 5; Luke ii. 23, xvi. 29, 31, xxiv. 27, 44.) *I am not come*, &c. Christ did not come to subvert the authority and principles of the Old Testament, but to establish, unfold, embody them in living form, and enshrine them in the reverence, affection, and character of men. (Rom. iii. 31, x. 4, xv. 8; Gal. iii. 17; Isa. xlii. 21.) Christ came to fulfill the predictions of the prophets, who had long foretold that a Saviour would one day appear to fulfill the ceremonial law, by becoming the great sacrifice for sin, to which all the Mosaic offerings had ever pointed, and to fulfill the moral law, by yielding to it a perfect obedience, which we could never have yielded—by paying the penalty for our breach of it with His atoning blood, which we could never have paid—by giving us its full sense and spiritual import, and by writing it on the heart, and giving grace to obey it. Christianity, therefore, is not the destruction, but the completion of Mosaicism. Jesus destroys nothing but sin, which indeed destroys itself. The Old Testament is the Gospel in the bud; the New Testament is the Gospel in full flower.

18. For verily, I say unto you, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."—Luke xvi. 17.

Verily is the same in the original as our word *Amen*, and it was a solemn *so let it be*. The word now for the first time occurs in Christ's public teaching of the people. *I say unto you*. This formula, frequent and peculiar to the Lord, but occurring here for the first time in His recorded teaching, is manifestly one of *supreme legislative authority*, and as the subject in connection with which it is uttered is the Moral Law, no higher claim to an authority *strictly Divine* could be advanced. (See Lev. xviii.

1-5, xix. 37, xxvi. 1-4, 13-16, &c.) *Till heaven and earth pass*—an expression similar to our *till the world shall end*. The expression was the same as saying *it will never take place*. (See Luke xvi. 17.) It was a received opinion among the Jews that the earth would never be totally destroyed, but would, at some time, be renovated, and in this renewed form exist forever. The *jot* was the *yod*, the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet. The *title* was the term for the point by which very similar Hebrew letters were distinguished from each other. Thus our Lord means to express, in addition to the *eternal obligation*, the *boundless extent* of the moral law, and to indicate that the most delicate and apparently smallest determinations and distinctions are to be preserved in the delicate and finer outlines of spiritual life. *From the Law*. The Law is only now mentioned, but its connection with what has gone before shows that it embraces also the Prophets. (See Luke xvi. 16, 17.) *Till all be fulfilled*—till all things which the Law requires or foretells shall be effected; till the whole design of the Law be accomplished, its promises fulfilled, its threatenings performed, and its precepts honored either by obedience or by punishment for disobedience. (Ps. cxix. 89; Isa. xl. 8; Luke xvi. 17, xxi. 33.) The immutability of the Divine Word, in relation either to happiness or misery, yields as much comfort to the righteous as it gives despair to the wicked.

19. *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do, and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.—James ii. 10.

As the connection with verse 20 shows, there is here a special allusion to the Jewish teachers of the law. The Pharisees understood not that the law is a living whole. (James ii. 10.) *Shall break one of these least commandments*, rather, “dissolve,” “annul,” or “make invalid,” neglecting, or transgressing, as if the offense was one of small importance, and would be followed with impunity. The scribes, who thought themselves *great*, used to break them. This does not refer to the coming short of keeping God’s law, of which all are guilty, and which fills the pious soul with sorrow

and contrition, but to a wanton, willful disregard of its claims. The Saviour did not, in His own judgment, apply the word *least* to any of the divine commands, but here adopted the method of speaking which was common among the scribes and Pharisees, who made frivolous distinctions between small and great commandments. As all the law is enacted by divine authority, no part of it can be of small obligation, though some parts may respect *matters* more important than others. *And shall teach men so*—*And*—not *or*, because *teachers* are the main subject. If to violate, with purpose, a known law of God, is a dangerous sin, how much deeper the danger of leading others to sin, by a spurious, enervating exposition of that law which *teaches* it as something unimportant! *He shall be called least*, &c. Views of truth which verge in the least toward antinomianism are utterly inconsistent with the true doctrine of Christ. The Saviour did not say, such a person may be admitted into heaven, and there considered as the least in the world of glory, but that such a person shall be accounted unsuitable to be among the Messiah’s subjects; he shall be rejected from them. *But whosoever*, &c.—he whose practice and doctrine tend to induce men to keep the commandments of God, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven; however low in human esteem, the King will approve and exalt him.

20. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.—J Rom. ix. 31, and x. 3.

For I say unto you—By way of illustration of the terrible danger of making void God’s law. Here something is proposed to Christians to excite self-inquiry. What was the *righteousness* which their’s must *exceed*, and how did it fall short? The Pharisees were strict in observing the *letter* of the law, rigorously kept the Sabbath, fasted often, prayed constantly, so revered the Scriptures as to wear sentences from them about their persons, are said not to have passed a day without reading the decalogue, never ate with unwashed hands, and brought to the sacred treasury the tithes of the meanest herbs. (See chap. xv. 1, 2, xxiii. 5, 23.) For this they

are not blamed. Rather let those take warning who have not even this outward righteousness. What, then, was wanting to their righteousness? And how must it be exceeded by that of those who are really the servants of God? They lacked that perfect righteousness which can only be found in Christ, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, by submitting to whom we are also made holy in heart and life. They lacked the conversion of the heart to God, the right spirit. What they did was directed by no love of God, no desire of pleasing Him, no zeal for His service or glory, but by a desire to procure among men the honor of superior sanctity. *In no case*—Not by any means. It is implied that if they shall have the righteousness taught by Moses, that is in the fulfilled form in which it is taught by Christ, they will be members of the kingdom.

21. ¶ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, *Thou shalt not kill*; and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment:—Ex. xx. 13; Deut. v. 17.

To illustrate His meaning, our Saviour proceeds to expound the spiritual sense and meaning of some commandments of the moral law, and to vindicate them from the corrupt and partial interpretations of the scribes. He begins with the *second table* of the law, containing duties to our neighbor, because this part of our disposition lies most open to conviction. The sixth commandment (Ex. xx. 13), which He first takes, was the first broken openly by Adam's race. *Ye*—The Apostles primarily, the people inferentially, *ye have heard*. It is not said, ye have heard that it has been *read* in the Law, but *ye have heard*—from the elders. *That it was said*, an impersonal form of speech, to which is elegantly opposed, *I say*. (Verse 22.) *By them of old time*. This refers not to Moses or the Old Testament prophets, but to the founders and recipients of Rabbinical traditions, which the scribes and Pharisees were now inculcating. Mark the contrast between “it was said by them of old time,” and “But I say unto you.” (Verse 22.) 1. In the one case it is the general unspiritual mass that speaks, here it is the highest personage—the Lord Himself. 2. In the former case, it has been said to past generations; in this, the Lord speaks to those around Him. 3. The former is a

tradition from the grave; the latter, a word of life to the living. *Thou shalt not kill*. All that the Pharisees understood by this was a prohibition of the overt act of violence and murder, a gloss which destroyed the spiritual and moral character of the law. They coupled the law of Sinai with a more criminal statute concerning the execution of a murderer (Lev. xxiv. 17; Ex. xxi. 12), and made the two parallel. *Whosoever*, &c. This was an addition, or explanation, made in subsequent times, and it proceeded on the principle, that the law recognized only actual murder. *In danger of*, liable to, exposed to, *the judgment*—the sentence of those inferior courts of judicature which were established in all the principal towns, in compliance with Deut. xv. 16. Thus the scribes and Pharisees fixed the mind on the temporal punishment awarded by the law for the crime of murder, as that which should chiefly or solely operate on the mind as a motive.

22. But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, *Raca*, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, *Thou fool*, shall be in danger of hell fire.
^a1 John iii. 15. ^bJames ii. 20.

I say unto you. (See on verse 18. Matt. vii. 29.) Christ, as the law's authorized expounder, proceeds to give quite a different interpretation of the spirit and sanctions of the sixth commandment. He shows that the precept extends properly to the thoughts, and feelings, and language, as well as to outward acts. *Angry*. Anger, indulged and carried out, leads to murder, as in the case of Cain, and of Joseph's brethren. *Brother*, means fellow-man, descended from a common ancestor, and hence, in a general sense, our brother. (Mal. ii. 10; 1 Cor. viii. 6.) *Without a cause*, needlessly, inconsiderately, blindly. Anger is not necessarily sinful. (Eph. iv. 26; James i. 19.) For just cause, and in its due measure, it is just, but we are to be extremely careful not to be angry *without a cause*, nor let our anger be lasting (Eph. iv. 26), or turn into a feeling of revenge or hatred. A righteous anger, springing from holy and jealous love, is predicated of God, and is also ascribed to the Saviour. (Mark iii. 5.) *In danger*, liable, or justly subject to. This expression, occurring three times in

the verse, implies not that he is necessarily lost in these judgments, but that he stands in need of Divine grace. *The judgment.* (See on verse 21.) That this was used here as symbolical of the tribunal of Divine justice seems evident from the fact that it was not the part of the municipal tribunal to punish angry thoughts, nor, in the nature of the case, could they have done so, inasmuch as no judicial cognizance could be taken of them, when confined to the bosom of him who indulged them.

Whosoever shall say to his brother (that is, without cause,) *Raca.* Raca is a Syriac word, expressive of great contempt. It comes from a verb signifying to be *empty*, *vain*, and hence denotes *senseless*, *stupid*, *shallow-brains*. Our Lord does not refer to the mere pronunciation of the word, but to its utterance as the outward *symbol* of an inner malignant purpose to destroy a man's just *reputation for intellect*. To use scornful language toward others is an offense before God. *The council*, that is, the Sanhedrim, which was the highest tribunal among the Jews, and consisted of seventy-two persons, the acting high priest being generally the president. The idea of the Saviour is, that whosoever shall commit the second offense here mentioned contracts greater guilt, and exposes himself to such an increase of punishment as that it may be likened to the punishment decreed by the *Sanhedrim*, when compared with the punishment decreed by the *judgment*. (Verse 21.)

Shall say (without a cause), *Thou fool*—a term of the greatest abhorrence—"thou impious wretch"—folly and impiety being equivalent with the Hebrews. (Ps. xiv. 1.) It stands here as the *symbol* for a malignant purpose in the heart to destroy the just *moral reputation* of a man. Every age and every country has its modes of expressing such things as are meant by "Raca" and "Fool." *In danger of.* (See on former part of the verse.) It will be observed that there is in this verse a gradation of punishment corresponding with the three offenses enumerated. The different degrees of punishment referred to express not merely what sin was in itself as a breach of the Divine Law (for in that sense all sin

exposes to hell-fire), but how many degrees of evil there were, short of actual murder, which would endanger a man's salvation.

Hell-fire, literally, *the gehenna of fire*. This was the valley of Hinnom, at the southern declivity of Jerusalem, where a fire was constantly kept burning and dead bodies were burned. (See 1 Kings xi. 7; 2 Kings xvi. 3, xxiii. 13, 14; 2 Chron. xxviii. 3, xxxiii. 6; Jer. vii. 31, 32.) That the literal valley of Hinnom is not here referred to is evident from the well-known fact that for none of the offenses here mentioned by our Lord did the Jewish courts inflict any punishment. Besides, the word *gehenna* is used in the New Testament twelve times, always by our Lord, except once by James (iii. 6), and always as meaning the place of eternal torment, except here, where it refers distinctly to the valley of Hinnom, as *representing* the abode of lost spirits. (See on iii. 12.) This is the view generally taken of this word, in this verse, but many persons interpret it differently. A modern commentator, in New England, says: "According to *Dr. Bartlett*, 'gehenna' did not have in the time of Christ *two meanings*, a primary and usual meaning as the name of a valley south of Jerusalem, and an unusual and secondary, or figurative meaning, denoting the place of punishment. It had but one meaning, *punishment in the future world, hell*. The Jews used it repeatedly in that sense. Even *Dr. Alger* (Unitarian), in his 'Doctrine of a Future Life,' says that 'this is a fact about which there can be no question.' *Dr. Bartlett's* view is supported by *Prof. E. P. Barrows*, formerly of the Theological Seminary, Andover, who writes to the former, that it appears to him certain that in our Lord's day the word *gehenna* 'had come in well-established theological usage—probably long before the beginning of the Christian era—to signify hell, that is, the *place of torment for the wicked*; and that this was the only sense of the word.'"

22. Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee: 24. Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

^aChap. viii. 4, and xxviii. 19. ^bSee Job xlii. 8; chap. xviii. 19; 1 Titus ii. 8; 1 Peter iii. 7.

Therefore—as an inference from the fore-

going declaration of our Saviour. *If thou bring, &c.* The reference is to the bringing by the Israelite of his sacrifice to the court of the Israelites, and awaiting the instant when the priest would approach to receive it at his hands. Our bringing our gift is the presentation of any worship or service to God. *And there rememberest*—whatever you are doing, even if you have already undertaken the most holy and most necessary matter, leave everything till you have been reconciled to your brother. (Eph. iv. 26.)

At the altar of God, in the very moment when man seeks forgiveness, the recollection of offenses rises more naturally than in the noise of human affairs. *That thy brother, thy fellow-man, hath aught against thee*, has just cause to find fault with thee; the expression is remarkable, as not referring to what complaints we have against others, but what complaints we have given ground for them to make against us. *Leave there, &c.* Not upon the altar. Proceed not so far as to lay thy sacrifice before God; wait not to perform the duty of reconciliation after the sacrifice is finished. *Go thy way*, that is, to the person wronged; thus will the Lord dispense, as it were, with His own service and honor, until we have rendered to our brother what love demands as his due. *First be reconciled, &c.*—prevail on him, by suitable acknowledgments, and whatever else is necessary, to be reconciled to thee; regain his favor. *Then come and offer, &c.* The only ground of hope for the acceptance of our persons or services is the free grace of God; but it is a plain proof that that grace is not believed by me, and therefore cannot be the ground of my hope, if it is not influencing my temper toward my brethren of mankind. Our Lord here expressly guards against the Pharisaism of practical virtue, which sets the duty we owe to our neighbor above the requirements of God's worship, and supposes that *this* may be dispensed with if that misconceived charity to man be not forgotten. Where the two duties conflict, or rather present themselves for performance, the lesser is to yield to the greater.

25. *Agree with thine adversary quickly, ⁵whiles thou art in the way with him, lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to

the officer, and thou be cast into prison. 26. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing. ⁶Prov. xxv. 8; Luke xii. 58, 59. ⁷See Ps. xxxii. 6; Isa. lv. 6.

The sentiment of these verses is closely allied to the preceding context. They contain a counsel of prudence with regard to the management of differences, and advice to avoid as much as possible going into law courts to have them decided, reference being made to the Roman custom, by which an aggrieved person could compel the party to go with him to the prætor, unless he agreed by the way to adjust the matter. But under this counsel a more important instruction is couched. Injuries done to men, as well as our other sins, expose us to the wrath of God, our Adversary at law. We are going to the judgment. Our time is short. A way of reconciliation is revealed, and we should enter it immediately. If this be neglected, the cause will be tried, the sinner condemned, delivered to the executioner, and cast into hell. (See Ps. ii. 12; Isa. lv. 6, 7; Matt. xviii. 34, xxv. 31; Heb. iii. 7–13.) The representation of hell as a *prison* expresses a condition in which all the energies are bound and fettered. A *farthing* was a small Roman coin, made of brass or lead, and equal in value to about two-fifths of a cent. The attempt to sustain the doctrine of purgatory, or that of universal restoration, from verse 26, is vain. The unending duration of future punishment, elsewhere so clearly and awfully expressed by our Lord, as in verses 29 and 30, and Mark ix. 43, 48, is the only doctrine with which His language here quite naturally and fully accords. (See Luke xii. 58, 59.) Though the expression, *till thou hast paid, &c.*, may imply the possibility of paying, at the same time it suggests the debtor's hopeless capacity to make the payment. Seeing that the sinner can never satisfy justice, nor pay his debt (as new crimes enhance the score), he must not expect ever to be liberated. But from these words in part the Church of Rome forces the doctrine of purgatory, and a certain class of Universalists, the doctrine of restoration! The impossibility of paying the debt is the meaning which Matt. xxv. 46 and many other passages require.

27. ¶ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*: 28. But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Ex. xx. 14; Deut. v. 18. Job xxxi. 1; Prov. vi. 25; see Gen. xxxiv. 2; 2 Sam. xi. 2.

Our Lord now proceeds to the elucidation of the seventh commandment. (Ex. xx. 14.) *Ye have heard, &c., i. e.,* you have been taught the divine law in its merely literal acceptance, as if he only was guilty of adultery who committed the act of carnal uncleanness. *But I say unto you.* (See on verse 22.) *Whosoever*, any one, even if himself not any woman's husband. *Looketh*, casteth a glance, not necessarily an intensified glance, or a prolonged look. (See Gen. xxxiv. 2, xxxix. 7; 2 Sam. xi. 2; Job xxxi. 1; 2 Peter ii. 14.) Not every glance of admiration cast upon the beauty of one of the opposite sex is here condemned. Such affection is planted in our nature for pure and beneficial purposes. But when from a sentiment it becomes a sensation, the danger commences. *On a woman*, even if not the wife of another, just as conversely Job (xxxi. 1) speaks of a maid when the married woman is also signified. It must also necessarily be understood; whatsoever woman thus looketh upon a man, &c. *To lust after her.* The particle *to* determines the character of the look: it is a look with evil desire, appetite, and impure passion, such a desire as gains the full consent of the will, and would certainly terminate in action, did not impediments from other causes arise, thus making the essence of the vice to be in the *intention*. Impure thoughts are the immediate and only source of an impure life. Our Lord here, like a wise physician, goes at once to the bottom of the evil, and checks the first movements of our criminal desires. *Hath committed adultery with her already in his heart*—the heart as the centre of life, and the seat of feeling and desire. It is here implied, if not expressly taught, that adultery in the heart is almost, if not quite, as offensive to God as the grossest acts of uncleanness. The spirit of the law which Christ thus interprets is sternly opposed to all loose and licentious conversation, all provocations to sensuality, through whatever sense addressed to the mind.

29. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy

whole body should be cast into hell. 30. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

Chap. xviii. 8, 9; Mark ix. 43-47. See chap. xix. 12; Rom. viii. 13; 1 Cor. ix. 27; Col. iii. 5.

The Saviour demands even the utmost degree of self-denial. Two of the dearest and most precious members are specified—the *eye*, the light, the lamp of the body; the *hand*, the strength, the support, the defense of the body, its most indispensable instrument. The former is mentioned as the symbol of delight in looking (sense of beauty), the latter as the symbol of intercourse (social feeling, converse, friendship). The word *right*, in both cases, designates superiority. *Eye* and *hand* are significative of the corresponding lusts. The Hebrews were accustomed to compare lusts and evil passions with members of the body. (See xx. 15.) *Offend thee*, do cause thee to offend. (See xviii. 8, 9; Mark ix. 43-8.) *Pluck it out—cut it off.* Our Lord does not mean that we are to mutilate our bodies, which are temples of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. vi. 19, iii. 16), but that the members of the internal organism of sin, which correspond to the external members of the body (and which might continue all the more vehemently to look, and to lust, and to strive, if those external members were actually destroyed), should be mortified as effectually on such occasions, as if those external members were destroyed. (See Rom. vi. 13, viii. 13; Gal. v. 24; Col. iii. 5.) *For it is profitable for thee*—for thy salvation. Not only is it not hurtful, but also it will be glorious. *That one of thy members, &c.* The adventurous figure is boldly carried out. Better go to heaven maimed, than to hell whole. *Hell*, literally, gehenna, the place of punishment in the invisible world. (See on ver. 22 and chap. x. 28.) A single lust persisted in will issue in eternal ruin. It is necessary even for those whom the Lord may know to be the heirs of salvation, in certain situations to be threatened with damnation, as the means of preserving them from it.

31. It hath been said, *Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement*: 32. But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery.

Deut. xxiv. 1; James iii. 1; see chap. xix. 3, &c.; Mal. x. 2, &c. Chap. xix. 9; Luke xvi. 18; Rom. vii. 3; 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

Under the head of adultery there occurred another case, namely, that of *divorce*, of which our Lord proceeds to speak. The allusion is to Deut. xxiv. 1—a *permission* which, as we are told by the Saviour (Matt. xix. 8), Moses gave the people “because of the hardness of their hearts.” This permission had come to be monstrously abused in our Saviour’s time, so that, on any petty pretext, a man thought himself at liberty to put away his wife, and thus the great intentions of marriage were in a good degree frustrated. That this was a gross and sad perversion of the enactment is evident from the witness borne against divorce by Malachi, iv. 4. *But I say, &c.* In this case our Saviour may seem to depart from the law of Moses rather than to expound it, and true it is that He took for His standard, in this instance, the original law of creation, to which it was His design, under the gospel dispensation, to bring His followers. This law, however, as well as the other, was given by Moses, and the difference between them He elsewhere accounts for. (Matt. xix. 8.) In what He now taught, therefore, He was not against the *mind* of Moses or of God, neither of whom approved of divorce, except in case of fornication, but barely permitted it to prevent a greater evil. *Put away his wife.* Our Lord does not refer to the case of adultery committed by the man, there being no occasion for it, since a woman, according to the law of Moses, could not divorce her husband. But the spirit of Christian ethics fully justifies and requires the application of the statement to the other case. *Fornication*, whoredom. Some think the word implies fornication before marriage, or adultery after it. Fornication is here designedly mentioned, instead of adultery, just as in verse 28; adultery, on the other hand, includes fornication. According to this law adultery is generally believed to be the only sufficient reason of divorce, and those who give divorces, or grant them for any other cause, come under this sentence of our Lord. Some, however, maintain that Paul (1 Cor. vii. 15), added another reason—*wilful and persistent desertion.* *Saving for the cause, &c.* He who for any other cause than adultery puts away his wife, is to be

held an adulterer if he marry another woman, and she, by marrying him, commits adultery, while, at the same time, he becomes the guilty occasion of adultery, if the woman, who is still his wife, marry another man, for in this case she commits adultery, as he also does who marries her. Whether the innocent party, after a just divorce, may lawfully marry again, is not treated of here. The Church of Rome says, no; but the Greek and Protestant churches allow it. The easy and frequent grant of divorces in any community is a sad evil, and tends to the subversion of the family organization, on which the purity and peace of the social system so largely depend.

33. ¶ Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, *thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:* ^aChron. xxiii. 16. ^bEx. xx. 7; Lev. xix. 12; Num. xxx. 2; Deut. v. 11. ^cDeut. xxiii. 23.

Another false interpretation of the law is here corrected. Reference is had to Lev. xix. 12; Deut. xxiii. 23. *Forswear thyself, perjure thyself, take a false oath, swear falsely.* (See Ex. xx. 7; Lev. xix. 12; Ps. xv. 4.) *But shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths*, the things respecting which thou hast sworn, perform religiously, as to the Lord, regarding it as a duty to be fulfilled to Him. Not to perform the promises sworn to, then, is perjury (Deut. xxiii. 21; Eccl. v. 4; Nahum i. 15), and so the scribes and Pharisees taught.

34. But I say unto you, *Swear not at all: neither by heaven: for it is God’s throne:* ^aChron. xxiii. 16, 18, 22; James v. 12. ^bIsa. lxvi. 1.

Though the scribes held in words that perjury was sinful, they did much to lessen the solemnity of an oath, and to smooth the way for this worst form of falsehood. Hence, though the oath was regarded with great solemnity in ancient times by the Jews, the practice prevailed among the people in a later day, of confirming even the most trivial statements, by an oath, considered more or less binding, according to the dignity or value of the person or thing named in the oath. They thought that if they did but swear *truly*, as to matters of fact, or *perform* their oaths in case of promise, all was right, having no idea of sinning by swearing *lightly*, and forgetting that thousands of things are true which yet it would be profaning the name of God

to swear to. *Swear not at all*—use no oaths, no approximation to oaths, in your ordinary conversation—not merely do not swear by God, but do not swear at all, for all oaths, if they have any meaning, are in reality addressed to God; all these kinds of oaths which I specify are forbidden you.

Neither by heaven—one of the oaths which the Jews were in the habit of swearing, and which they regarded as a trifling one, which they could violate without guilt, as not expressly mentioning the name of God. *For it is God's throne.* There is nothing by which one can swear that is not virtually the same as God's name, since all things belong to Him. Heaven is said to be God's throne, because there He especially dwells and manifests himself as sovereign of the Universe. The use of such expressions as, "upon my soul," "upon my life," and the names of God, Lord, or Christ, as expletives, notes of admiration, with bad or good wishes, or prayers, as, "God bless us," "the Lord knows," "Lord have mercy on us," are not to be used in conversation, especially when there is no seriousness in the mind, and when they are words without meaning, but not without profaneness. None of the oaths which our Lord adduces here and in the following verses are judicial oaths, hence judicial oaths are not forbidden. That oaths were a part of the Divine law is manifest from Deut. vi. 13. As evidence of the sanction which they have, see Gen. xxi. 23, 24; xxxi. 34; xlvii. 31; 1 Sam. xx. 17; Ezek. x. 5; Ps. lxiii. 11, cx. 4; Isa. xlv. 23, lxv. 16; Jer. iv. 2; Matt. xxvi. 64; Rom. i. 9, ix. 1; Gal. i. 20; 2 Cor. i. 23; Phil. i. 8; Heb. vi. 13, vii. 21; Rev. x. 6. The indifference, if not levity, with which oaths are administered in many of our courts of justice, and on other public occasions, tends to weaken their obligation, and is matter of lamentation.

35. Nor by the earth: for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem: for it is the city of the great king: 36. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. 37. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

*Ps. xlviii. 2, and lxxxvii. 3. *Col. iv. 6; James v. 12.

Nor by the earth, for he who thus swears, swears by God, as such an oath is a recognition of God Himself, to whose dignity the earth is, in accordance with human

language and customs, represented as an appendage. (Isa. lxi. 1.) *Neither by Jerusalem*, for if the oath have meaning, it is an oath by the God who has chosen Jerusalem as the seat of His worship. (Ps. xlviii. 2, lxxxvii. 3.) With what solemn awe the Son of God speaks of His Father! *By thy head.* Among both Greeks and Romans the hand was placed on the head during swearing, implying imprecation in case of perjury. *Because thou canst not*, &c. In swearing by the head and the like, we swear by that which is beyond our control, and therefore profanely assumed to have a stability which it has not. Not a single hair, not even the color of a single hair, is in man's power. If such an oath be not absolutely unmeaning, it refers to Him who has the entire ownership in men. *Thomson* says: "This people are fearfully profane. Everybody curses and swears when in a passion. No people that I have ever known can compare with these Orientals for profaneness in the use of the names and attributes of God. The evil habit seems inveterate and universal. . . . The people now use the very same sort of oaths that are mentioned and condemned by our Lord. They swear by the head, by their life, by heaven, and by the temple, or, what is in its place, the church. The forms of cursing and swearing, however, are almost infinite, and fall on the pained ear all day long." Swearing among the Jews in the time of our Lord was also very common.

The term *communication*, which means conversation, discourse with one another, limits the prohibition to social intercourse, so that, to extend it to judicial or public doings, is unwarranted. *Be Yea, yea; Nay, nay.* (See James v. 12.) Let your affirmative communication be yea; your negative, nay. Let your affirmation and negation be in accordance with fact. Let there be no mental reservation. When you have affirmed or denied a thing, abide by what you have said, and seek not to add to its claim for belief by an oath. *For whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.* The meaning is, that evil attaches to the kind of asseverations just noticed, because they indicate a want of reverence, a pledging of things which belong to God, and a kind of

imprecation. All unnecessary oaths are wrong, as proceeding from, and tending to strengthen, a principle of irreverence, a want of a due fear for that great and terrible name, the Lord our God. Going beyond Yes and No, in affirmations and denials, as if our word for it were not enough, and we expected others to question it, springs from that vicious untruthfulness which is only aggravated by the very effort to clear ourselves of the suspicion of it. The undue multiplication of oaths is a great evil. Most justly does *Sir William Blackstone* say, "A large crop of oaths cannot fail to produce a rich harvest of perjuries."

38. ¶Ye have heard that it hath been said, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:"

¶Ex. xxi. 24; Lev. xxiv. 20; Deut. xix. 21.

The statute of the civil or judicial code of Moses (Ex. xxi. 24), which, in accordance with the simplest ideas of natural justice, regulated punishments according to the nature and magnitude of the offenses, and which was meant as a direction to *judges* and *magistrates*, had been grossly perverted by the traditions of the scribes and Pharisees. They converted a principle of judicature into a rule of every-day life, and thus gave their sanction to the gratification of *private* and *personal* revenge. Our Lord now proceeds to condemn this corruption of principle, and to show that the statute of Moses was not intended to foster a vindictive spirit, or to encourage a disposition to stern and indignant re-creation.

39. But I say unto you, "That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."

¶Prov. xx. 22, and xxiv. 29; Rom. xii. 17, 19; 1 Cor. vi. 7; 1 Thes. v. 15; 1 Peter iii. 9. ¶Isa. l. 6; Lam. iii. 30.

Private retaliation and revenge are here forbidden. To *resist evil* is very much the same thing as to avenge ourselves. We are not, in the spirit of retaliation, to resist an evil, that is, an injurious man, one who has done us evil, by doing him evil in return. A disciple of Christ who receives a blow on the cheek should expose himself to a repetition of the injury rather than to begin a contest, even though he should be ridiculed for his want of manly spirit, in consequence of his obedience to the laws of his Lord. That there are cases in which a man may be not only author-

ized, but required, to protect his own life, liberty and property, at the peril and by the punishment of the illegal assailant, there can be no doubt; but in every such case the animating principle must not be vindictive. Men who would injure their neighbors must be resisted, lest by those very actions they should prove the ruin of themselves. The word, in the text, rendered *evil*, is supposed by some to refer to sin, and evil in the world. This is often better conquered by Christian submission than by strenuous resistance. Our Lord, in order to exemplify the *kind* of injuries to which He alluded, and show the legitimate application of His principles, specified three strong external instances or symbolic specimens. *Whosoever shall smite, &c.* This does not mean that we should court insult, or in all cases submit to it without any kind of resistance, for this was not the practice of our Lord himself. When unjustly smitten before the high priest, He did not invite the repetition of the indignity, but, on the contrary, remonstrated against it. (John xviii. 22, 23.) In this remonstrance, however, He was not influenced by a spirit of retaliation, but of justice to His own character, which, under the form of striking His person, was assaulted, and what He said had a tendency to convict the party and assembly. Paul also defended his rights when they had been unjustly assailed. (Acts xvi. 37, xxiii. 3, xxv. 10, 11.) The meaning of the precept is, that we render not evil for evil, but rather suffer injury, and that injury to be repeated, than to go about to avenge ourselves. We must leave the matter to God and the magistrate. This command does not forbid the repression of crime or declare the office of the magistrate and policeman unlawful. (Rom. xiii. 4.)

40. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* cloak also.

While our Lord showed, in the first instance, a case in which an injury done to the body may be so trivial that it is more becoming not to resent it, in this one he showed a case in which an injury done to property may also be of so light a description that it is better to suffer such an act of injustice in silence than be involved in the temptation and evils of ob-

taining legal redress. We are to cultivate a spirit of forbearance, and be ready to suffer, rather than manifest a quarrelsome litigious spirit. When the importance of the case warrants it, an action at law may be defended, but this should be done in the spirit of love, which sets the well-being of society above our private ease and quiet, and without any malice. The *coat* here mentioned was a tunic, generally made of linen, worn next to the skin, with arm-holes or sleeves, reaching down, like a shirt, to the knees, and bound round the waist by a girdle. The *cloak*, called in modern times the "aba," was a large, square piece, several feet in length and breadth, and worn very much as an American Indian wears his blanket.

41. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.—Chrou. xxvii, 32; Mat. xv. 21.

This relates to a restraint upon personal liberty. It was an established practice in the Persian empire that all the royal commissioners and officers of the crown were authorized to seize upon ships, horses, carriages, and even men, wherever they might find them, and oblige them to assist in furthering the public business on which these servants of the king were employed, and to speed them on their journey from one province to another. This compulsion is mentioned third, because those who did it were officially obliged to resort to such measures. The thing here demanded is, a readiness to submit to unreasonable demands of whatever kind, rather than raise quarrels, with all the evils resulting from them. Let there be no malice, but, on the contrary, a readiness to exceed the required limits in rendering service.

42. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.

^aDeut. xv. 8, 10; Luke vi. 30, 35.

This direction must be referred to a spirit of kindness and benevolence. Taken in connection with the parallel passage (Luke vi. 30), where the words "taketh away thy goods" occur, it requires a free and cordial administering to the wants of others, whether they approach us as importunate mendicants, or even attempt by violence to despoil us of our possessions. It rebukes the maxim: "I neither ask nor grant favors." It commands generosity, yet it is a suggestive, not a universal, com-

mand. It is manifestly not one's duty to give to every worthless and indolent vagabond who asks a gift, nor to lend articles to any chance comer who may wish to live by borrowing. We are, according to our ability, to administer freely to the wants of others, when, in the exercise of our judgment, they are deserving objects of charity, and even when they are not, provided they are in perishing want of assistance.

In relation to the commands of our Lord in the four preceding verses, it should be remembered that they are not to be taken strictly, but restrainedly; not so much in their *letter*, as in their *spirit*. We must be guided by the other sayings and the example of our Lord, as well as by the moral law, in applying the principle of Christian love here laid down, to every particular instance. These commands must be so expounded as not to contradict other portions of God's Word. It is obvious that a literal interpretation of them would break up all the foundations of society, and destroy all control of person and property.

43. ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said, ^bThou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy:

^bLev. xix. 18. ^cDeut. xxi. 6; Ps. xli. 10.

The command was given to the Jews—*Thou shalt love thy neighbor* (Lev. xix. 18); but as this injunction was not extended to their *enemies*, they thought that this was a tacit permission to *hate* them, and hence the corrupters of the law added, *and hate thine enemy*. By *neighbor* they understood a *Jew*, and by *enemy*, the *Gentiles*, hence they entertained strong prejudices and malignant sentiments toward every other nation but their own. *Tacitus*, the Roman historian, says, "toward each other they are compassionate and kind, toward all others they cherish a deadly hatred." The same thing was true of the Romans and the Greeks, for they called all other nations barbarians, and treated them with insolence, contempt and cruelty. In this general ferment of the malevolent passions, how seasonable, salutary, kind, conciliatory, was the command which follows! Our Lord, let it be observed, only interpreted a law in force from the beginning; this, indeed, is the only satisfactory view of the entire strain of this discourse.

44. But I say unto you, *Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you;*

*†*Luke vi. 27, 35; Rom. xii. 14, 20. *†*Luke xxiii. 34; Acts vii. 60; 1 Cor. iv. 12, 13; 1 Peter ii. 23, and iii. 9.

This is the most sublime piece of morality ever given to man. The thought of requiting acts of enmity with acts of kindness could only arise in the heart of Him who has Himself prayed for the evil-doers, and the best commentary on these matchless counsels is the bright example of Him who gave them. (Rom. xii. 20, 21; 1 Cor. iv. 12; 1 Peter ii. 21-24, iii. 9.) *Love your enemies.* The love of *benevolence* is here required, not of *complacency*, which is due to those only of an upright character. We are to cherish kind wishes toward all man, kind. Even our personal enemies are to be embraced in our personal regards, not because they are our enemies, but our fellow men. We are to have a benignant, out-going desire for their good, and to treat them with kindness, as we have opportunity. *Bless them that curse you.* This is quite parallel to the Apostle's injunction, not to "render railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing." Be civil and kind to those who are rude to you, and be ready, when you can do so with truth, to speak to the advantage of those who have, by malignant and untrue statements, endeavored to injure your reputation. *Do good, &c.* Confer acts of kindness on those who hate you. *And pray, &c.*—pray for those who are making continual war upon you, and constantly harassing and calumniating you. Knowing that you can do but little to make them happy, call in the aid of Omnipotence. Instead of imprecating vengeance, pray for forgiveness and for all heavenly and spiritual blessings to them, and do this for your most inveterate foes. "This precept," says *Leighton*, "does not bar any calm way of self-righting, to which there is sometimes an obligation, but men overstretch it, and passion and self-love domineer under this pretext. Let Julian and other atheists laugh at it, but it is the glory of Christians. No doctrine or religion in the world presses so much clemency and innocence and bounty as theirs, even to sworn enemies."

45. That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. —*†*Job. xxv. 3.

How touching, how irresistible is the argument used to enforce the gracious injunction just given! *That ye may be the children, &c., i. e.,* that ye may show yourselves to be such by resembling Him, assimilated to Him by conformity of disposition, as children usually are to their parents. (Eph. v. 1.) The children of God are not to imitate the world (Rom. xii. 2), but to take the Most High for their example; His love was manifested in the most costly sacrifice for us (1 John iv. 7, 8), and it is by acting out our love in like manner that we truly confess the truth respecting the Father and the Son. *For he maketh his sun, &c.* The sunshine and the rain, the two great causes of the earth's productiveness, are made subservient to the temporal welfare of the evil, as well as the good. Here is evidence of God's long-suffering patience and unwearied kindness, and impartial love. We need to be reminded of those common mercies which fail to strike us, simply because they are common mercies. The rain often seems poured out uselessly upon barren heights, but it is there collected and made to descend in a thousand channels concealed from mortal eye, to gladden the parched up wastes below. So, too, the sun appears to waste his generous energies upon the arid wastes of the Great Sahara and the desolate solitudes of Africa, but he may then be preparing those genial influences by which God "makes our garments warm when he quieteth the earth by the South wind." (Job xxxvii. 17.) Who can say that the efforts of the Christian who aims at the good of all his race shall ever be lost?

46. *†*For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? *†*Luke vi. 32.

If ye love only them which love you, what reward have ye? What remarkable thing do ye which entitles you to any special reward? The reward referred to is that mentioned in the preceding verse, of being like our heavenly Father. The love of one's wife, or husband, or children, or relatives, is only an enlarged species of selfishness. (Eph. v. 28.) He who is destitute of this kind of love is worse than a brute, but he who has no more extended benevolence is no better than a *publican*. The

publicans, who had care of tributes and customs, were bitterly hated by the Jews, because they were officers of the Romans, and were generally covetous. In loving those who love us, there is no evidence of superior principle; the worst of men will do this. It is the duty of the Christian to be better than anybody else. "He should," says *Cecil*, "if he be a shoemaker, be the best shoemaker in the town." "Love for love is justice," says *Burkitt*, "love for love is favor and kindness; but love for hatred and enmity is Divine goodness, a Christ-like temper, which will render us illustrious on earth and glorious in heaven. But, Lord! how do men confine their love to little sects and parties! and from thence comes that bitterness of spirit of one party toward another, and, oh, how hard it is to find a Christian of a true catholic love and temper!"

47. And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

Salute, i. e., bestow a friendly greeting. *Brethren*; here fellow-citizens, countrymen, neighbors in the Jewish acceptance of the term. The forms and modes of salutation were observed with great care among all oriental nations. Among the Jews, the expressions employed amounted to an interceding for blessings to rest upon the person, and were such as these: "Be thou blessed of Jehovah," "May Jehovah be with thee," "peace," that is, all prosperity, "be with thee." *Do not even, &c.* (See on verse 46.) How much over civilization and the general influences of religion have improved society, Christians ought to be above the average standard of virtue around them. This should not be shown by an extra severity, and moroseness, but by an ex-

tra serenity, sweetness, love and devotion.

48. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."
 1 Gen. xvii. 1; Lev. xi. 41, and xix. 2; Luke vi. 36; Col. i. 28, and iv. 12; James i. 4; 1 Peter i. 15, 16. 1 Eph. v. 1.

These words are to be limited by the context—"Be not satisfied with the low standard of publicans and other ordinary men, but make God your model. Follow not the example of unregenerated persons, but aim at an imitation of your Father. Your love is not to be partial, but universal, like His." That this is the meaning is plain from the parallel passage in Luke vi. 36. Still, it is true that the divine moral excellence is the copy and rule of the Christian, and that nothing short of as complete a conformity to this as the limited capacities of our nature admit of, should satisfy our ambition. Perfectness, though it may not be attained in this world, is to be our earnest, constant, ultimate aim, as we keep our eye fixed upon that full-orbed completeness which is in the great divine model. (See 1 Thes. v. 23.) The *perfect* law is our rule; the *perfect* God our pattern. These last verses prove that our Lord's exposition of the law was intended both to show the people their need of mercy, and to teach His disciples the strict rule of duty. And all coming short of it, or deviation from it, is *sin*, needs repentance, forgiveness through His blood, and grace to enable us to be more obedient. We who are created in God's image, and restored in Christ, and made partakers of the divine nature in Him, are bound by the conditions of our creation, redemption, and sanctification, to endeavor to be like Him here, that we may have the fruition of His glorious Godhead hereafter. (Eph. iv. 1; 1 Peter i. 15; 1 John ii. 1.)

1. Is this discourse of our Lord recorded by more than one Evangelist? 2. Of how many divisions does it consist? 3. State them. 4. What is said of the mountain on which the sermon was preached? 5. What things relating to the beatitudes require to be noted? 6. Explain them in their order. 7. Why should Christians rejoice? Why are they the "salt of the earth," and the "light of the world?" 8. How are they to let their light shine? 9. How did Jews "not come to destroy, but to fulfil?" 10. What is said about "one of these least commandments?" 11. What is said about "righteousness" in verse 20? 12. Explain verses 21 and 22. 13. How are we to bring our gift to the altar? 14. What awful truth is taught in verse 23? 15. What is the meaning of the injunctions in verses 29 and 30? 16. What does our Saviour teach in regard to "swearing?" 17. What; about revenge? 18. What; about forbearance? 19. What; about beneficence? 20. What; about enemies? 21. Explain "Be ye therefore perfect," &c.

CHAPTER VI.

1 *Christ continueth his sermon in the mount, speaking of alms, 5 prayer, 14 forgiving our brethren, 16 fasting, 19 where our treasure is to be laid up, 24 of serving God, and mammon: 25 exhorteth not to be careful for worldly things: 33 but to seek God's kingdom.*

TAKE heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

Having thus far exploded the glosses, upon the law, of the old doctors, handed down to the rabbies of the day, our Lord now proceeds to expose certain favorite practices of the Pharisees. He passes from the correction of wrong *doctrine*, to the reformation of *life*. In this fact we have a sufficient answer to the dogma, so often and so confidently put forth, that "it matters not what men believe, provided they are sincere in their opinions."

Take heed. Be watchful, be on the alert. The warning here given extends to what is afterward said about prayer and fasting. The Greek word for *alms* is a different word from that which is rendered "alms" in verse 2. It signifies *righteousness* (See Dan. iv. 27; Deut. xxiv. 13; Ps. cxii. 9; 2 Cor. ix. 9, 10), by which we are to understand that same righteousness of the kingdom of heaven, whose leading features—in opposition to traditional perversions of it—it is the great object of this discourse to open up. In particular it embraces the specifications of alms-giving, prayer, fasting—three relations to God, to ourselves, and to our neighbor, which are brought to view in verses 2-18, and which are frequently referred to in the Scriptures. (Rom. ii. 21, 22, vii. 12, xix. 17; 1 Cor. vi. 11, xiii. 5, 6, 13; Eph. v. 9; 1 Tim. i. 13; Titus i. 8, ii. 12; Heb. xii. 12, 14.) Thus the verse becomes a general heading for this whole section of the discourse. To "do our righteousness" is just, in other words, to perform those duties which we owe to God and to man. (Ps. cvi. 3; John xv. 8.) Righteousness is here presented in a negative character. Alms-giving is a religious duty; acts of charity are acts of justice and equity. (Deut. xxiv. 13; Ps. cxii. 9; James i. 27.) It is also here intimated that the matter of our alms should be goods righteously gotten; to give alms of what is gotten unjustly is robbery, and not righteousness.

Before men, &c. If we let what we do

be known with discretion and prudence, and absence of all self-laudation, our object being, that others may be stimulated to follow our example, and so give glory to our Father who is in heaven (chap. v. 16,) we do not only what is right, but what is expedient in the sight of God, and for the good of mankind. But if our object is to show that we are better than others—to gain the *clat* and notoriety which such acts would be adapted to call forth—then we inherit the succession of the ancient Pharisees—we act to get praise of men. The excessive love of men's admiration and applause is a most dangerous and pernicious principle. When we *do* give, how much of self, and how little of God is there in it! *Otherwise ye have, &c.*—if ye disregard my caution, you cannot obtain the approbation of God. You serve the eyes of men, and from them must be your reward. Act for God's eye, and God will reward you. It is here evident that actions take their character from their principles, and that nothing is an act of duty to God but what springs from a regard to His authority, and from a desire of His approbation. (Isa. xxxix. 13; Prov. xvi. 5; James iv. 6.)

2. Therefore when thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

Therefore evolves the special admonition out of the general one contained in verse 1. *Alms* are deeds of charity, or things given to the poor. With a delicate reference to the secrecy enjoined, the plural pronoun *ye*, of verse 1, is here changed to the more pointed *thou*. Christ here assumes that His disciples were in the habit of giving alms. *When thou*—child of God, doest alms, which must no more be omitted than the offering of the gift according to chapter v. 24. (See Prov. xix. 17; Matt. x. 40-42; Luke xi. 41; Acts ix. 36, x. 2-4; 2 Cor. ix. 8, 9; Heb. vi. 9, 10.) *Do not sound, &c.* The practice prevailed extensively, in ancient times, of the great and the wealthy distributing their bounty to their poor dependents, who were summoned to their houses at a stated hour, and by the sound of a trumpet; and another practice, which probably arose out of the former, of the

poor, who received those largesses, celebrating the praises of their benefactors by the same public and flattering expedient. In the East, at the present day, alms are distributed in both of these ways. In illustration of the first, it may be stated, on the authority of the most respectable writers, that the Mussulmans are in the habit, particularly at the great festival of Muhûrun, of erecting stages in the public streets, and by the sound of a trumpet calling the poor to receive alms of rice, and other kinds of food; and those who have no trumpets go to the houses of the persons they intend to benefit, and deliver their charities in person, repeating at the same time verses, containing admonition and advice, with a very loud voice, that the sound of it may bring them out. In illustration of the second, one traveler informs us that the wandering dervishes of the East use rams' horns, which are of extreme length, for trumpets, and that they blow them immediately on their arrival in any place, and at the doors of opulent citizens, to intimate that they are in want of alms. And another says, that he saw some mendicants proclaiming the generosity of a wealthy Persian, who had given them some douceur, in the most noisy and vehement manner, on the fragment of an old and worthless horn. This custom, which boasts a venerable antiquity, seems to have prevailed in the time of Christ; and whether the hypocritical Pharisees imitated the modern Mussulmans, in placing themselves on elevated platforms, and announcing by public proclamation the charitable office they were going to commence—or whether that ostentatious class generally limited their gratuities to those whom they knew would pay them the compliments of the horn—it is evident that the *intention* of our Lord's precept is to forbid the distribution of alms in the manner, and from the motives, of those who resorted to the streets, and other places of general and busy thoroughfare, with the express view of publishing their liberality.

Hypocrites, men who carry themselves with other faces than their own, as stage-players. *Synagogues*. The word here used, in the original, commonly means *Jewish*

places of worship; in this verse it appears to mean *collections of people*. *Streets*, not *lanes or alleys*, as in Luke xiv. 21, but *wide streets*. *That they may have, &c.*—applause, honor. *Verily I say unto you*. In such august expressions it is the Law-giver and Judge Himself we hear speaking to us. *They have their reward*, they acted from pure selfishness, hence have their reward in men's praise, and will not receive any reward at the hands of the Heavenly Father. (Verse 1.)

3. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: 4. That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.—Luke xiv. 14.

Let not thy left hand know, &c. Mr. Roberts remarks, that among the Mussulmans the *right* hand always dispenses gifts, because it is more honorable than the other; and the figure used here is a common oriental-ism. Thus, it is usual to say of things which are not to be revealed—"Let not thy left ear hear that which went into the right, nor the right be acquainted with that which was heard by the left." Here the utmost secrecy possible in performing the act is enjoined. We must not only shun the applause of others, we must shun even our own. No one, not even the nearest and most intimate friend, is to know of our alms-giving, and, as far as possible, we are to keep from us the very consciousness of what we have done. We are not to reflect on it with self-pleasing, for that is the "left hand" in view. In some cases publicity in giving alms is so far from being culpable that it is necessary, useful and laudable. (1 Chron. xxix. 1-9; see on verse 1; also on chap. v. 16.) But where it must be public, our intention should be secret; we should take no delight in having the eyes of men on us. We ought also to be careful that we bestow a much *larger* proportion of our alms in secrecy and in silence, and have no other object whatever in view but the approbation of God. The secrecy of our charity is one good evidence of its sincerity. Hence the Egyptians made the emblem of charity to be a blind boy reaching out honey to a bee that had lost her wings. *And thy Father which seeth, &c.* Even in public acts of charity God sees in secret. Though the action be no secret,

the source of it is, and He still looks upon that. It is so ordered in the divine administration that the selfish soul shall be disappointed in the end, while he who seeks the good of others shall find his own. No one can by beneficent actions secure the favor of God. But if a man believe in Jesus he is accepted in Him, and being so, his offerings presented from grateful love to Him are accepted and rewarded both in this world and that which is to come. (Ps. xxxii. 5-7, xxxiv. 15; Eccl. xi. 1; Luke xiv. 14; Acts x. 4; Rom. ii. 16; 1 Cor. iv. 5; Heb. vi. 10; 1 Tim. v. 25.) The inward consciousness of integrity is itself a reward; and the esteem of worthy men, spontaneously bestowed, is a reward. But most of all will the righteous be rewarded when that takes place which is spoken of in Matt. xxv. 34, &c. (See Luke xiv. 14.)

"Every act

Which shunned the trifling plaudit of mankind,
Shall there to wondering millions be displayed
A monument of grace."

5. ¶ And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

Job xxvii. 8, 10; Isa. i. 15; Luke xviii. 10, 11, xx. 47.

From sincerity in almsour Lord proceeds to sincerity in prayer. It is here assumed that every one prays who hopes to obtain God's favor. Neither social prayer or public devotion is here forbidden. (1 Kings xviii. 33, 37; 1 Chron. xxix. 10-19; 2 Chron. vi. 13-42; Neh. viii. 5, 6, ix. 3; Isa. lvi. 7; Matt. xviii. 19, 20; Heb. x. 25.) *Hypocrites*. (See on verse 2.) *For they love, &c.* It is not the praying in the synagogues, or in the streets, which our Lord here condemns, but the hypocrisy of so praying in order to *be seen of men*. The Jews of old observed stated hours of prayer, three of which are mentioned in the Scriptures, the *third hour* answering to our nine o'clock, when the morning sacrifice was offered—the *sixth hour* answering to our twelve o'clock (Acts x. 9, 30)—the *ninth hour*, answering to our three o'clock in the afternoon. (Acts iii. 1; see Ps. lv. 17; Dan. vi. 10.) At these hours the Pharisees and hypocrites took care to be in some public place, for prayer, to be noticed and applauded for their devotional spirit and fidelity. *Verily, &c.* (See on verse 2.) The person who loves to officiate in social worship, because he

may thus obtain for himself a character remarkable for piety among his brethren, is equally condemned by the spirit of our Lord's prohibition, as the Pharisee who performed his private devotion in public for the same purpose.

6. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.
Gen. xxxii. 24, 29; 2 Kings iv. 23; Isa. xxvi. 20; John i. 43.

Private or secret prayer is evidently here referred to. *When thou prayest*. Religion is a personal thing. Our collective character, as belonging to the universal church or some particular portion of it, is not sufficient either for our happiness or safety. The very act of prayer supposes something personal between God and men. David and Daniel prayed three times a day. *Twice* a day, at least, the Christian will withdraw for prayer, and as much oftener as he feels spiritual languor or danger. *Thy closet*. In the Jewish houses there was usually an upper room devoted to retirement. "Closet" means "a place of retirement," and a term of such latitude may have been employed that we might have no excuse for omission, if we are unfurnished with a place appropriated more expressly to pious use. Isaac made a closet of the field, Daniel of the river-side, Nathaniel of the fig tree, Peter of the house-top. *When thou hast shut, &c., i. e.*, used every caution against being interrupted. *Pray to thy Father, &c.* The glorious doctrine of a particular providence is here brought to view. God communes from the mercy-seat with, and receives the case of, every individual Christian. God alone is the proper object of prayer. Godhead alike belongs to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, so that all having the same Godhead are the objects of worship. Through Christ we all have access by one Spirit unto the Father. *Which seeth in secret*. God is everywhere—He is in our closet—He seeth in secret as much as anywhere, as much as in heaven itself, where He reigns in full perfection. *Shall reward thee, &c.* (See on verse 3.) Secret prayer is not designed to raise a transient emotion, or lighten care by a communication of it to another, but to yield a benefit which shall appear in experience and in

the daily walks of life. For the Christian who thus prays, there will be the reward of increasing piety—his profiting shall appear unto all—he will be rewarded in the sight of angels and an assembled universe.

7. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

Our Lord has previously been speaking of the way in which the Pharisees and hypocrites sought in prayer to deceive men; now He shows how they thought to deceive God. *Use not vain repetitions.* Earnest, importunate prayer is not here forbidden. Intensity of feeling sometimes leads to repetition. (See Matt. xx. 30, 31; xxvi. 44; Luke vi. 12; xviii. 1, &c.) Neither are lengthy prayers forbidden. (See 1 Kings viii., and 2 Chron. vi.; Neh. ix.; Dan. ix.; John xvii.) It is *vain* repetition that is condemned—that which claims merit because of its much speaking.

As the heathen do—people not Jews, and not instructed respecting God. (1 Kings xviii. 26–29.) In all the pagan world of antiquity vain repetitions were used. Even among the enlightened Greeks and Romans it was customary to repeat their supplications a hundred times, with the view of making a deeper impression on the heart of the deity they invoked. Even the Jews themselves needed caution on this point, for it was a current maxim with them that “whoso lengthens his prayers, will not return empty,” and that “every man should daily repeat at least eighteen prayers.” The modern Jews in Barbary, says *Mr. Shaw*, repeat the same prayer a hundred and twenty times in a breath. The priests of Bhud spend whole days in repeating the sacred word “Um,” and the Mohammedans cry for hours the single word “Allah.” But the most remarkable and strange of all the forms in which the heathen observe their “vain repetitions,” is that of the Kalmuc Tartars, whose practice may be described briefly as follows: “They have praying machines, which, in the act of devotion, they turn repeatedly, and in the same manner as one would revolve a wheel. A machine of this kind consists of a small barrel about sixteen inches in length and seven or eight in diameter, covered with red velvet, and having within it a number of written

prayers. At each end of the barrel is an axle, one of which has a crank, and to it is fixed a string with which to turn the instrument. It is fitted to a frame, which is covered with cloth of a coarser or finer description, according to the circumstances of the owner. The one, of which this account is given, belonged to a Kalmuc princess, and was enveloped in a covering of velvet; and the whole apparatus was set upon an elegant little chest directly before her. When the barrel turns round, it is supposed by the poor ignorant people that the prayers go up to heaven, and the more revolutions that are made—or, in other words, the oftener the writing is uppermost—the more chance there is of their being heard. Those of the Kalmucs who are too poor to purchase, or too unskillful to construct, a machine of this superior kind, have small praying mills, like the windmills given as toys to children with us, to the spokes of which they fasten prayers, written on slips of paper, with paste or small cords. These they set up on the top of their tents, and as they are turned by the wind, it is imagined that they have a similar effect with the barrel.”

For they think, &c. *Augustine* says in effect, that our Lord’s injunction is against *much speaking*, not against *much praying*. There should not be superfluous words, but a continual pious affection of heart. We may pray in few words, or in many words; it is the heart that God looks to. As a man feels, so is he in God’s sight.

8. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

Prayer is not designed to communicate information to God, nor to weary Him into compliance. (Ps. cxxxix. 2–4.) “If God knows our necessities before we ask,” it may be inquired, “what can be the necessity of asking?” The answer is, prayer is a divinely appointed instrumentality or channel through which God has chosen to confer blessings on His children. (Matt. vii. 8.) It disposes us rightly to receive and improve the gifts of heaven. It is itself the exercise of our best feelings, and by the very act we possess many of the blessings we ask. *Superstition* ascribes the reason for the granting of a prayer, not to the mercy of God, but to its own godless

work. *Unbelief* infers from the omniscience of God (in which it does not believe) the uselessness of prayer. *Faith* founds, upon this same holy, gracious, divine omniscience, its poor prayer. Thus our Lord teaches us to pray in faith, *because* God knows, before we ask Him, what things we stand in need of, and, therefore, He can inspire the (to Him) acceptable prayer, and grant it accordingly. (Rom. viii. 26-8.)

"Prayer," says *Quesnel*, "is not intended to inform God, but to set before man his misery, to humble his heart, to awaken his desires, to kindle his faith, to encourage his hope, to raise his soul toward heaven, and to remind him that his Father, his home and his eternal inheritance are above." (Phil. iii. 20.)

⁹ After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

¹ Luke xi. 2, &c. On which see notes.

In a prayer framed in the spirit of the injunction against "vain repetitions," our Lord gave a vivid illustration of the nature of Christian prayer. This prayer is found, with very slight variations, in Luke xi. 2-4. From its delivery to the present hour it has excited the admiration of the wise and good throughout the world, and down through all these centuries it has been the single golden link, running through the ages, that has bound together in one the whole vast company of the prayerful. Even the stupid infidel and the shallow scoffer have not failed to perceive its beauty, sublimity and comprehensiveness. It is little in words but great in substance, so short that the weakest memory may retain it, and yet so full that it comprehends all things which relate to ourselves or others, to our bodies or souls, to time or eternity—proper for all exigencies and occasions, as well for the last ages of Christianity as the first, as well for the private devotions of the closet as the public service of the temple, including every part of religious worship, supplication and intercession, confession and deprecation, resignation and thanksgiving, adapted to all periods of life, to all kinds of character, to all countries and capacities, and suited to all conditions, equally proper for high and low, rich and poor. The child may lip its simple sentences as soon as it knows how to pray; it comes with no less fitness

from the wrinkled lips of age. It may be taken up and used alike by the penitent in the first hour of his return to God, the struggler in the thick of the spiritual conflict, and the believer in the highest soarings of his faith and love. The youngest, the oldest, the simplest, the wisest, the most sin-stained, the most saintly, can find nothing here unsuitable, unreasonable. It gathers up into one what they all can and should unite in saying as they bend in supplication before God.

The existence of a progressive sequence in the prayer is seen even on a casual view. At the outset the suppliant appears lost in the contemplation of the Being to whom his spirit ascends; next, he turns his thoughts upon himself and his own wants. Further, it is not difficult to recognize a progression in the first three petitions, and in the three (or four) last. The recognition of the name of God is the basis on which alone the kingdom of God can be established, and again, this kingdom is the sphere in which the will of God is fulfilled. Further, the prayer for the maintenance of the life of man precedes the prayer for the forgiveness of his sins; and again, it is only when the guilt of the past is removed that the thought is directed to the temptations of the future. The thoughtful reader, who has derived from other sources the knowledge of the Trinity, will also find a reference to that truth in the scheme of this prayer. The petitions of the first and second parts refer to God as Creator and Preserver; the second petition of either part refers to God as Redeemer, whilst the third of either part relates to God the Holy Spirit, by whom the divine will comes to be fulfilled, and through whose power temptation is overcome.

After this manner pray ye. In Luke (xi. 2), "when ye pray." Evidently it was not our Lord's meaning that we should use these words exclusively, for the second form of the prayer in Luke varies considerably from this. It was intended as a model rather than a mould. Highly appropriate as it is, both in public and private devotion, it was never intended to confine within the limits of its few sentences the free spirit of prayer. It was

given rather as a specimen, by the spirit and order and proportion of whose several parts we should guide our own spontaneous petitions, than as a rigid and imperishable enclosure in which all our pious acknowledgments and supplications should be compressed. It was intended not so much as a sacred formulary, as for divine instruction as to what petitions are universally good, universally necessary, universally acceptable, as well as to inculcate simplicity and brevity in the expression. The example of our Lord Himself, of the Apostles, of the Church in all ages, has taught us how full and varied are the utterances of the human heart when it breathes itself out unrestrainedly unto God in prayer. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Our Father which art in heaven. The very commencement of the prayer assumes in the suppliant a spirit penetrated with reverence and love—a spirit which, like the Psalmist, thinks of God as the highest and best portion. (Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26.) Against Atheism, which teaches that there is no God; against Pantheism, which teaches that God is not a person, but identical with nature; against Epicurism, which teaches that God cares nothing for His creation; against Polytheism, which teaches that there are many gods, and against Fatalism, which renders the hearing of prayer an impossibility, our Saviour teaches that our one God is a personal, living, freely-working God, who projects and executes His counsel, not without, but with reference to, the praying man—even a *Father*. We have here grouped together the three principles which settle man's just relations to this and to the next world. 1. The *Filial*. We see in the Most High a Father. (Acts xvii. 28; Col. i. 20-22; John i. 12.) This representation of God as a Father of those who worship Him teaches us that He stands in a relation toward them similar to that in which a father stands to his children, and that He regards them in a manner similar to that in which a father regards and acts toward his children—really loving them, and disposed to bestow on them everything that is necessary to their true happiness. 2. The *Fraternal*. We come not with our private needs and

vows alone, but with those of our race and household. *Our Father.* The renewal of the parental re-knits the fraternal tie. Believers, in all their prayers, should think of others as well as themselves. "Every Christian," says one, "has a share in all the prayers of all the rest; he is a partner in every ship of that kind that goes to sea, and has a portion of all their gainful voyages." Though we go *alone* into the closet, we are not accepted there if we go in *selfishness and isolation*. 3. The *Celestial*. Though we are now of the earth, and attached to it by these mortal and terrene bodies, we are not originally from it, nor were we made to be eternally *upon* it. We are *of* heaven, and *for* heaven, for there and not here our Father is, and where He is our true *Home* is. God, though omnipresent, has heaven as His special residence. The clause, *which art in heaven*, directs our thoughts to the difference between earthly fathers and this Father. (Comp. chap. vii. 11; Eph. iii. 15, iv. 6.) By the words "Our Father" we express God's nearness to us; by the phrase "in heaven," His distance from us. (See Eccl. v. 2; Isa. lxvi. 1.) By the latter we learn God's ability to help us; by the former, His willingness to do so. Holy, loving familiarity suggests the one, awful reverence the other. The whole compellation tends to produce the right disposition of prayer, the mixture of *joy and fear, confidence and reverence*. (See Ps. ii. 11.)

Hallowed be thy name. It will be noticed that our first concern is to be for what relates to God, before what respects ourselves. Thus are we taught that man's needs are never to take precedence of God's rights. The first part of the prayer begins with the riches of God:

Thy name be hallowed,

Thy kingdom come,

Thy will be done.

The second part, on the contrary, commences with the poverty of man:

Us give daily bread,

Us forgive our debts,

Us lead not into temptation,

Us deliver from evil.

By the *name* of God, we are to understand His revealed character and attributes—even all that is implied in the appellation

by which He is known among men. (See Ex. xxxiv. 5-7.) The word *hallowed* is nearly synonymous with "sanctified," or "glorified." God's name may be hallowed by us in three ways: 1. In our hearts, by entertaining suitable conceptions of Him. 2. By our lips, when we acknowledge His divine perfections, and tell of all His wondrous works. 3. In our lives, when the consideration of these divine perfections engages us to suitable obedience. This petition forbids cursing and swearing, perjury and blasphemy. It forbids all lip-service, all hypocritical genuflections, all mummeries of worship, where the heart is not engaged. In it we desire that all atheism, infidelity, idolatry, impiety, superstition, ignorance, and false religion, may be banished from the world, and that the only living and true God may be worshiped and honored all over the earth, and by every intelligent creature. This, in fact, is the very petition which the Lord Jesus himself put up, on another occasion. (John xii. 28.)

10. Thy kingdom come. *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

¹Chap. xxvi. 39, 42; Acts xxi. 14. ²Ps. ciii. 20.

Thy kingdom come. (Ps. xxii. 28; Dan. ii. 44.) The plainest and simplest sense of *thy kingdom* is, the promised kingdom which God is one day to take to Himself over all the world, foretold by *Daniel and the other prophets*, when Satan shall cease to be "prince of this world," and the millennium shall begin. This petition implies an earnest desire that the kingdom of God may be set up in our own hearts (Luke xvii. 21), reducing all within us to entire subjection to Christ, our king; that it may be set up in the hearts of our children, relatives, servants, friends, neighbors; that the word of the kingdom may, in all nations, "be preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven;" that Christian churches may be established in every region of our earth, and that "the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ," that every opposing power may be put down, and God be all in all. The final setting up of this kingdom has been long predicted. (Gen. iii. 15; Rom. viii. 22; Rev. xi. 15, and xxii. 20.)

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

(Ps. xl. 8, ciii. 20.) God's will may be considered either as preceptive or providential. To the former reference is here made, for God's providential will is done in earth equally as in heaven. Or, if the latter is also referred to, that submission, acquiescence and satisfaction in it which angels feel and express, may be intended. It ought to be the prayer and care, the study and endeavor of every Christian, that the commanding will of God may be done by himself, and by all men on earth, as it is by the saints and angels in heaven, with entireness, harmony, cheerfulness, diligence, constancy and ineffable delight. (Hab. ii. 14; Heb. viii. 11; see also Luke xxii. 42; Acts xxi. 14.) Nor should the knowledge of the fact that in this life, through the imperfection of our nature, we never shall do the will of God in the same absolutely perfect way as it is done in heaven, be regarded as a reason why we should lower the object of our desires, or the aim and earnestness of our endeavors. This petition is instinct with the very life of missionary enterprise, and the Church cannot offer this clause of the Divine prayer in the full spirit of its power without becoming a missionary church. There are some who see in it an intimation that our earth is to be one part, at least, of the final and glorious abode of the saints. (See 2 Peter iii. 13.)

11. Give us this *day* our *daily* bread.

^{*}Or, *for the day.* ¹Job xxiii. 12; Prov. xxx. 8.

Daily bread. The bread which is convenient or sufficient for our daily subsistence. (Prov. xxx. 8, 9.) Bread is one principal part of the things which are needful for the body, and here, as is often the case, it is put for the whole. By the use of this word, therefore, we are taught to ask only things that are necessary, without craving superfluities, and to refer it to our Heavenly Father to determine what things are necessary, according to our station in life, our families, and various other circumstances. We are taught to ask "daily" the supply of the *needs* of life. (Ps. xxxvii. 3.) 1. That we should not have anxious care for the future, and 2. Because we are not warranted to ask, even of the necessities of life, very large supplies, which may serve for weeks, months, or years to come, but are, as children, contin-

ually to exercise the spirit of entire dependence on, and complete confidence in, our Heavenly Father's care. The richer sort of persons, in offering this petition, do in effect say, "Let the bread which is ours come to us this day *sanctified by Thy Almighty Hands!*" (Ps. cxxxii. 15; Matt. iv. 4.) The "our" points to necessary *labor*, the true way of asking and receiving, according to God's original appointment for man, in Gen. iii. 19, independently of which we eat not *our own bread* (2 Thes. iii. 12; 1 Thes. iv. 11, 12), but another's. It shows that our food and raiment must be of God's giving—that is, honestly and fairly earned, "for," as an old writer remarks, "to him God gives bread, who earns it by righteous means, but to him who earns it by sin, the devil it is who giveth." It points also to the obligatory communication and fellowship, since as we in "our" and "us" pray with and for one another, so we may not hold anything that we receive exclusively and covetously for ourselves alone. "Break thy bread to the hungry," &c. (Isa. lviii. 7; Comp. 1 Sam. xxv. 11.) Our Lord does not bid us pray *merely* for the need and nourishment of the body, but speaks also of the *bread* which the Father giveth from heaven, just as in John vi. 27-33, iv. 34.

12. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.—1 Chap. xviii. 21, &c.

This petition immediately follows the preceding one, to show us that though we have daily bread, yet all is nothing without forgiveness. In this prayer there is but one petition for the body (verse 11), but two petitions, this, and the following one, for the soul. Hence observe that we are to be more careful for our souls than for our bodies—more desirous to have our souls saved than our bodies fed. What are here called *debts*, are called "sins," in Luke xi. 4. So then sin is a debt, and every sinner a debtor. (See Matt. xviii. 23-35; Luke vii. 41.) Sins are called debts: 1. Because as a debt arises upon non-payment of that which is one's due, so we, owing to God exact obedience, and not paying what is due, come to be in debt; 2. Because, as in case of non-payment, the debtor goes to prison; so, by our sins, we become guilty, and stand exposed

to God's wrath forever. In this petition the following things are supposed: 1. That we are all sinners, and, as such, stand in need of forgiveness. 2. That we are obliged to pray every day for pardon, as we do for our daily bread, for our sins are many and daily. (Rom. iii. 10-12; Ps. xl. 13; see Heb. vii. 27, referring to Lev. xvi. 11-15.) Nor is there anything in this view inconsistent with the perfection and perpetuity of justification. The moment a man believes on Christ, he is as much justified as Paul or John, and cannot be more justified if he lives to the age of Methuselah. But all this is no reason why he should not daily confess his sins, and daily seek fresh application of Christ's blood to his conscience. In fact, it is the life of faith to do so. The truth, "he that believeth in Christ shall never come into condemnation," instead of leading to the conclusion, "I need not pray for the forgiveness of my sins," suggests the strongest encouragement to present such a petition. (See 1 John ii. 1.) 3. That since we are to pray for pardon of sin, it is impossible for us ever to satisfy the justice of God for sin.

Forgive us our debts—Remit the penalty of our offenses, and hold us as if we had not sinned. (Job vii. 21; Ps. xxxii. 1; Isa. xliii. 25, xlv. 22; Jer. xxxi. 34; Mi. vii. 19; Mark ii. 7.) *As we forgive our debtors*. In Luke xi. 4, it is, "for we also forgive," &c. The word *As*, meaning *according as*, *like as*, is not a note of equality, but similitude, not that we equal God in forgiving, but imitate Him. It also has in a measure the sense of *inasmuch as*. The willingness of the suppliant is by no means a ground upon which God can bestow on him forgiveness, but rather a subjective condition without which he has no boldness to entreat the forgiveness of his own sins. (See chap. vi. 14, 15. James ii. 13; 1 John iv. 18, 19.) This condition, or qualification, requires, 1. That we forgive cordially (Jer. xxxi. 34; Matt. xviii. 35; Eph. iv. 2)—fully (Ps. ciii. 3)—often (Isa. lvii. 7; Matt. xviii. 21). It is a very striking consideration that this petition is so framed that, if presented in an unforgiving spirit, it is, indeed, an imprecation of divine vengeance. He who does not forgive his neighbor his trespasses, when he uses this prayer, in

effect asks God not to forgive him his trespasses, and, if he continues in his present temper, there is no doubt that his prayer will be answered.

13. ¹And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; ²For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.
³Chron. xxvi. 41; Luke xxii. 40, 46; 1 Cor. x. 13; 2 Peter ii. 9; Rev. iii. 10. ⁴John xvii. 15. ⁵1 Chron. xxix. 11.

As the prayer for daily bread raises us above care for *to-day*, and the prayer for the forgiveness of sins is meant to quiet us concerning the past, so is the prayer against temptation a weapon for the uncertain future. It consists of two parts: 1. Deprecatory; 2. Petitionary. The Greek word rendered *lead* is only used seven times in the New Testament. Excepting in the Lord's Prayer, our translators have always rendered it "bring into." (Luke v. 18, 19; Acts xvii. 20; 1 Tim. vi. 7; Heb. xiii. 11.) "Temptation" means "trial." God never puts evil into our hearts, or stirs it up there by any positive influence. (James i. 13.) In the former respect, our own lusts tempt us (James i. 14); in the latter, Satan, or wicked men. (Matt. iv. 3, on which see notes.) But Providence may permit us to be brought into such circumstances as have a tendency to give our corruptions, and the temptations of Satan and his agents, peculiar advantage against us. This the Lord sometimes does to prove the reality or power of our grace, the sincerity or hypocrisy of our profession, or the remaining prevalence of sin. (Gen. xxii. 1; Job i. 11, vs. 20, 21.) "A saint's whole life (says *Austin*) is a temptation." This petition asks that God would graciously prevent us from being brought into circumstances of strong temptation; that He would not leave us to struggle with it in our own strength; that He would instruct us to avoid, and enable us to overcome, our temptations. He who would honestly and acceptably present this petition must guard against going into temptation. (Gal. vi. 1; Matt. xxvi. 41.) But when, in the course of God's good providence, and the pursuit of our known duty, we find ourselves involved in circumstances of trial, then we are taught (James i. 2) to "count it all joy"; for then, it may be humbly hoped, that the tempter beholds in us that living principle of earnestness

which it is the whole business of himself and his accursed emissaries to assail, and, if possible, to destroy. (See 2 Cor. xii. 7, x. 13; Heb. iv. 15.)

But deliver us from evil. Here we confess that evil is in us, and about us, and near us, and on every side, and that we have no power to deliver ourselves from it. We apply to the strong for strength. We cast ourselves on Him for protection. In this petition we pray not only to be kept from evil, but also that we may make progress in piety. (Tit. ii. 12; Rom. xii. 9; Isa. i. 16, 2 Cor. vii. i.) The evil we seek to be delivered from is, 1. The evil of our own heart. (Rom. vii. 23; Heb. iii. 12.) 2. The evil of Satan. (Matt. xiii. 19; 2 Cor. ii. 11; Eph. vi. 12; 1 Peter v. 8.) 3. The evil of the world. (Gal. i. 4.) 4. The evil of God's wrath; (Rom. vi. 23; Rev. xxi. 8.) The many expressions in the Psalms (liv. 5; lix. 1, 10; cxliii. 12, &c., &c.,) which speak of enemies, and pray for victory or deliverance, may be considered, in their spiritual meaning, to look in the direction of the present petition. On Christian lips, they convey a desire akin to that here expressed.

For thine is the kingdom, &c. Some refer this to David's doxology, 1 Chron. xxix. 11. It has reference as a plea to the first three petitions of the prayer—"thy kingdom come," *for thine is the kingdom*. Thou hast the government of the world, and the protection of the saints, thy willing subjects in it—"thy will be done," *for thine is the power*, to maintain that kingdom, and to make good all thy engagements to thy people—"hallowed be thy name," *for thine is the glory*, as the end of all that which is done for the saints, in answer to their prayers, for their praise waiteth for thee. (Psalms lxxv. 1.) It is our duty to plead with God in prayer, to fill our mouth with arguments (Job. xxiii. 4), not to move God, but to affect ourselves, to encourage our faith, excite our fervency, and evidence both. The best pleas in prayer are taken from God Himself. Praising Him is the way to obtain further mercy, as it qualifies us to receive it. Some see, in this threefold doxology, an ascription of praise to each of the persons of the Trinity. It has been very beautifully said that "when the whole number of the sons of God shall

have reached their goal, a pure doxology will arise in heaven: Hallowed be the name of God. His kingdom is come. His will is done. He has forgiven our sins. He has brought temptation to an end. He has delivered us from the evil one. His is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

14. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15. But if ye forgive not, men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

³⁵Mark. xi. 25, 26; Eph. iv. 32; Col. iii. 13. ³⁶Chap. xviii. 35; James ii. 13.

This is an explanation of the fifth petition in the prayer, verse 12. As this is the only portion of the prayer commented on, may we not infer that Christ deemed the duty of forgiveness the hardest duty, even for the Christian? The forgiveness of injury is here made a prime virtue, yet it must be regarded as standing connected with other essential elements of Christian character, for the possession of one Christian virtue implies the possession of all the rest. The forgiveness of those who injure us cannot, we know, merit the forgiveness of God, yet He sees with complacency His own image reflected in His forgiving children, and to ask Him for what we ourselves refuse to men, is to insult Him. He has declined being called Heavenly Father by the revengeful and unforgiving. (Ver. 15.) He will conduct toward us according to the spirit which we habitually cherish. (Ps. xviii. 25, 26; 1 John iii. 18-24, iv. 20; Matt. xviii. 21-35; Luke vi. 37, xvii. 34.)

16. "Moreover when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 17. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face: 18. That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

¹⁷Isa. lviii. 5. ¹⁸Ruth iii. 3; Dan. x. 3.

Having concluded His directions on almsgiving and prayer, our Lord now condemns ostentatiousness also in fasting. Pride may lurk in sackcloth. Fasting is here supposed to be the ordinary practice of the godly. The main reference probably is to private and voluntary fasting, though the spirit of the direction applies to any fast. (See on chapter iv. 2.) Prayer and fasting are frequently united in Scripture. (Ps. xxxv. 13; Dan. ix. 3; Matt. xvii. 21; Mark ix. 29; Luke ii. 37; Acts xiv. 23, &c.) *Hypocrites*. (See on verse 2.) *A sad countenance*, assumed for effect. If expres-

sive of a sad heart, in our approaches to God, such a countenance has nothing in it improper; but a joyous face is more like the index of Christianity than a melancholy one, and does more to recommend it. *Disfigure their faces*—emaciate, contract and deform them. *That they may appear, &c.*—in order to keep up their credit, and gain applause for sanctity. *Have their reward*. (See on verse 2.) *But thou, &c.* As anointing the head and washing the face were the customary dressings of the Jews, our Lord here directs them to use their ordinary modes when fasting. Appear as usual—appear so as to attract no notice. All *affectation* in its minutest form is here condemned. *That thou appear not, &c.* Christ's disciples should avoid all ostentation in this duty, whether performed at home or abroad, satisfied with the acceptance of God, who is present in the chamber as well as in the assemblies of His worshipers, and will openly reward humiliation for sin, mortification of the flesh, and desires after holiness for the sake of communion with Him. There is no injunction here for absolute privacy in fasting. (See 2 Chron. xx.; also notes on chapter iv. 2.)

19. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal."

²⁰Prov. xxiii. 4; 1 Tim. vi. 17; Heb. xiii. 5; James v. 1, &c.

Some connect this injunction with almsgiving in verses 1-4. Certain it is that there can be no surer way of depositing one's goods in safety than by placing them in the hand of Him who (in the person of His poor) stretches out His hand to receive them. (Prov. xix. 17; Matt. xix. 21; Mark x. 21; Luke xviii. 22.) But it is mainly a warning against *covetousness*, of which the Pharisees were peculiarly guilty. Their apparently *good* actions having been exposed, their *wicked* practices are now reprov'd. *Treasure*, in the Oriental use of the term, denoted everything which men were want to desire with avidity, and to hoard with care: fruits of the earth, ornamental dresses, &c., as well as the precious metals. It means anything on which the heart is set, whether that be wealth, rank, reputation, worldly grandeur, friends, luxury, or what not. Foremost in the list of these are placed the

passionate fondness for fine and richly-embroidered apparel, for which the natives of that part of the world have been always distinguished, and to gratify which is often the main-spring of many active exertions, to which their habitual indolence would make them otherwise averse. Little as such a taste may be thought of by us, it is both natural and necessary in the East, where the rank and fortune of an individual are always estimated by the finery or meanness of his dress, and where the perpetuity of customs, as well as the open, flowing style of the garments, prevents that change in fashion, or alteration in form, which might supersede these at any future period, either as articles of utility or ornament. *Upon earth*, where nothing is or can be other than corruptible and transient. (Job iv. 19, xxvii. 16; Ps. xlix. 6, 10; Eccl. ii. 18.) The prohibition to amass wealth, or other goods, is by no means to be regarded as absolute; the negation is to be understood rather in the sense of "not so much, as rather." Many branches of business require an extensive capital. Parents are to gather up for their children. (2 Cor. xii. 14.) Everything depends on the object in view. We are not to make the gratification of *self* our end; if our purpose is to employ wealth in the service of God, we commit no sin in gaining it. (See 1 Cor. vii. 30, 31.) In the East, treasures consisted in part of valuable apparel. (Ezra ii. 69; Neh. vii. 70; Job xxvii. 16; James v. 2.) *Moth*. Although these troublesome insects are known to us, and support their ephemeral existence by carrying on their silent work of destruction, yet they are neither so considerable in numbers, nor so noted for the celerity and magnitude of their depredations, as to entitle them to be ranked among the prominent causes that occasion the rapid waste and decay of our garments. But in hot climates, where they swarm in myriads, and almost assume the destructive character of animals of prey, there do not exist more formidable enemies to the treasures of the wardrobe than the moths; nor could our Lord have given a livelier picture of the frailty of such treasures, and of the folly of making these the objects of supreme desire, than by reminding His

hearers of the rapid and indiscriminate havoc which those tiny depredators were known to make of whatever stuffs are within their reach. *Rust*. (Comp. James v. 3.) Allusion is probably made here to the rust which gathers upon metals, and which seems to be eating them. *And where thieves*, &c., might have been more literally rendered, "thieves dig through." With us, the places where our property is lodged are generally built in so solid and durable a manner that there is not perhaps an instance in the annals of robbery, of a thief endeavoring to effect a passage through stone and lime, to the repositories of a house which he had doomed for plunder; and we are so accustomed to consider these as secure and impervious to the most dexterous and elaborate schemes of the spoiler, that our language disdains to acknowledge any other way of violating the sacred quiet of a dwelling than by breaking *into* it through the more slender defenses of the windows and doors. Of a very different description, however, were the tenements of Judea, especially in the rural and pastoral districts of the country, such as that where the Sermon on the Mount was delivered; and where they consisted of nothing but a frail and temporary structure of mud, palm branches, and tiles dried in the sun. To this day the inhabitants of the Eastern World, in country villages, can boast of no better habitations. Hence the expression, "break through," &c.

It will be observed that two kinds of insecurity and perishableness are mentioned: 1. Earthly treasures are liable to destruction in the ordinary course of nature, by animals and by internal corruption; 2. They may be forcibly abstracted. Even if we do not lose them, we must leave them. Why, then, should we set our hearts on things so transient and uncertain? Let us watch against covetousness; it is the great sin of the church and of the age; it dishonors God, and brings reproach upon the Christian name. (Luke xii. 15, xviii. 24; 1 Tim. vi. 9, 17; James v. 1-3.)

20. 'But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

^aChap. xix. 21; Luke xii. 33, 34, xviii. 22; 1 Tim. vi. 19; 1 Peter i. 4.

In heaven, that is, with God. His favor is the alone imperishable treasure. (1 John ii. 17.) Whatever of this world's goods may be sacrificed by the Christian in a strong faith in the invisible world, remains and enters into the eternal destiny of the man; he shall have praise, honor and glory in God's presence, in opposition to all that vain show before man, and that self-indulgence in which the covetous and the hypocrites found their reward. (Rev. xiv. 13.) *For yourselves*, you are a momentary holder of earthly good, and not an owner; but heavenly treasures become your own forever. *Where neither moth, &c.* The treasures are in heaven, where God reveals Himself, and where all is unfading and eternal. O wondrous love which has provided a means whereby the perishable things of earth may be conveyed away and deposited in the eternal mansion! *For where your treasure is, &c.* There is here indicated the deepest knowledge of men. The principle stated is the obvious, but momentous one; that what men value they will love, and that the two things cannot be divided in experience. "Whatever man loves," says *Luther*, "that is his God. For he carries it in his heart; he goes about with it night and day; he sleeps and wakes with it, be it what it may—wealth or pelf, pleasure or renown." The human heart, little by little, appropriates to itself the style and nature of the treasure to which its whole thought is directed. Whoever constitutes his god of gold, his heart becomes as cold and hard as metal; whoever takes flesh for his arm, or makes it his idol, becomes more and more sensual, and takes on the properties of that which he loves above everything; but whoever has invisible treasures, keeps spontaneously eye and heart fixed upon the invisible world. Obvious though this maxim be, by what multitudes who profess to bow to the teaching of Christ is it practically disregarded!

22. "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. 23. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

* Luke xi. 34, 35, 36. * 2 Cor. x. 3; Eph. v. 5.

The design of these verses is to illustrate and enforce the preceding sentiment. They show that it is of the utmost import-

ance that we form a just judgment where our treasure lies, and that we have right views of what is necessary and sufficient to make such beings as we are truly happy. The body is as a large room, naturally dark. The eye, though not the source of light (which is the sun) is necessary (as a window, as it were, to the body,) to the man deriving any advantage from the sun. If, therefore, his eye is simple, not complex, not distorted, not looking in two directions (see Prov. iv. 25–27), but looking directly forward, by the light, which is rectilinear, a true image will be painted on the retina, and the man will see clearly the object gazed at—all the members of his body, too, will enjoy the advantages of the light, and the man will know what he is doing, and where he is going. So with the moral man: truth is the light of the mind, and if the faculty which apprehends truth—if this mental eye be *single*, looking right at its object, the whole inner man is full of light, and by the clear perception, and firm belief of the truth, all the powers of our nature will be influenced, and perform their various functions properly. (Prov. iv. 20; John viii. 12; Heb. xii. 1, 2.) But if the eye be *evil*—if the man be blind altogether, or if his eyes be so distempered by any alloy of base self-interest, as to mistake one object for another, if his heart be divided between heaven and earth and he supposes that the world in any of its forms can make him happy, his whole nature is, and must be, full of darkness. The regulative faculty being wrong, all others must be so. *And how great is that darkness!*—how great must the darkness be which is thus deprived of the means of illumination! The man is in constant and fearful danger of stumbling and falling, and when he thinks himself in perfect safety, he is in extreme danger. "When," says one, "the pilot is drowned, and the light extinguished, and the captain taken prisoner, what more hope is there for the crew?"

24. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

* Luke xvi. 13. * Gal. i. 10; 1 Tim. vi. 17; James iv. 4; 1 John ii. 15.

Here we have the third reason against indulging in worldly mindedness, the first

being given in verses 19-21, and the second in verses 22-23. If any one should think that possibly he might reconcile the criminal employment of temporal riches with the attainment of eternal life, our Lord anticipates and explodes this vain refuge. *Mammon*, according to some, was the name of a Syrian false god; others say it is a Punic word signifying *gain*. We are warranted by the original in understanding the word as comprehending everything that is capable of being an object of *trust*, or a ground of *confidence* to men of worldly minds, such as wealth, power, honor, fame, business, gay amusements, and all the other various pursuits of the present scene. The point contended for in respect to God is not exclusive *possession*, but exclusive *dominion*. Other things may occasionally, for a certain time, and to a certain degree, have possession of our minds, but they must not *rule*, must not *reign* over them. We can serve but one master faithfully and effectually, and that one must be God. The concerns of this life may have their *due* place in our hearts, but they must not aspire to the *first*: this is the prerogative of religion alone; religion must be supreme and paramount over all. Every one, it has been often said, has his ruling passion. That of the Christian must be the love of his Maker and Redeemer. This must *principally* occupy his thoughts, time, attention, and heart. If there be any thing else which has gained ascendancy over our souls, on which our desires, wishes, hopes or fears are *chiefly* fixed, God is then dispossessed of His rightful dominion over us, we serve another master, and shall think but little of our Maker, or anything belonging to Him. The words *hate*, *despise*, express here the opposite of attachment, such an indifference, or dislike, as leads to neglect.

23. Therefore I say unto you, *Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

*Ps. lv. 22; Luke xlii. 22; Phil. iv. 6; 1 Peter v. 7.

The transition from the foregoing verses is evident. The most common excuse for men's striving after earthly possessions is, the *care* they have about the necessities of life; therefore must this care be subordinated to the high end of life. *Therefore*,

in view of what has been said—since it is God's part, like a true master, to care for us. *Unto you*, that is, to the disciples of the Lord, the children of the Father, with all who, by His grace, would become so. *Take no thought for your life*. This does not mean that we are to make no provision (Prov. vi. 6-8; Tim. v. 8; 2 Thes. iii. 8, 9, 10; Acts xviii. 3, xx. 34), but that we be not excessively anxious—yield to no inordinate or solicitous concern or grief beyond our immediate wants, calling, or daily occupation. To take thought of a thing is a Christian duty, but to indulge in carping, irritating anxiety, is sin. Many persons are not satisfied with meeting to-day's duties in to-day's strength, but they cast the net into the unsounded future of to-morrow; they draw it in-shore, and in it are all venomous reptiles, that sting their hearts with a thousand anxieties. *What ye shall eat*, &c. Earthly care is directed first of all to nourishment and clothing. Both forms the Saviour opposes, inasmuch as He points those that are anxious to what they see in the realm of nature, but above all to the truth that He who has already given the higher will certainly not let them lack the lesser. The questions thus prohibited are questions of infidel distrust asked by a Mammon worshiper, who is called upon to become a man of faith, but is afraid he will thereby lose his earthly living. *Is not the life*, &c. Here is an argument from greater to less. Surely He who gives life *can* give food; surely He who gave you a body *can* give you clothing for that body. And as to give life is a far greater favor than to give food, to give a body than to give clothing, and as the life of a Christian especially was bestowed not for a trifling purpose, surely He who has given the more valuable blessing *will* not withhold the less.

24. *Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

*Job xxxviii. 41; Ps. cxlvii. 9; Luke xlii. 24, &c.

Behold—observe well. By *fowls* is here meant the birds, and their representation as fowls of the air serves to show their free and unrearing condition, flying from one place to another at their pleasure. Perhaps at this particular moment birds had in

our Lord's immediate vicinity drawn His attention to this. *Sow, reap, gather into barns.* The three main points of husbandry are mentioned, all which are denied in reference to the birds, which is equivalent to saying that they use no means at all for the production of their food, but are wholly dependent on their instincts and the bounties of their Maker. *Are ye not much better than they?* The reasoning is much more pointed and popular by being compressed into a question instead of being stated as a formal proposition. You are much better than the birds; as men you occupy a far higher sphere in the scale of being; you belong to a nobler order, and are designed for a higher destiny. You are created in God's image—you are acknowledged as "His offspring." (Acts. xvii. 28.) He has taught you more than the beasts of the field, and made you "wiser than the fowls of heaven." (Job xxxv. 11.) And if we consider our Lord as addressing those who are laying up treasures for themselves in heaven, the argument is still more forcible, as such persons are the objects of His peculiar love, and He has bound Himself by promise that they shall want no good thing. Will the God who cares for and feeds these birds overlook you and allow you to perish for want of food? The consideration of the world is a continual lesson for a rational creature, and faith finds something everywhere to increase and strengthen itself. The care which God takes of every living creature upbraids men with their uneasiness and distrust. Man knows too well his own excellence, and how to set himself off when he would gain the confidence of others. But he forgets what he is when he should put his confidence in God.

27. Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature?

^bEcc. iii. 14; Luke xii. 25; 1 Cor. xii. 13.

Taking thought, indulging in anxious solicitude. *Can add, &c.* The cubit was originally the length from the elbow to the end of the middle finger. The cubit of the Scriptures is not far from twenty-two inches. The context requires *stature* to be translated *life*, or *time of one's life*. For, 1. Our Lord refers to the prolonging of life by the supplying of its necessities

of food and clothing. 2. It is not easy to see how the incapacity of persons, by anxiety to increase their height—a thing very little connected with their happiness in any way—is a reason why they should not be anxious about what is absolutely necessary for the continuance of their life. 3. The thing implied in the text, and especially in the parallel passage, Luke xii. 26, is something inconsiderable, whereas the addition of a cubit to one's stature would be a very great one. It is here implied that the duration of life has its fixed measure. It is not uncommon for the sacred writers to apply linear measure to time. (Job ix. 25; Ps. xxxix. 5; Acts xiii. 25; 2 Tim. iv. 7.) As thus explained, our Lord's words contain a strong argument why we should not be anxious about life or food. It serves no purpose; no anxiety of ours can protract life. True confidence must needs be a thing extremely rare and very necessary, since Christ recommends it to us with so much earnestness.

28. And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29. And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

^c1 Kings x. 5, 7; 2 Chron. ix. 4, 6; Luke xii. 27.

After speaking of sustenance for the life, our Lord now speaks of clothing for the body. Having shown God's care of living things, He now shows it over things inanimate. *Consider*, literally, *study thoroughly*, *note accurately*, not necessarily as a mass, but also as individuals—observe closely as one who is a learner—not from mere taste or curiosity, but to derive a moral lesson. (See Prov. vi. 6-8, xxx. 24-31.) *The lilies.* No species of *fowl* was mentioned, but now the emphasis is more specific—the *lilies*. From the name under which this flower goes in our translation, the reader is led to transfer his imagination to that humble plant, whose head, drooping in modesty, and whose petals, whiter than the purest snow, point out to us the lily of the vale, and which, whether on the mountains or among the varied artificial treasures of the flower-garden, is allowed to bear away the palm of natural beauty. But that flower does not grow wild in the Holy Land; and, as the fields of the Levant are overrun with a species of large lily, called the *Amaryllis lutea*, whose white and golden or purple

flowers, beautifully blended, afford one of the most brilliant and gorgeous objects in nature, the comparison which our Lord makes of the beauties of the lily to the royal magnificence of Solomon, and the superiority which He alleges of nature's produce to the imposing appearance of that splendid monarch, are not more just in the truth of the natural description than in the historical exactness of the similitude. It is two or three times as large as the ordinary lily, and being variegated with the most superb tints and gorgeous hues, has something imperial in its bearing, and presents a display of matchless splendor, "surpassing Solomon in all his glory." The dress of eastern princes, on public occasions, is rich and splendid almost beyond description; and their vestments, consisting chiefly of purple and the finest linen, decorated with rows of the most dazzling jewels, and set off to advantage, as they always are, in the rays of a meridian sun, give an air of grandeur to the illustrious wearers, which never is beheld without admiration. How superb, then, must be that oriental flower, which "is born to blush often unseen" among the mountains of Palestine, although the splendor of the greatest monarch that ever sat on the throne of that country could never rival its gorgeous beauty!

Our Lord may have selected this particular plant for His illustration because, 1. It adorned the sides of the mountain on which He stood. 2. It was an emblem of Himself. (Cant. ii. 1.) 3. It is an emblem of Christians. (Hos. xiv. 5.) *Of the field*—not cultivated, not growing in the garden, but growing of themselves in the common field. *How they grow*, i. e., *in what manner they grow*. The varied colors of the flowers are, so to speak, their robe, just as it is said of man's mortal body that it shall "put on immortality." (1 Cor. xv. 54.) As the beauty of the flower is unfolded by the Creator from within, so must all true adornment of man be unfolded from within by the same Almighty Spirit. (See 1 Peter iii. 3, 4.) *They toil not*, &c.—they cannot prepare themselves their clothing. They neither practice the labors of husbandry to procure the materials of clothing, nor engage in the processes of art to

form them into raiment, and yet they are clothed in garments of beauty far surpassing anything which the wardrobe of royalty can display.

Solomon—in the estimation of a Jew the most illustrious of sovereigns, Solomon, *in all his glory* (see above) *was not arrayed*, &c. The lily belongs to the paradise of God; Solomon's glory to the hot-house of art. If to inanimate objects—flowers—is granted such beauteous costume, how unworthy is the desire in man to be clad in robes of splendor, when his highest efforts will not place him on a level, in this respect, with the wild plants of the field. We have here the declaration of the Creator Himself concerning the relative glory and beauty of all human pomp, compared with the meanest of His own works. *All* God's works display more of His wisdom the more they are examined. The most exquisite articles of raiment wrought by man, when surveyed through the microscope, exhibit rudeness and roughness. But the white and purple of the lily, under even the inspection of the glass, compel us to exclaim: "This is the finger of God."

³⁹ Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he not much more clothe you*, ⁴⁰ O ye of little faith?

³⁹ Mark iv. 40; 11eb. iii. 12.

Wherefore, the premises having been recited, the argument from less to greater is now stated, and again in the form of an interrogation. *Grass* here signifies herbage generally, including the flowers which grow up among the grass. In Palestine the grass withers in the course of two days under a strong east wind, when it is only fit for hay or fuel, for which latter purpose it is ordinarily used in eastern countries where fuel is scarce. *Oven*. It consists of a large jar made of clay, about three feet high, and widening toward the bottom, with a hole for the extraction of the ashes. Occasionally, however, it is not an actual jar, but an erection of clay in the form of a jar, built on the floor of a house. It was heated with dry twigs and grass, and the loaves were placed both inside and outside of it. *Shall he not*, &c. Let reason judge, if He who has done so much to beautify insensate matter, may not be expected to provide sufficient covering for His own obedient children whom He has

bought with an infinite price, within whom He has put His Spirit, and whom He has made partakers of the Divine nature. When man is once more elevated by the words *much more* above the fragile and fading grass and flowers, we discern in this a sublime appeal to faith, inasmuch as to all appearance man's sensitive, earthly life is just on a level with the withering grass. (See Ps. xc. 6.) *O ye of little faith!* The expression, "little-faithed ones," which our Lord applies once and again to His disciples (chap. viii. 26, xiv. 31, xvi. 8,) can hardly be regarded as rebuking any actual manifestation of unbelief at that early period, and before such an audience. It is His way of gently chiding the *spirit* of unbelief, so natural even to the best, who are surrounded by a world of sense, and of kindling a generous desire to shake it off. When Mungo Park, the great African traveler, was once robbed, beaten and left to perish in the wilderness, just as he was ready to resign himself to death, the extraordinary beauty of a small moss caught his eye. The thought that the Being who planted, watered and brought to perfection in that obscure place a thing which appeared of so small importance, would not look with unconcern on the sufferings of a creature formed after His own image; would not, as he tells us, allow him to despair; he started up, and disregarding both hunger and fatigue, traveled forward, assured that relief was at hand, and he was not disappointed.

31. Therefore take no thought, saying, "What shall we eat?" or, "What shall we drink?" or, "Wherewithal shall we be clothed?"

Lev. xxv. 30; Ps. xxxvii. 3, iv. 22; 1 Peter v. 7.

Our Lord here resumes the exhortation of verse 25. He forbids two things: *taking thought*, or solicitude, and then, *saying*, giving open utterance to the same, because the taking thought weighs down and dispirits the heart of one only, but the saying infects others also with despondency. As meat—drink—clothing, are subjects of anxiety rather with the *poor*, than with the *rich*, that class may take the present as a solemn caution addressed to themselves. But the words convey a lesson to rich and poor alike, for as *what* and *wherewithal* indicate anxiety about the *kind* of thing, rather than about the thing itself—

daintiness in meat, drink, clothing, is here specially forbidden to all.

32. (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek;) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

Here are two additional reasons why those whom Christ addressed should not be anxious: 1. *For after all these things*, all worldly goods, and earthly treasures (verses 18-21), which are included under the dominion of the world-god, Mammon, *do the Gentiles seek*—heathens—the world outside of the Jewish nation. The heathen had very obscure and incorrect views of the divine character and government. Some of them believed that all was fixed by fate; others, that all was left to chance. The one considered the gods themselves as subject to fate; the others thought that they took no interest in the concerns of mortals. With such views, how could they trust in these gods? Of a future world, they had no distinct knowledge. This world was everything to them, and it was not wonderful that they should be anxious about obtaining its necessities and comforts, and making the most of them all. But it is unworthy of a Christian to be distinguished by a mode of thinking and feeling which is emphatically heathenish. 2. *For your heavenly Father knoweth, &c.* This is an intense repetition of what had been preparatorily uttered in verse 8, following verse 7. The stress of emphasis falls upon the *knoweth*: ye have a *living* God, *who knoweth!* But in addition to His knowing, His willingness is already secured in the name of *Father*, so that we may say that every single word in the whole sentence utters a ground of assurance and strong consolation, coming as it does from Him who "knoweth the Father." (Chap. xi. 27.)

33. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

See 1 Kings iii. 12, 13; Psalms xxxvii. 25; Mark x. 30; Luke xli. 31; 1 Tim. iv. 8.

But. Our Lord shows His hearers how the indulgence of a special solicitude about even necessary things belonging to the present life is to be avoided—not by mere negation, or attempting simply to abstain from such anxiety and unbelief, but by positively doing something else which will immediately correct the evil. *Seek* is here

emphatic, opposed to the "seek" of verse 32; it means—make this the object of supreme choice and pursuit. *First*—before and above all else. *The kingdom of God*—the kingdom of heaven. To seek this kingdom is to seek to promote the reign of God in ourselves and others. *And His righteousness*—the righteousness which He communicates and requires. (See Rom. viii. 4; Cor. xv. 10; 2 Cor. iii. 5; Gal. ii. 8; Eph. iii. 7; Phil. ii. 13, iii. 13, 14; John xv. 4.) The connection between *righteousness* and the obtaining of the *kingdom* should not be overlooked. They go together. *All these things*, &c. (verse 8)—all we require for the present life, shall be given over and above the spiritual good directly flowing from devotion to God's service. This does not imply that grace in the heart will ensure the supply of temporal wants without personal exertion. The original denotes that which was given in addition to the purchase—so to speak, "into the bargain." (1 Tim. iv. 8; Psalms xxxvii. 3, 4 and 25, xli. 1, 2; Prov. xi. 24, 25, xix. 17; Mark x. 29, 30.

34. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Of course we are not to understand that all care and foresight are forbidden, but only anxious carefulness, else Joseph was wrong in laying in his stock of corn (Gen. xli.), and Solomon's allusion to the ant was a mistake (Prov. vi. 6). The "bag" which contained the common fund where-

by the daily need of the Son of Man and His followers was supplied (John xii. 6), showed *thought*. *For the morrow*. The Christian should not be *careful* for even the next day. It may not arrive to *him*; if it does, it will bring its supplies, and thus "take thought for itself." The personification by which the day is represented as caring for its own wants is full of meaning. The idea is, that within the sphere of each new day new means of help are in waiting for us. In this counsel we have an expression of the Saviour's sympathy with the daily care of man. What is the use of tacking to-day's troubles on to-morrow's troubles, when we have only to-day's strength? God has not promised strength for two days at once, but for each day as it dawns.

Sufficient for the day is the trouble (for that is the translation) "*thereof*." And besides, thinking painfully of to-morrow does not lighten the burdens of to-morrow. Let us, therefore, do the duties of to-day, and draw from the Fountain of Strength, to-morrow, strength for to-morrow, and then we shall find that, by thus seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, to-day's and to-morrow's things shall be added to us, for He has promised it. "Life is no series of chances with a few providences sprinkled between to keep up a justly failing belief, but one providence of God."

1. What is meant by "alms?" 2. What is forbidden concerning them? 3. Why is it forbidden? 4. What is required concerning "alms?" 5. Why is it required? 6. What is enjoined in respect to prayer? 7. What is said of the "Lord's prayer?" 8. Explain "After this manner." 9. What do we learn from the words "Our Father?" 10. What does the first part of the prayer begin with? 11. What the second? 12. Explain the petitions severally. 13. What is said about fasting? 14. Explain verses 19, 20. 15. How are we to understand a "single" and an "evil" "eye?" 16. Why cannot a man serve two masters? 17. How are we to "take no thought for our life?" 18. Why? 19. What is the argument drawn from the lilies and the birds? 20. What is meant by "the kingdom of God, and His righteousness?" 21. Explain "Take . . . no thought for the morrow."

CHAPTER VII.

1 *Orations against rash judgment.* 6 *Things holy are not to be cast to dogs.* 7 *Encouragement to prayer.* 12 *The rule of doing as we would be done to.* 13 *The strait gate and narrow way, and the wide gate and broad way.* 15 *A warning against false prophets, who may be known by their fruits.* 21 *No gifts or miracles will avail the workers of iniquity at the day of judgment.* 24 *The parable of the house built on a rock,* 25 *and that on the sand,* 28 *Christ concludes, and the people are astonished at his doctrine.*

JUDGE not, that ye be not judged. 2. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

*Luke vi. 37; Rom. ii. 1, and xiv. 3, 4, 10, 13; 1 Cor. iv. 3, 5; James iv. 11, 12; †Mark iv. 24; Luke vi. 38.

The judging here forbidden is not judging by civil magistrates in their spheres, or judging by ecclesiastical officers of applicants for admission to the communion, or that judgment which cannot but be formed of the state and character of men from their avowed principles and visible conduct, for Christ directs His disciples to judge by this rule. (See verses 16–20; Heb. v. 14.) The judging referred to obviously respects personal actions and characters. We are not to be officious in our judgments, intermeddling with what we have no concern with, or rash, not deciding, even when called to judge, till we have carefully examined the subject, or presumptuously pronouncing on things beyond our reach—such as the views and motives of others, and acting as if our conjectures were infallible truths; or severe, but putting the best construction on doubtful actions; (1 Cor. viii. 5, 7,) or partial, condemning in one what we approve, or at least pass by, in another, condemning in our neighbor what we overlook in ourselves; or hasty in pronouncing judgment, because it is very difficult to obtain possession of all the materials that in any case are necessary to form a correct judgment, and to pronounce judgment without this, is to run the hazard, at least, of doing cruel injustice. (Rom. xiv. 4, 10; 1 Cor. iv. 5.)

For with what judgment, &c. Such is the ordinary course of things in the present life. A censorious spirit toward others brings censure in abundance upon ourselves. And if we go on condemning in this manner till death, we must expect to be condemned at a judgment seat, from the decisions of which there is no appeal. (James ii. 13.)

3. *And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 4. Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye, and behold, a beam is in thine own eye? 5. Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

†Luke vi. 41, 42.

Mote means a small bit of straw, or grass, or dry wood. *Beam* means a large piece of timber, such as is used for the rafter of a roof. A contrast is intended between little faults and great ones. The epithet *hypocrite*, so frequently applied by our Lord to the scribes and Pharisees, does not always mean that they were always deceiving those about them by a profession which they *knew* to be hollow. The offer of the man to *pull out the mote* from his brother's eye, supposed him to have considered himself perfectly clear-sighted. The censorious are here condemned, and those, also, who, though never perhaps designated censorious, yet are lynx-eyed for all the blemishes and faults which disfigure their neighbors, and set themselves to the removal of what is wrong in others, without due consideration as to their own fitness for such duty.

We are here taught the lesson of the true *relative* magnitude which our own faults and those of our brother ought to hold in our estimation. What is a “mote” to one looking on another, is to that other himself a “beam,” just the reverse of the ordinary estimate. We are not to close our eyes to the defects of others, but first to be jealously anxious to obtain clear vision ourselves.

First cast out, &c. The reason of this requirement is obvious. Only the man who has learned to deal with his own heart unreservedly, in the way of tracing out and bringing into the light of day all that would hide itself there, who has experimentally learned how deceitful as well as wicked that heart is, is prepared to deal wisely with others. Then only will he *see clearly, &c.* Besides, the very process through which he has himself passed will give a gentleness and tenderness to all that he may be called to do with others, which he never otherwise could have possessed. We should forgive ourselves little, and others much.

6. ^dGive not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again, and rend you.

^eProv. ix. 7, 8, and xxiii. 9; Acts xiii. 45, 46.

The preceding rule abates the sharp eye of wrong judging; this quickens and clears the eye of right discerning; that was for the moderate censuring of evil; this is for the prudent imparting of good. *Dogs* and *swine* were both counted unclean by the law, and are consequently mentioned in Scripture with contempt. (2 Sam. iii. 8, and ix. 8; 2 Kings viii. 13; Matt. xv. 26; Rev. xxii. 15; Prov. xi. 22; Luke xv. 15, 16.) Some maintain that one animal here denotes unbelievers; the other unworthy Christians. *That which is holy* is God's, and that it may not be desecrated, preserve it from the profane! But it has become also *our* treasure and property, if we are Christians; hence it is added, *your* pearls, partly in the same sense as chapter xiii. 45, 46, partly with a specific design in the plural form. So act for the sake of God's honor that the holy things may not be despised: take care that your treasure and the good that is in you be not evil spoken of (Rom. xiv. 16), for your own sakes, for there are those who will despise and destroy the precious *gift*, and the well-intentioned, imprudent *giver*.

The general sentiment is, that religion, in its principles and experiences, is not to be forced upon those who cannot value it and will not have it, so that it shall be brought into contempt, and its professors be insulted. But while the indiscriminately zealous have need of this caution, let us be on our guard against too readily setting our neighbors down as dogs and swine, and excusing ourselves from endeavoring to do them good on this poor plea. (See Mark iv. 33.) We have here also a warning against irreverence in regard of holy things, which may not be discoursed of in all companies, without discriminating respect had to circumstances of time and place. (Eccl. viii. 5; Prov. ix. 7, 8.) In fulfilling this direction, we have much need of that *anointing that teaches us all things*. (1 John ii. 27.)

7. ^fAsk, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 8. For every one that asketh, receiveth, and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. ^gChron. xxi. 22; Mark xi. 24; Luke xi. 9, 10, and xviii. 1; John xiv. 13, xv. 7, and xvi. 23, 24; James i. 5, 6; 1 John iii. 22, and v. 14, 15. ^hProv. viii. 17; Jer. xlii. 12, 13.

The connection here may be seen by supposing the hearer to mentally exclaim: If that which is holy is not to be given to dogs, &c., what hope is there for man, so infinitely unworthy of the Divine mercy? In reference to such an inquiry, our Lord proceeds to unfold the readiness of God to bestow His favors upon such as humbly and devoutly implore them. The three repetitions of the command, *ask, seek, knock*, are more than mere repetitions. There is an ascending scale of earnestness. Each of the words manifests increased importunity, so that each apparent refusal will add earnestness to the entreaty, until the required blessing is received. A man, in order to offer up a good prayer, must ask with the humility of a beggar, seek with the carefulness of a good servant, and knock with the confidence of a friend. This three-fold command to pray is, indeed, a commentary on words of our Lord spoken at another time: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Who can tell the amount of blessedness from which we exclude ourselves by lack of *earnestness* in prayer?

For every one, &c. The change from the future tense (verse 7) to the present, here, is significant: "Not only shall you receive hereafter what you ask, but whoever does ask, does receive accordingly." That is to say, believing prayer is never vain or unsuccessful, and the knowledge of this truth is among the most efficient antidotes to skeptical misgiving and excessive care. When we do not receive that which we ask, let us always believe either that we do not ask it as we ought, or that it is good for us not to receive it. (2 Cor. xii. 7-9.) We must receive refusals from God as gifts with adoration and thanksgiving, because it is really a great gift for us not to receive that which He foresees we would abuse, and the abuse of which would incense His wrath against us. (See Ps. lxxvii. 18-31; 1 Sam. viii. 6-9 and 19-22; Hos. xiii. 11.) Sometimes prayer, though refused at the time, is eventually answered in a different and far higher sense than was expected. (Deut. iii. 23-27; Luke ix. 28-31; Mark x. 35-40; Matt. xix. 27-28; Josh. ii. 3, 4.) But the promise is far oftener

fulfilled, in the strict letter, and at once. (Gen. xviii. 23-33, xx. 17, xxiv. 12-15; Num. xi. 2; Josh. x. 12, 14; Matt. viii. 1, 2, 3, ix. 27, 29; Luke xvii. 13; Josh. iv. 49-53.)

9. *Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? 10. Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11. If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*

^aLuke xi. 11, 12, 13. ^bGen. vi. 5, xviii. 21.

Our Lord here draws from the domestic circles of earth some precious arguments for confidence in approaching our heavenly Father. *What man, &c.* This is not the way you ever dream of dealing with your children, who depend on you for their support. "Young preachers," says *Dr. Doddridge*, "are desired to consider how much force it adds to these discourses of our Lord, that they are an immediate address to His hearers, and not general harangues, like the *essays* now so fashionable in pulpits." *Bread.* Probably the round cake now used in the East, and bearing some resemblance to a smooth, flat *stone*. The same resemblance may be traced between some kinds of serpents and some kinds of *fish*. Now, if earthly parents will not mock their children when hungry, by giving them that which is not food, and especially if they will not give them a noxious and deadly thing instead of food, it may not be expected that God will refuse humble and earnest suppliants the good things which they ask. He will not give us a stone instead of bread, but we may ourselves, and we should fear lest we do, change the bread of God into a stone by the hardness of our heart. When, too, we do not get whatever we ask, and when we ask it, we may be sure that, in our ignorance and short-sightedness, we asked a stone or a serpent, because they seemed beautiful—not knowing that the one was destitute of nourishment, and that the other would sting.

If ye then being evil, &c. The corruption of man's nature is here taught. This is not a comparison of the morally corrupt man with God, but rather a contrast. If men, *being evil*, notwithstanding their depravity, which blinds their judgments, makes them defective in moral purity, and tends to make them weary through re-

peated provocations, and selfish, *know how to give*, are able, understand from their experience, and have the disposition to give, *good gifts*, in reference to this life, *unto their children*, their beloved offspring, *how much more*—the difference is not defined, being, indeed, infinite (see Rom. v. 9, 10, viii. 22)—*shall your Father which is in heaven*—an essential description here, because the argument itself is one from the parental love of men to that of God—*give good things* (in Luke xi. 13, "the Holy Spirit"); thus intimating, as the terms illustrate one another, that the Holy Spirit is the best gift of God to those that have received the truth as it is in Jesus, and comprehends all things which are truly and essentially good for them. *To them that ask him*, literally, *to those asking him*—a phrase which not only suggests the indispensable condition of God's favors, but also shows the necessity of prayer as a preventive of unbelieving and excessive care.

The argument of Jesus in verse 11 seems to derive its force from these three considerations. 1. If the love of offspring be so strong in our nature, how powerfully must it operate in Him who is the Fountain of natural affection! 2. The reception of the Holy Spirit has relation to our highest welfare—our spiritual and eternal interests. 3. The influence of the Spirit, unlike any gift which a parent bestows upon his child, can never fail of being intrinsically and eternally good. It is a precious truth that this view of God, so human, so paternal, is given us by One who knows what He affirms. (Matt. xi. 27.) This great gift of the Holy Spirit, which is to be asked in the name of Jesus, be it remembered, we may ask unconditionally, and without limit—as we are permitted to supplicate for nothing else, at the throne of grace.

It is indeed better for us and our friends that some of our prayers should not be answered. "Monica, dreading the persecutions which were then threatening the metropolis, prayed to God that He would not suffer her son to go to Rome: he went notwithstanding, and it was in Italy that he found Christ." This son was Augustine, the celebrated church father, born in the middle of the fourth century, whose conversion was a most remarkable illustration

of the grace of God. We should be careful to pray for bread, not for a stone. It is better that the prayer be lost if offered for that which will not nourish.

12. Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for ¹this is the law and the prophets.

²Luke vi. 31; ³Lev. xix. 18; Chron. xxii. 40; Rom. xiii. 8, 9, 10; Gal. v. 14; 1 Tim. i. 5.

Therefore, a comprehensive reference to the preceding part of the chapter, yet more immediately to the close of the former verse, where the free mercy of God was set before the disciples: as if it were said, in prayer commit yourself with perfect confidence to the God who giveth every good and perfect gift, but on that very ground imitate Him in your conduct toward your neighbors. *All things whatsoever ye would* includes and sums up with most significant definiteness every individual case that could prompt the question: What is here my duty to my neighbor?—all things, small and great, seen and unseen, whether done when absent or present, and whether involving much sacrifice or little.

In interpreting this rule we are to have regard to the following limitations: 1. We are not to overlook the difference which exists in regard to the circumstances in which we are severally placed, as, for example, in the case of a father and a child, a master and a servant, a magistrate and his subjects. 2. What we would that others should do to us, is not to determine our duty to them, unless the thing we would they should do to us is right in itself, as in the case of a criminal desiring a judge not to condemn him. 3. We are not obliged to do all that to others which we might probably be glad they would do to us, that is, the rule does not apply to everything that is lawful, but to what is reasonable, as if a poor man should desire that one who is wealthy should give him enough to make him rich. This rule has the following, among other points of interest: 1. It is plain and concise. 2. It is admirably adapted to sudden emergencies, when there is not time for long deliberation as to what duty demands. 3. It is susceptible of universal application—to all persons, places, and things. 4. It meets those cases in which self-interest and private feelings are likely to dim our perceptions of right and wrong. 5. Being founded in the reason of things, it

is such a precept as approves itself to the mind of a reasonable creature, as soon as he hears and understands it, so as not to need any labored proof. The demand which it addresses to us is found in our own heart, in the shape of our demand upon our neighbor.

It should be noticed that this rule holds negatively as well as positively. We are as much bound not to do to others what we would not have others do to us, as to do to them what we would have them do to us. To neglect to do what we would expect from others, is equally wrong in nature, though it may not be equally wrong in degree, as to do to them what we would not wish them to do to us. *For this is the law*, &c. "This is the substance of all relative duty, all Scripture in a nutshell." (Luke xi. 13; Gal. v. 14.)

13. Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14. Because, strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.—Luke xiii. 24.

We have here the application of the whole preceding discourse. (Verses 13–27.) Two objects are presented: *destruction*, that is, future misery; *life*, that is, future happiness. And as *only two* conditions hereafter are stated, so *two* ways, and *two* gates are represented as leading to one or the other of those conditions. Nothing is said of a *third* course in this world, or of a *third* place in the next. Heaven is compared to a palace or a city. (Rev. xxii. 14; Matt. xvi. 18; also Luke xiii. 25.) As mention is made not only of the strait and the wide *gate*, but of the narrow and the broad *way*, we are reminded that as no one falls into the hands of Satan unless he "walks in the way of sinners" (Ps. i. 1), so no one can hope to enter into life, but by *walking*, first, in "the way of God's commandments" (Ps. cxix. 32), and *treading* "the path of life." (Ps. xvi. 11.) The broad way is easily entered, because our depraved nature prompts us to it; it needs no search; it is easily traveled, because it is so wide as to give scope for every variety of sinful inclination, and so many are on it as to help one another forward, but it has a fearful end. *Destruction*. The word does *not* mean annihilation, but *ruin*, the destruction not of being, but of well-being. "I am lost, *destroyed*, or perished," was a common Attic phrase, meaning,

I am in the last degree miserable or unfortunate." If the word means *annihilation*, as some have strangely maintained, the words in Hosea xiii. 9, O Israel, *thou hast destroyed thyself*, mean, O Israel, *thou hast annihilated thyself*. It is difficult to see how Israel could have been annihilated and yet continue in existence.

The narrow way is hard to enter, because it requires to be *found*, and we are unwilling to make sacrifice of sin and self-righteousness—hard to pursue, because as the way of holiness it is in opposition to the natural desires of the human heart, and requires self-denial (Matt. xvi. 24, xix. 17, 21, 22; Eph. ii. 1-3), and because so few comparatively are traveling it; but it has a glorious termination. The one is down, the other is up, the stream; the one is in accordance with the feelings, the tendencies, and the preferences of fallen humanity; the other crosses them all; the one is the way of nature, in which the fall has left us; the other is the way of grace, into which Christ alone can introduce us.

The words "few there be that find it," contain nothing discouraging as to the number of the human race that will be saved. From other passages of Scripture we know that there are to be "nations of the saved," and that they are to form "a multitude which no man can number." It also leads us to a joyful hope respecting all who die in infancy, and in the age of millennial glory the converts to true religion will be very numerous; so that it may prove in the long run of our poor earth's history, that Satan's captives are outnumbered by the Saviour's trophies. But in our Lord's time, in our time, in every intervening age, there can be no doubt that the truly religious are, and have been, a minority—comparatively a very small minority.

15. ¶ "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."

¶ Deut. xiii. 3; Jer. xxiii. 16; Chron. xxiv. 4, 5, 11, 24; Mark xiii. 22; Rom. xvi. 17, 18; Eph. v. 6; Col. ii. 8; 2 Peter ii. 1, 2, 3; 1 John iv. 1. ¶ Micah iii. 5; 2 Titus iii. 5. ¶ Acts xx. 29, 30.

The connection between this passage and the preceding one is striking. Would we keep clear of this "broad way?" We must beware of *false prophets*, or false teachers. (See chap. vi. 1, xvi. 6, xxiv. 4; Luke

xii. 1, 15 and 16.) They will arise. They began in the days of the Apostles. Even then the seeds of error were sown. They have appeared continually ever since. We must be prepared for them, and be on our guard. They will come wrapping error in truth's mantle, saying that the way is not narrow, &c., yet there is ever something to a discerning eye that will readily discover them. It is the neglect of the Bible (Ps. cxix. 105) which makes so many a prey to the first false teacher whom they hear. He who truly seeks God trusts no guide until sure that he will lead to God.

16. ¶ Ye shall know them by their fruits. ¶ Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? ¶ Verse 20, chapter xii. 32. ¶ Luke vi. 43, 44.

As men can always determine the nature of the tree or bush, not by its appearance, leaves or blossoms, but by its fruit, so the claims which religious teachers have to our attention, faith and obedience, can and are to be decided, not by their profession, but by their doctrine and their conduct. The guise of hypocrisy will sooner or later be seen through, notwithstanding their pretences are as specious as the berries of thorns are like grapes, and the heads of thistles are like figs. What is true of public teachers is equally so of private individuals.

17. Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.—Jer. xi. 19; chapter xii. 33.

Here, as frequently elsewhere, the Saviour compares persons to trees. The law that like produces like, so immutable in the natural world, is applied to the law of moral likeness which exists between the state of the heart and the external acts of men. While a tree continues good or evil, its fruit must be strictly corresponding. As the corruption of the tree lies back of the evil fruit, so the corruption of the man's nature lies back of his evil doings; hence depravity lies not, as some teach, merely in the *actions*, but in the *nature back of the actions*. To become good, the branch must be united to, and abide in the vine. (John xv. 4-6, and see on verse 19.)

19. ¶ Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

¶ Chapter iii. 10; Luke xiii. 9; John xv. 2, 6.

Each fruitless tree, each impenitent individual, *that bringeth not forth good fruit*—that

is, right or acceptable to God, and salutary, useful, to the doer and to others—is *hewn down*—that is, *cut out*, cut up by the root (see Rom. ii. 24)—*and cast into the fire*, a description of the element made use of to consume the tree, and representing, as a figure, the wrath of God, or its ruinous effect upon the unforgiven sinner. (Comp. Heb. xii. 29.) If the tree serve not for fruit, to the honor of God's grace, it must serve for fuel, to the honor of His justice. In Scripture language, that which is very sure and very near, is spoken of as if it was *already done*; thus Christ speaks of Himself as if He was already in possession of His glory (John xvii. 14); sinners are represented as *condemned already*, and Christians are spoken of as *already glorified*. (Eph. ii. 6; Heb. xii. 22, 23.) Let it be observed that the sin here specified is a sin of *omission*. The tree is described, not as bringing forth evil fruit, but as not bringing forth good fruit. The neglects of duty are as dangerous and destructive as the positive acts of sin.

20. Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them.

Some regard this as an emphatic repetition of what is said in verse 16. According to others, the intimation also lies in the words (in accordance with the "every" of verses 17, 19,)—by their fruits will *ye* be known, even as *ye* know others. This is the *verification* of discipleship before *men* in the time of the *present life*—the shining before men (Chap. v. 14, 16); and with it the transition is strikingly made to the impressive sequel.

Hence, we may learn, that our Lord expects from His people such knowledge of the Scriptures that they can discern truth from falsehood; and such diligence, as to search the Scriptures, whether the things their teachers utter be according to them or not (Acts xvii. 11); not taking Divine truths on trust, nor believing on the mere word of a teacher, using *teachers* not as dictators, but only as *helpers of their faith*. (See 1 John iv. 1-3.)

"There is," says *Dr. Chalmers*, "a principle and a cause within for all our actions without; the former related to the latter as the root of a tree is to its fruits, or as a foundation to the building which rises from it. O God, put the right principle within me,

that I may be rooted and grounded in the faith—forgetting not that while justified by faith I am judged by works. And may these sayings of Christ sink deep into my heart. May I feel and recognize His authority in reading, as the men of that day did in hearing, Him; and enable me to discern even on the face of His written word the signatures of that wisdom and weight which distinguish Him from all other teachers."

21. † Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

† 1 Jos. viii. 2; Chap. xxv. 11, 12; Luke vi. 46 and xiii. 25; Acts xix. 13; Rom. ii. 13; James i. 22.

Not every one. Our Lord takes a farther step toward the time of final discrimination. He turns from false prophets to false professors, from unsound teachers to unsound hearers. To call a person *lord* is equivalent to acknowledging him as master. If there be any emphasis in the repetition of the word *Lord*, it is intended to express, not merely profession, but a decided, open, habitual profession. A profession of discipleship, an acknowledgement of our submission in mind and heart to Christ Jesus, is a solemn duty; but such profession, by itself, is not enough for the purpose of salvation, it must be connected with faith and obedience.

But he that doeth, &c., that will which it had been the great object of this discourse to set forth. To do the will of God is sincerely to seek to please Him from love to His name. (Heb. xiii. 20, 21.) Yet our Lord says warily, not "the will of your Father," but "of *My* Father," thus claiming a relationship to His Father with which His disciples might not intermeddle, and which He never lets down. And He so speaks here, to give authority to His asseverations. It is not the man who indulges in a few pious and devotional forms of speech, or who can make the most beautiful prayers, that will be saved, but it is he who not only knows, but does, whose conduct is his creed, whose character is the test of his relationship, and who shows that he belongs to Christ by having the spirit, wearing the livery, doing the works, and walking in the ways of Christ. (See 1 Sam. xv. 22; Hos. vi. 6; John xiv. 15, 21, 23, xv. 10, 14; 1 John v. 3, &c.)

22. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

^aNum. xxiv. 4; John xl. 51; 1 Cor. xiii. 2. ^bChap. xxv. 12; Luke xii. 25, 27; 2 Tim. ii. 19. ^cPs. v. 5, vi. 8 Chap. xxv. 41.

Here the solemn fact is announced, that at the judgment day *many* will appear at that tribunal, not merely the many who run with a wicked world, but many even of those who appeared to honor Christ, amazed at the possibility of their own rejection. The form of dialogue is used here, as in Matt. xxv. 34-46, to make the scene more vivid and forcible. *Say to me*—Christ thus reveals Himself as the *Judge* of men—even as the Son of God. *In that day*—the great and terrible day of Christ, when He shall come “in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” (Mark viii. 38.) This day is frequently so spoken of by our Lord and His Apostles—as if always occupying so conspicuous a place in the sphere of their mental vision as to make a further description superfluous. (See Luke x. 12; 2 Thes. i. 10; 2 Tim. i. 12, 18, iv. 8.) *Lord, Lord*, showing the earnestness of their appeal. *Have we not prophesied in thy name?* &c. Observe the self-glorifying way in which they vindicate their own merits, as the unholy are wont to do (Ch. xxv. 24), and their vain imagination, even to the last, that they shall find acceptance.

Then will I profess, &c. As it seems impossible that the persons referred to should continue, during the period of their separate existence in the unseen world (for the hope of the nominal, formal, hypocritical professors of Christianity, must perish at death), we are to consider the words just as a striking and picturesque statement of the truth, that multitudes of men, who made a profession of Christianity, and who were even possessed of the supernatural gifts by which the primitive age of that religion was distinguished, and who flattered themselves to the last that they would be saved, shall, in consequence of their not having done the will of Christ's Father in heaven, be shut out from all participation in the happiness of the genuine followers of Christ, and a clear demonstration then given that *He* never considered them as belonging to that class. God

may choose to bestow spiritual gifts upon unholy men, just as He often gives them genius and mental power, but such intellectual endowments are by no means necessarily connected with moral worth, or Christian character.

24. ^aTherefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: 25. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.—^bLuke vi. 47, &c.

Therefore—a fit conclusion of the discourse, and practical application of it. We are here taught how vastly important it is that we “be not forgetful hearers, but *doers* of the Word.” To *hear* our Lord's sayings, is just to have them addressed to us, to have an opportunity of becoming acquainted with them. *And doeth them*. The man here described not only listens to them, and understands their meaning, but believes them (Rom. iii. 27), learns to think, feel and act according to them, and through them, thus understood and believed, repents, changes his mind, is “converted,” radically changed, is “born again,” becomes “a new creature,” being “transformed by the renewing of his mind.” *Unto a wise man*, &c. This man has wisely thought over the plan beforehand, seen the amount of expenditure it would require, and he is now *doing* his work. He is *building an house*, the image of desired felicity, that he may dwell in it quietly, comfortably and securely in the midst of tempestuous weather. By the building we are to understand, 1. The character which he cultivates—the whole frame of his sentiments, affections and active habits. He is moulded according to “the form of doctrine” into which he has been delivered. 2. The hope he cherishes. He has a “hope of eternal life,” a “good hope through grace;” but that hope rests entirely on what Christ has said to him.

Upon a rock. This indicates the solidity of the work. The man built, not on his own conjectures and reasonings, nor those of other men, but on “the true and faithful sayings of God,” in which Christ is represented as “the Lord, our strength and righteousness.”

And the rain descended, &c. In Judea, as in other Oriental countries, the rains are periodical. When they descend, they often

descend in torrents, and continue to do so with unabated violence for a number of days. The huts of the inhabitants, generally formed of clay hardened in the sun, are exposed to great danger, and when not founded on the solid rock are often undermined and swept away by the resistless torrent. The Christian's edifice of faith and hope may be subjected to many trials from divine judgments expressed in various tribulations, persecutions from men, accusations of conscience, terrors of death and retribution, and false teachers (Eph. iv. 14), who seek to draw him away from Christ and overwhelm him in sadness and despair; but they cannot succeed. (Rom. viii. 33-39; John vi. 68, 69.) In "the day of the Lord Jesus," the tempests of divine wrath against sin shall sweep resistlessly along, the streams of all-searching judgment shall beat vehemently on all that must be tested, but they shall not even shake a single stone in the building of the true believer, because it is founded on the Rock of Ages which can never be moved. There will then be found much wanting and much wrong, and that will be freely forgiven for Christ's sake, but the frame of character, of thought, feeling and action, formed by the faith of the truth, will meet with the unqualified approbation of God, and the hope founded on these sayings will prove to be a "hope that maketh not ashamed."

23. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: 27. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

Notice the points of similarity between these men. Each was a builder, and set to work. The object of both was the same; shelter, pleasure, comfort. Both had time given them to build. Both had the choice of situation. Both took possession of their buildings—both were tried. *He that heareth, and doeth not*, professes to believe Christ's words, and declares his determination to obey them, but fails to do so. *Built his house upon the sand*—was satisfied to begin his building "on the earth," just as he found it, or with lifting a spadeful here and there, but did not toil and labor, descending deeper and deeper through the soil. The building he erected was not

based upon Christ the foundation consisted of false principles, and the edifice corresponded with it. The study of piety should not be superficial, but a principle well founded and deeply rooted in the heart. *And the rain, &c.* This "foolish" man's building was tested as well as that of the "wise man." Character and hopes must be subjected to the trial of the Divine judgment. *And immediately it fell, &c.* The self-delusion vanishes; the man feels it is too late to correct his error; his past life is forever fled; his misery is boundless, the more so as he flattered himself with vain hopes. (See Luke xvi. 15.)

Thus ends the Sermon on the Mount. Such a sermon was never preached before. Such a sermon has never been preached since. Let us see that it has a deep and lasting influence on our own souls. It is addressed to us as well as to those who first heard it. We are they who shall have to give account of its heart-searching lessons. It is no light matter what we think of them. The word that Jesus has spoken, "the same shall judge us in the last day." (John xii. 48.)

23. And it came to pass when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: 29. For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

^aChapter xiii. 34; Mark i. 22, vi. 2; Luke iv. 32.

Astonished,—they were struck, literally *struck out*, driven from their normal or customary state of mind, by something new and strange. *At his doctrine*—both the matter of his discourse and the manner of his teaching. *For he taught, &c.* He spoke as one not relying on rabbis, or elders, or prophets, or even upon Moses, but as one greater than they all, having authority, original and unappealable, in His own Divine person. Moses and the prophets had said, "Thus saith the Lord;" but our Saviour's word was, "I say unto you." Being the Master of Law, He uttered things which were above the Law, changing the letter to the truth, and the figures to the spiritual meaning. There was something in the manner of Christ which awed and impressed beholders to a remarkable extent. (See Mark i. 22, xi. 18; Luke iv. 15.) It is one thing to admire the preacher, but another and quite a different thing to believe the truth he proclaims.

1. What is said about judging? 2. What is the "hypocrite" commanded to do? 3. Explain "Give not that which is holy," &c. 4. What does our Lord teach concerning prayer? 5. What rule is to govern us in our conduct toward men? 6. What is said of the strait gate? What of the wide gate? 7. Why are we to beware of false prophets? 8. How are we to know them? 9. Who shall enter into the kingdom of heaven? 10. What will many say to Christ on the judgment day? 11. Who is likened to a "wise man?" 12. Who to a "foolish man?" 13. What was the effect produced by Christ's teaching?

CHAPTER VIII.

2. *Christ cleanseth the leper, 5 health the centurion's servant, 14 Peter's mother in law, 16 and many other diseased; 18 sheweth how he is to be followed; 25 stilleth the tempest on the sea, 28 driveth the devils out of two men possessed, 31 and suffereth them to go into the swine.*

WHEN he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.

After the portraiture given of Jesus as a teacher, the Evangelist proceeds to describe Him as a worker of miracles. *Great multitudes, &c.* The numbers of those who descended with Him were swelled by accessions, after they reached the plain. Though Christ was a Lawgiver, so strict, and so faithful as a Reprover, the people diligently attended on Him.

2. "And behold, there came a leper and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."—Mark i. 40, &c.; Luke v. 12, &c.

A leper. Of all diseases to which the human frame is liable, the leprosy, perhaps, was the most astonishing and appalling. It was a poisoning of the springs of life, and was deemed one of the Lord's most fearful visitations of wrath. (Num. xii. 6, 10; 2 Chron. xxvi. 19.) It is still to be found in some parts of the world. There is said to be a small island on the coast of South Africa, near the Cape of Good Hope, which is appropriated by the Colonial government to lepers.

Worshipped Him. In token of civil respect, or as an act of religious homage.

Saying, Lord, &c. The leper expressed the profoundest reverence and most earnest importunity. There was here no questioning of Christ's power, of his unbelief who said, "If thou canst," &c. (Mark ix. 22.) *Wilt* and *canst* are not mere auxiliaries, but distinct and independent verbs. *If thou art willing thou art able to cleanse or purify me, i. e.,* to free me from leprosy, considered not as a mere disease, but as a symbolical and actual defilement. If the leper had known the compassion of the Saviour's heart, he would not have said,

"If thou wilt." Christ's *mercy* is as great as His *power*. It is true that by His *power* He stretched out the heavens and laid the foundation of the earth. But it is also true that "high as the heaven is above the earth, so great is his *mercy* toward them that fear him."

There are gradations in faith. In *this* case we have the example of it in a nascent and imperfect form—as a grain of mustard seed. In the history of the second case here recorded (verse 8), we have it in far greater strength and maturity. In the former the man believed in the power, but doubted the will of Christ to heal him. In the latter case the man believed that Christ might cure the patient who stood before Him; but more than this—believed that His word would be alike effectual, though the patient were at a distance and out of sight. His was a faith not helped by the full accompaniments of sense, and which subsisted on itself alone.

3. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.—b2 Kings v. 11.

By the law of God (Lev. v. 3), he that touched a leper was unclean. By what Christ did, as He was God, He could not contract any ritual uncleanness. The sun casts his beams upon all that is polluted on earth, but retains unscathed his own purity and splendor. *Put forth, &c.* This visibly connected the author with the subject of the miracle, and at the same time symbolized or typified the healing virtue which it did not of itself impart. *Saying, I will, &c.* Jesus ratified and approved His utterance of faith by making the concession of his request in the very words wherein the request itself had been embodied. This is the saying of God—and God only—the saying of Him whose almighty will is the cause of all things. The

cures which His servants wrought were in the name of *another*, but Christ's were in *His own name*, and by *His own will*. (See Gen. xli. 16; 2 King v. 7; Acts iii. 6.)

And immediately, &c. The effect, as usual, was instantaneous; the man was cleansed or purified, both in a physical and moral sense. What an astonishing and convincing spectacle! This action of Jesus is a representation of that *invisible hand* which makes itself *felt* by the most *insensible heart*, of that *internal word* which makes itself heard by the most *deaf*, and of that *supreme will* which *works* everything according to its *own counsel*. "To my mind," says *Dr. Thomson*, after describing this dreadful malady as he saw it, "there is no conceivable manifestation of Divine power more triumphantly confirmatory of Christ's Divinity than the cleansing of a leper with a word. He who can cleanse the leper can raise the dead, and can also forgive sins and save the soul. I ask no other evidence of the fact."

4. And Jesus saith unto him, *See thou tell no man, but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.*

^cChap. ix. 30; Mark v. 43. ^dLev. xiv. 4, 10; Luke v. 14.

See thou tell no man: but go, &c. Lest if a rumor of these things go before thee, the priests at Jerusalem, out of envy, out of a desire to depreciate my work, may deny either that thou wast a leper, or else that thou art now truly cleansed. There are times when our Lord would have us work for Him quietly and silently, rather than attract attention by a noisy zeal. The man was ready to remain. Adversity transfers our affections from natural objects to Christ.

Show thyself, &c., i. e., subject thyself to the inspection of a priest, and obtain an official recognition of the cure that has been wrought upon thee. *And offer the gift, &c.* (Lev. xiv. 2, 10, 21, xli. 1-32.) Thus would the miracle be fully authenticated. So long as the ceremonies of the Mosaic law, which were now drawing to a close, were not abrogated, Christ would have them respected. *For a testimony unto them, i. e.,* as a proof that I reverence the law and comply with its requirements, or it may refer to the fact of the man's being cleansed, which could be fully ascertained by nothing but official scrutiny and attestation. (Lev. xiv. 2, 10, 21.)

Leprosy is an emblem of sin. Sin is the deadly sickness by which we are all affected. It is inherited from our parents. (Ps. li. 5.) It has eaten into our constitution. It has affected all our faculties; heart, conscience, mind, and will, are all diseased by it. (Isa. i. 6.) It excludes from communion with God, from heaven, and, at length, it will bring down the body to the grave (Rom. vi. 23); and if sin is unpardoned, it will ruin the soul forever. Who shall deliver us from this body of death? Let us thank God that Jesus Christ can. He is able to cure the worst cases of spiritual leprosy, even such as those of *Manasseh*, *Saul*, and *Zaccheus*. The two little words, *I will*, are a deep mine, rich in comfort and encouragement to all laboring and heavy-laden souls.

5. ^fAnd when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, 6. And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. ^gLuke vii. 1, &c. ^hJob xxxi. 13, 14; Acts x. 7; Col. iii. 11, iv. 1; Phil. 16.

Capernaum—the center of Christ's operations, to which He frequently returned after His itinerant missions. A *centurion*, or captain in the army of Herod, who was at that time king of Galilee, but under subjection to the Romans. He was stationed with a hundred men under his command in the barracks at Capernaum. Herod, to support himself in his authority, and to enforce the payment of tribute, which he had to render to the Emperor of Rome, had stationed large bodies of soldiers in various parts of the land. This centurion was one of the proselytes, whom the providence of God had so wonderfully prepared in all the great cities of the Greek and Roman world as a link of communication between Gentile and Jew, in contact with both—holding to the first by their race, and to the last by their religion, and who must have greatly helped to the ultimate fusion of both into one Christian church. The first fruit of the Gentiles was a Roman soldier.

Came unto him, &c. In Luke vii. 3, "sent unto him the elders of the Jews." It is usual in all languages, when the speaker or writer wishes to direct attention simply to the act, and not to the attending circumstances, to ascribe to the person himself the things which are done, and the words

which are spoken, by his order It is a legal maxim *who does by another does by himself*. *My servant*, &c. The centurion's feeling such a deep interest in the well-being of his servant, keeping him at his "home," instead of sending him in his affliction to relatives or friends, is a beautiful trait in his character, and highly creditable to him, especially when the temptations of military life are remembered. True religion binds the hearts of masters and servants together. It is a great advantage to be connected with godly families. *Sick of the palsy*, &c. When paralysis or palsy are united with tetanus, as it sometimes is in Eastern countries, extreme suffering and rapid dissolution are often the result.

7. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

How promptly does our Lord accede to the request! The confidence with which He spoke of healing one so near his end shows that His power to work miracles was not a derived one, but inherent in Himself. It also shows Christ's gracious readiness to bless. (Ps. cxiii. 5.)

8. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.
9. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh, and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.—Luke xv. 19, 21. ¹Ps. cvii. 20.

The gracious language of our Lord was *humbling* to the centurion. *Lord, I am not worthy*, &c. He was far from being puffed up with conceit of his own merit, and this, too, even though he had built a synagogue. (Luke vii. 5.) He thought himself unworthy of the presence in his house of so exalted and holy a personage, yet Christ counted him worthy that he should enter into His heart—a greater boon and blessedness. The best men have always the lowest thoughts of themselves. When we esteem ourselves unworthy of any favors, Christ accounts us worthy of all. Humility is that virtue which, more than any other, disposes the mind to yield to the evidences and embrace the doctrines of the Bible, which the Gospel was peculiarly meant to produce, on which it lays the greatest stress, and in which, perhaps, more than in any other, consists the true essence and vital principle of the Christian temper. (Luke xiv. 11.) It is the concomitant grace of faith.

But speak the word only, &c. He had faith in Christ's Divine power. (See on verse 2.) He thought that it was equal to that of God, who said, "Let there be light, and there was light." (Ps. cvii. 20.)

For I am a man under authority, &c. "I am a subaltern, an under-officer, and have such power that I can say to this soldier, 'Take up that position,' and to that soldier, 'Be sentinel there,' and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he doeth it; much more, surely, Thou, who art the Commander of all the armies of the skies, and the Ruler of all the inhabitants of the earth, hast but to speak the word, and my servant then will be instantly healed." One's profession may often be made serviceable to one's Christianity, and lessons may be gathered from domestic, private and professional life, which will cast new lustre on the truths, and inspire with new force the precepts, of the Gospel. We are now separated from the Saviour, but we can reach Him by faith and prayer. What peace we should enjoy if in all our difficulties we felt that Jesus was able to deliver us!

10. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

Marvelled, wondered, started in a pleasant surprise, as at the discovery of a rose in the desert, at this supernatural union of abasement and elevation, consciousness of guilt, and strong faith in a Roman centurion! It is remarkable that of the only two occasions on which it is recorded that Christ wondered, one was at "faith," and the other at "unbelief." (Mark vi. 6.) We ought to wonder less at wisdom, wealth and grandeur, than at the fruits of *faith*. This expression is one of those which show the reality of our Lord's human nature. The miracle He was about to work showed Him to be "perfect God;" the feeling of wonder showed Him to be "perfect man." The union of two natures in one person is a thing passing our weak comprehension. We must believe, admire and adore, without attempting to define or explain. *To them that followed*, i. e., His disciples.

Verily, I say unto you, &c. The faith of the centurion was great because he had to ascend from paganism to attain it; great because not purely physical, but spiritual, realizing his own unworthiness and the

superiority of Jesus as the Holy One; great, because it realized the divine mission of Christ from Jehovah, and expressed a sense of profound confidence in His absolute word, without His actual presence, thus surpassing that of the nobleman (John iv. 49) Jairus, (Mark v. 23) and Martha and Mary. (John xi. 21 and 32.) The unbelief of the entire chosen people of God was rebuked by the faith of this *stranger to the commonwealth of Israel*. (Eph. ii. 12.) How striking a commentary upon the Apostle's words, Rom. ix. 31-32!

11. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

¹Gen. xii. 3; Isa. ii. 2, 3, xi. 10; Mal. i. 11; Luke xiii. 29; Acts x. 45, xi. 18, xiv. 27; Rom. xv. 9-12; Eph. iii. 6; ²Chap. xxi. 43. ³Chap. xiii. 42, 50, xxii. 13, xxiv. 51, xxv. 30; Luke xiii. 28; 2 Peter ii. 17; Jude 13.

Jesus takes occasion from the faith of the Roman centurion to state that this case was not to be a solitary one, that many of those afar off, and not of the Jewish nation, should be called to be heirs of the grace of eternal life. *Sit down*, literally, recline, in allusion to the recumbent posture of guests at table in the East. *With Abraham, &c.* They should become his spiritual descendants. It is not sect, nor system, nor longitude, nor latitude, that are the limits of Christianity. God has His own hidden ones, where the world least suspects them. *Kingdom of heaven*—the state of future glory.

Learn. 1. Heaven will be composed of a vast multitude and various descriptions of persons. 2. In that assembly there will be a perfect harmony and congeniality in character, for spending eternity in happy fellowship. 3. The assembly will not be one collected for toil or battle, but for "rest from their labor." 4. There will be a mutual recognition among all those whose relation to each other here is such as to admit of its perpetuation in that blessed state. 5. Heaven will be a feast—a feast of the understanding, of the affections, of memory, of anticipation.

I say unto you. This is the authority on which the whole rests. We have the testimony of Jesus, and on it we may with confidence rely. Many of the heathen are pressing into the kingdom of God; are you still loitering about the entrance? Many

of them are the subjects of grace; are you still in a state of nature? God forbid that while they shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, you should be cast out!

But the children, &c. Natural Jews, all, indeed, to whom the kingdom would seem naturally to belong—those who, by their descent and outward circumstances, might regard themselves as candidates for the blessings of heaven.

Cast outer darkness. The imagery of a feast, as representing the happiness of heaven, is still preserved. The expression denotes darkness the most remote from the light, and is employed in opposition to the brilliant lights which are figuratively supposed to be burning in the banqueting-room. It seems a fitting retribution that those who, when *light* came into the world, loved darkness rather than light, *because their deeds were evil*, should hereafter be enshrouded with fearful darkness and gloom. *Weeping and gnashing of teeth* is a strong image of that utter despair, darkness, and death of a soul excluded from God, who "is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all. (1 John i. 5.)

13. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self same hour.

As thou hast believed—his faith was great, and so also was the corresponding blessing. (John xi. 40.) Unbelief hinders blessing. (Matt. xiii. 58); but faith can work wonders. (Matt. xvii. 20; 1 Cor. xiii. 2.) *Servant was healed*, restored to perfect health and vigor; there was not merely a remission of the strength of the disease, but it had altogether left him. (Luke vii. 10.) *In the self same hour*—as soon as Jesus had spoken the word. (Comp. John iv. 46.) This cure was the effect of the faith, prayer and humility of the centurion, through which the almighty energy of Christ was conveyed to the sick man; but those very graces in the centurion were the products of divine grace.

On this history, note 1. Our Lord's miracles had the fullest credit given to them by men of rank and character, competent to judge. 2. The profession of a soldier is not an unlawful one; it is never condemned in the Scriptures. (Matt. xxvii. 54; Acts x. 2, xxvii. 43.) 3. There is no situation

in life that exempts us from the obligation to be Christians. 4. We are to admire more the least measure of grace in a good man, than all the grandeur and glory of a great man. 5. Christ is most pleased with us when we put the most confidence in Him.

14. ¶ "And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw ^{his} wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. 15. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them."

¶ Mark i. 29, 30, 31; Luke iv. 38, 39. ¶ 1 Cor. ix. 5.

Peter's house. Peter and Andrew appear to have lived together. (Matt. iv. 18.) Peter is here mentioned alone for his strong personal character. *His wife's mother.* Whether his mother-in-law lived with him, or whether he received her into his house that she might be cared for during her sickness, is not known, but either shows the kindness of his heart. We should show piety at home. (Prov. xxiii. 22.) The Romish doctrine of the celibacy of the clergy certainly finds no countenance in the fact that the chief of the Apostles, who is claimed by that church as the first pope, was a married man. (See 1 Cor. ix. 5.) Neither the Prophets of the Old Testament, nor the Apostles of the New, judged themselves too pure for an institution of their Maker. (See Gen. ii. 18; 1 Tim. iii. 2; Heb. xiii. 4.)

Laid, and sick of a fever. In Tabiga, the great manufacturing suburb of Capernaum, where Peter's wife's mother lay sick, and about which there is considerable marshy land, "Feyers," says *Dr. Thompson*, "of a very malignant type are still prevalent, particularly in summer and autumn, owing, no doubt, to the extreme heat acting upon these marshy plains, such as the Butailha, at the influx of the Jordan."

He touched her hand, i. e., took her by the hand. Luke says that he "rebuked" the disorder, so that perhaps He also spoke. The evangelist, who adds something more, does not contradict him who says the less. This miracle did not, as in some other cases, consist in the cure of an incurable disorder, but in the *mode* of cure. *And the fever left her.* Instantly. There was not a gradual convalescence, but an instantaneous cure was effected, thus showing the reality of the miracle. We found Jesus, in the first place, at the hospital, next at the barracks, and now we find Him beneath

the roof-tree, and by the domestic fireside, healing the sick, and giving comfort and joy. *And she arose, &c.* The completeness of the recovery was shown by the fact that she at once girded herself for serving. She *ministered unto them*, or waited on them, served them, with specific reference to food. Let those who have been restored to bodily health, perhaps rescued from the sight of an opening grave, not forget the divine goodness, but be found ministering to the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the wants of His people. (Ps. lxvi. 13, 14.)

16. ¶ "When the even was come they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: 17. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, *¶* Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."

¶ Mark i. 32, &c.; Luke iv. 40, 41. ¶ Isa. liii. 4; 1 Peter ii. 24.

When the even was come, namely, after sun-set, at which time the Jewish Sabbath ended. Thus the Sabbath (for we find, from Mark i. 21, that it was a Sabbath day) had ended, when the sick were brought, and hence they did it without scruple. It was a time when there was in Capernaum a deep stirring of enthusiasm for the Lord—when this general longing seized the inhabitants of the place, and they brought unto him their sick, especially those who were possessed with devils. The lame, the blind, the paralytic, the possessed, were brought by their friends, walking, led, supported by crutches, or carried in their beds, to the great Healer. *And he cast out the spirits with his word*, literally, *by a word, i. e.,* at a single authoritative command. *Healed all that were sick.* Some persons turn away from the view of misery, because it gives them uneasiness; but such conduct is selfish. What rejoicing was heard that night through all the place! No sinner need despair who comes to Christ, conscious of his spiritual malady, to be healed by His merciful hand.

That it might be fulfilled, &c. The prediction is found in Isa. liii. 4-6. The sympathy of Christ with the distressed was a part of His suffering, and His removal of diseases was the fruit of His bearing our sins and the punishment of them. It was by His substitutional suffering in our stead that He was entitled to redeem us from hell and relieve us from the earthly part of our woes. Jesus, by relieving suffering, has

left us an example that we should follow His steps. All the philanthropic means employed by individuals or by society at large for the relief of human suffering, and especially of that produced by bodily disease, are but continuations of the work begun by Christ himself. The medical profession, more especially when governed by right principles and actuated by becoming motives, bears the same relation to our Lord as the physician of the body, that the ministry ought always to sustain to Him as the physician of the soul.

This is an appropriate place for noticing several peculiarities of our Lord's miracles. 1. They were public. Some of them, it is true, were wrought in private, thus indicating that there was no ostentation in the manner of performing them, yet as a *general* thing they were wrought in public, in broad day, in the sight of multitudes in all parts of the country, and, in fact, under the eye of a whole nation for nearly four years. 2. They were of a beneficent character, not a wild, arbitrary display of power, but all looking to some benignant result. 3. They were of such a character that if *they* were not miracles, then miracles can have no existence for the authentication of a divine mission. They cannot be referred to the possible effects of imagination, nor to occult laws of nature never till then developed, nor to fortunate coincidences. The universal experience of mankind up to that time, and since that time, proves that they were not only above nature, but in many instances contrary to all its fixed and uniform laws. They were, moreover, generally of such a character as to preclude all preconcerted action with a view to collusion and deception, being performed, not in circumstances previously arranged, or at places specially suggested, but just when and where exigencies arose and necessities required.

18. ¶ Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.

The occurrences here narrated took place some time after those recorded in the preceding verse. *The other side.* The other side of Lake Gennesaret. (Comp. verse 28.) He crossed from west to east.

19. ¶ And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.
 ¶ Luke ix. 57, 58.

A certain scribe. (See chap. ii. 4.) *Came,* struck with what he had seen, in the enthusiasm of the moment. *Master*—Teacher. A resolution to follow Christ is a good one, if made deliberately, and not rashly, nor for sinister and secular advantages, which, it is to be feared from the answer our Saviour gave, was the case here. It has been suggested that this may have been Judas Iscariot, but where nothing is known silence is a virtue.

20. And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

¶ Psalms lxxiv. 3, civ. 17. ¶ Isa. liii. 3; 1 Cor. viii. 9.

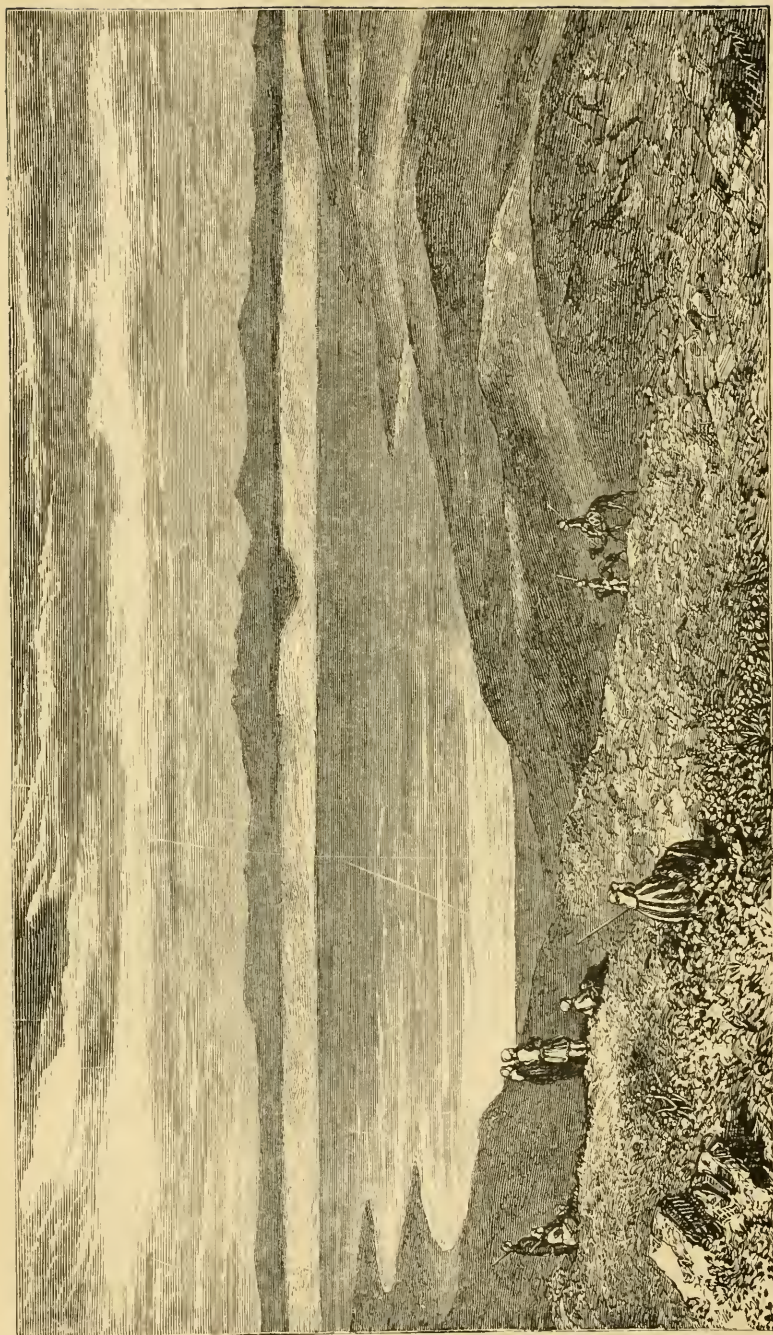
The foxes have holes, &c. "It is well, but recollect, for it is right that you should know what you are to embrace." How inexpressibly affecting are these words, on the lips of the Word "made flesh!" What a history do they reveal of weary days, and shelterless nights—of houseless wanderings, and scanty supplies of food! The title, the *Son of man*, which Christ here gives to himself, is 1. An intimation that He who requires so much self-denial also fully deserves it. 2. Shows the truth of His humanity, for the Son of man must be a man; and 3. Indicates the depth of His abasement; He humbled, yea, emptied Himself, when, being the Son of God, He submitted to be made man. Had this *certain scribe* truly loved Jesus he would not have been deterred by any privation from following His steps. As no further mention is made of him, it is most probable that he was discouraged by the reply Jesus gave.

21. ¶ And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

¶ Luke ix. 59, 60. ¶ See 1 Kings xix. 20.

Another of his disciples, i. e. another, who was one of His disciples. Tradition says it was Philip. If the former man was too sanguine and inconsiderate, this one was too melancholy, even in the most immediate neighborhood of the Prince of Life, finding himself pursued by the gloomy images of death, and therefore requiring to be urged forward. *Lord, suffer me first, &c.* Some suppose that the request was only for permission to take care of an aged father until he should go down to the grave; others, that it was to inter a father who was already a corpse.

22. But Jesus said unto him, Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead.—¶ Eph. ii. 13; 1 Tim. v. 6.



SEA OF GALILEE.

The term *dead* is here used both in its figurative and literal acceptation. It was common among the Jews to describe an ungodly or sinful person as one dead, though alive. Our Saviour therefore means to say that one who had an urgent call to follow Him might leave even his aged father to be cared for, or his dead father to be buried by his other sons or other relatives, who were "dead" to the great concerns of eternal life. (See John v. 25; Rom. v. 14; Col. ii. 13.) By this remarkable instance—strong even to seeming harshness—our Lord did most pointedly indicate the superior object and higher duty to which *all* others must give place. We must not let anything upon earth stand between us and instant duty. Infinite interests must take precedence of the finite. Such as are called by Christ to preach the Gospel (see Luke ix. 60) must mind that alone, and leave inferior duties to inferior persons.

23. † And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.

The *ship* was a fisherman's boat. Christ had given commandment to depart (verse 18), but was detained by the scribe and the disciple.

24. † And behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, inasmuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.—† Mark iv. 37, &c.; Luke viii. 23, &c.

There arose a great tempest in the sea—the sea of Galilee. It was a sudden and violent squall, such as those small inland seas, surrounded with mountain gorges, are notoriously exposed to, which descended on the bosom of the lake: and the ship which bore the Saviour of the world appeared to be in imminent peril, as, humanly speaking, no doubt it was, for the disciples, exercised to the sea, as many of them were from their youth, and familiar with all the changes of that lake, would not have been terrified by an ordinary tempest. A sailor will never seek or take help from others as long as he feels that he has resources of his own on which he can rely. Thus they who had set sail, with the sky unfretted with a cloud, the sea unruffled with waves, a fair wind, and every prospect of a prosperous voyage, were soon overtaken with a storm. What an emblem of life, at least, of the life of many! "Judge not according to the appearance." "Boast not thyself of

to-morrow," &c. There is neither room nor reason to doubt that Jesus is with us, because in temporal or spiritual things, trouble and sorrow assail us. We may encounter storms when sailing with the Son of God Himself. "In the world ye shall have tribulation." "We are they who have come out of great tribulation." The wave which rises the highest only lifts the ship nearest the sky. *But he was asleep.* Like Jonah He slept, but, unlike Jonah, he was the arrester, not the cause of the storm. Exhausted with the toils of the preceding day, on which He had delivered several parables (recorded in Matt. xiii.), Jesus now sought the restoring influence of repose. Here we see His human nature, through which we must fly for hope and help to the clefts of the Rock of his Godhead. How truly was Christ a partaker of our necessities! And what could give us a stronger assurance of His sympathy and compassion! Jesus, though He may *seem* to be indifferent to the condition of His people, has *not* forgotten them, even when their case may appear to be most desperate. He makes the trial of their faith work patience, and patience, experience, even the blessed experience of His infinite power and love, which *then* shine forth the more resplendently.

25. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.

We are now perishing, while thou art sleeping. Our necessity pleads for God's ability. We see their terror in the double "Master, Master," with which, according to Luke, and in the words of almost rebuke. "Master, carest thou not that we perish," with which, according to Mark, they addressed Jesus. In times of imminent peril, how strangely even advanced Christians are forgetful of their own principles!

26. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea: and there was a great calm.

† Ps. lxxv. 7, lxxxix. 9, cvii. 20.

How gentle and tender the rebuke! *Why are ye fearful*, &c. Our Lord rebuked the fear and weak faith of His disciples, first, showing that moral disorders are worse than physical. They had faith, for they turned to Christ in their need, but their faith was not quick and lively; its imperfection showed itself in their excess

of terror; and their counting it possible that the ship which bore their Lord could ever truly perish. A true and saving faith, although it cannot be too large for God's glory and for our own comfort, cannot be too small for the purpose of salvation. The shipwrecked sailor, if he has been cast upon a rock but a single foot above the reach of the waves, is perfectly secure. So, if by God's sovereign grace we have been cast upon the Rock of Ages, we are safe. Only let us not rest contented in our present condition, but be daily climbing higher and higher by more fervent prayer, more frequent and intimate communion with Jesus, and by more conscientious and consistent discharge of duty, and we shall reach the summit of that Rock whose head is above the heavens.

Then he arose, and rebuked, &c. The word *rebuked* is one which we apply to living and intelligent creatures only—a servant, or a child, not a tree or a stone. It is possible, therefore, that in this case there is not a mere historical personification, but a recognition of a malignant agency to which the word is spoken. There may have been demon-spirits giving strength to the hurricane—mustering, in diabolic rage, the destructive forces of nature, under some mad delusion, that they might possibly effect the ruin of the voyagers, and thus prevent the discomfiture they seem to have known too well was at hand. Satan, we know, is called “the god of this world,” and the “Prince of the power of the air,” and he is trying to grasp the sceptre which he cannot hold, intruding, and doing mischief wherever he is permitted, and has the power to do so.

And there was a great calm. The sea no longer, as after a storm, rises, and falls, and frets, but at once becomes smooth and tranquil, and the rolling vessel rests in peaceful security and quietness on its placid bosom. “And so,” says *Leighton*, “in the soul, when all within is full of confusion and noise—the heart working like a troubled sea, and finding no rest, either from its own persuasions or the most skillful speeches of others, but, amidst all, likely to be swallowed up or split in pieces: then, one word from CHRIST’S mouth quiets all presently, and makes the soul calmer

and smoother than the stillest water in the fairest day.”

Notice the juxtaposition of lowliness and greatness in the scene now before us. In the weary, jaded passenger, wrapped in a coarse fisherman's coat, sleeping amid the chill damps of the evening—we see “the Son of man;” in the stilling of the tempest we see “the Son of God.” The same juxtaposition is always (or generally) found in Christ's history. Born in a stable, yet angels sang of His glory. Baptized by a sinner, with a sinner's rite, a voice from the “Excellent Glory” attested His Divinity. Bethany's tear-drops revealed His *human* heart; Bethany's word of Omnipotence in raising the sheeted dead, proclaimed His Godhead. Calvary's cross shows us a dying man, but a blackened sun, riven rocks, the earth trembling to support its Creator's cross, testified that He who hung in ignominy on that tree was “the mighty God.”

27. But the men marvelled, saying, what manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?

By the miracle the disciples were led into thoughts, even higher and more awful, of the Lord whom they followed, and were brought more and more to feel that in nearness to Him was all safety and deliverance from every danger. Their faith was disciplined, and they were prepared for sterner moral storms yet in reserve for them. God has a kind design in *all* the afflictions which befall His people. Happy are those for whom all the hurricanes of life's unquiet sea have the effect of making Jesus more precious.

This miracle may be regarded as symbolical of the Church—the Church *in* the world, and yet not *of* the world, subject to the storms of persecution. From all these storms she shall be delivered, as she ever has been, by Christ, who is in her, being roused by the cry of His servants. It is also not a mere miraculous feat, but also a prophetic fact. It was not finished when it was done, but a foreshadow, as all Christ's miracles were, of a grand result yet to be. That clear dominion of man's spirit over the material universe which Christianity gives, the calm courage which it inspires, and the lordship over the winds and waves, and over all the blind uproar

of nature, which it secures, is the appointed sequence of the calming of the storm on the Galilean lake. It is also a part of the recuperative and restoring process which is going forward under Him "by whom and for whom are all things." It is an advance toward the time of the promised "restitution of all things." (See Job. iii. 17; Rev. iv. 6, xxi. and xxii.)

28. *And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.

*Mark v. 1, &c.; Luke viii. 26, &c.

We have just seen Jesus show Himself the controller of the elements by which our world is assailed. We now come to contemplate Him in a light still more glorious, as the Lord of the inner storms—the moral hurricanes by which the human mind and heart are deranged.

The other side, that is, of the sea of Galilee. *Country of the Gergesenes*. In Mark, and Luke, we read "the country of the Gadarenes." The city of Gadara, which was one of the ten cities called Decapolis, was on the east of Jordan, in the vicinity of the lake of Gennesaret, beyond the brook Jarmuk, about eight miles above its junction with the Jordan. This city gave its name to the district or canton of which it was the chief town—*Gadarene*. *Gergesa* was another city in the same neighborhood, which gave to another district the name of the country of the *Gergesenes*, so that the region generally might be designated by either name. The event here related probably took place in the vicinity of the two cities.

There met him two possessed with devils. In describing this fearful scene, each Evangelist that records it has some touches which are peculiarly his own. Mark and Luke note but one demoniac. Here is variation, but not contradiction. He who mentions the one does not deny the other.

These men may have rushed down from their dismal dwelling-place, to encounter with hostile violence the intruders that had dared to set foot on their domain. Or it may have been that they were drawn to Christ by the secret instinctive feeling that He was their helper, and driven from Him by the sense of the awful gulf that divided them from the Holy One of God. If they came with purposes of violence, their mind

was changed ere they fully reached Jesus. (Luke viii. 29.)

Coming out of the tombs. They avoided human supervision and society. Gadara is remarkable for a great number of tombs, hewn out of the white limestone rocks, and richly carved. *Exceeding fierce*. They were desperate cases. *No man might*—No man *could* pass that way. There is no road which sin does not make dangerous. These demoniacs are a painfully exact likeness of men in the worst stage of sin, and to that stage all sin tends. There met him *two*. Sinners of the worst stage like to be together.

29. And behold, they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?"

*Acts xvi. 17; James ii. 19.

What have we to do with thee. These are the words of the devils by whom the men were possessed, rather than the men themselves, and they mean "what have we in common? Why interestest thou with us? Why wilt thou not let us alone?" *Jesus, thou Son of God?* Perhaps the demoniacs were Jews not wholly unacquainted with the Messianic hope, but certainly it is in the spirit of the Evangelists, if we believe that the knowledge of the Lord which the demons usually exhibited had been attained in a supernatural way. (Comp. chapter iii. 17.) *Art thou come hither, &c.* How awful and terrible are these glimpses of the unseen world! It is here implied that these evil spirits expect a certain time of torment. (Jude v. 6; 2 Peter ii. 4; Matt. xx. 41.) How miserable an expectation! How thankful should we be, who not only are invited and persuaded to "flee from the wrath to come," but have a promise of all grace which may be needful to us, to support us through dangers, and carry us through temptations!

30. And there was a good way off from them a herd of many swine feeding. 31. So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

A good way off. At a considerable distance on the hills which skirted the plain where our Saviour had landed. *Many swine*. (Mark v. 13.) The Jews were prohibited from keeping swine, which were unclean animals. The herd must therefore have belonged to pagans, or else have been kept for purposes of traffic. In any case,

it might serve as evidence of the legal uncleanness of the people, and of their essentially Gentile disposition. *If thou cast us out, &c.* The demons, becoming aware that they must in some way yield before Jesus, entreated at least to be handled in the mildest way. They had great objections to being in "the deep" (Luke viii. 31), *i. e.*, the abyss or pit of hell, and much preferred to wander about. But it was held that they could only do this within the vehicle of some body, human or animal, divested of which they returned to the abyss. To avert this, the demons implored permission to enter the herd of swine.

32. And he said unto them, *Go.* And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine; and behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters. 33. And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told everything, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.

Go. This does not mean that Jesus approved of it, only that He permitted it. In Luke viii. 32, "he suffered them." God often and everywhere permits in this world what He does not applaud. *They went, &c.*—of course the demons, not the demoniacs. According to *Paige*, an American Universalist commentator, the demoniacs were merely crazy men, and their insanity was transferred by Jesus to these two thousand pigs! *And behold, the whole herd of swine, &c.* The entire herd rushed headlong in frantic rage over the crags or slopes overhanging the lake, and were engulfed in the waters below, thus showing the extraordinary malice, hatred and love of mischief, which are attributes of Satan, and which extend their operation beyond *men*—even to *brutes*. *Perished*—the swine. The devils, alas! are still alive.

The destruction of the swine does not, as some have imagined it does, present any serious difficulty. A man is of more value than many swine, and if the Lord that made all things could do man good morally, physically or otherwise, by sacrificing these swine, He only did then and in that

act, what is done every day when the innocent lamb, the unoffending bird, the patient ox, are slaughtered for man's nutriment. So in relation to the loss incurred by the owners of the swine (at which some have cavilled), it is no more open to objection than any murrain that causes cattle to die, or inundation that destroys the fruits of the field, or other natural calamity with which God chastises His children, punishes, or seeks to make contrite the hearts of His enemies. For often times the taking away by God is, in a higher sense, a giving. It is the taking away of the meaner thing, for the purpose of making receptive of the higher. *And they that kept them fled, &c.* They that fed the swine repaired to the adjoining city, and reported to the inhabitants all that had occurred.

34. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts.

^eDeut. v. 25; 1 Kings xvii. 18; Luke v. 8; Acts xvi. 39.

The intelligence of the stupendous miracle so aroused the city, that for the moment the terror produced by it was stronger than the indignation from the loss, and the inhabitants poured forth to meet Jesus; and, seized with superstitious and half-heathen fear, and dreading further destruction of their property, they entreated Him to depart out of their country. When He healed their diseases, they begged Him to remain; but when He deprived them of their property they asked Him to depart. What a contrast to the entreaty of the Samaritans! (John iv. 40.) How many, alas! are there who, though they do not emulate the open opposition of the Gergesenes and ask Jesus to depart, yet put the word of salvation willfully from them, rush into the world, give way to folly, yield to sin, and in their days of darkness seek any and every master, rather than commit themselves at once to the Shepherd of their souls, and give themselves up to be guided, governed, sanctified and saved by the God of their salvation.

1. Who came to Jesus and worshiped Him? 2. What did he say? 3. What was the result? 4. Who next came to Christ? 5. For what purpose did he come? 6. What is said of him? 7. Why was the centurion's faith "great?" 8. What is said about sitting down in the kingdom of heaven? 9. What about "the children of the

kingdom?" 10. Mention the miracle in Peter's house. 11. State some of the peculiarities of our Lord's miracles. 12. What did Jesus say to the scribe? What to "another of His disciples?" 13. State the particulars of the "great tempest." 14. Describe the miracles in "the country of the Gergesenes." 15. How do sinners ask Jesus to depart from them?

CHAPTER IX.

2 *Christ curing one sick of the palsy,* 9 *calleth Matthew from the receipt of custom,* 10 *eateth with publicans and sinners,* 11 *defendeth his disciples for not fasting,* 20 *cureth the bloody issue,* 23 *raiseth from death Jairus' daughter,* 27 *giveth sight to two blind men,* 32 *healeth a dumb man possessed of a devil,* 36 *and hath compassion of the multitude.*

AND He entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city.—Chap. iv. 13.

Passed—at the request of the Gergesenes. The Lord does not thrust His blessings on the unwilling. And by not making too long delays in one place, He aroused the more earnest wishes for His presence. *His own city*—Capernaum, dignified by this inhabitant. The miracle which followed was wrought not many days after the cure of the leper, (viii. 2-4).

2. ^bAnd behold, they brought unto him a man sick of the palsy, and lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

^bMark ii. 3; Luke v. 18. ^cChap. viii. 10.

Behold, merely indicates something new and unexpected. *They brought unto him*—many such offerings were made to the Saviour acceptably. *Sick of palsy*—palsy seems to be a contraction of the word paralysis. It is the cessation of nervous activity and muscular motion—a disease that is found everywhere in various forms. (See notes on chap. iv. 24.) *Lying on a bed*. According to Oriental usage, the bed was probably no solid framework like our bedsteads, but a simple pallet, rug or blanket. Even the most costly beds in the East consist of cushions and light coverings, spread upon the floor or divan. *Jesus seeing their faith*—that of the paralytic himself, as well as those who brought him, manifested by their making these extraordinary efforts to bring him to Jesus. *Son, be of good cheer*. Be confident, neither thy sins nor thy disease shall stand in thy way.

Thy sins be forgiven thee. Saving faith and healing were alike the gift of God, and often, if not commonly, bestowed together. Knowing the state of the man's heart, as

one who mourned more for his sins than his sufferings, our Lord, instead of healing immediately, pronounced his sins forgiven. This absolution was not a declaration of what was, or a wish for what might be, but a judicial sentence of what took effect the moment the words were uttered. The worth of the pardon which Jesus bestows is valued only by those who groan beneath the burden of sin. The great reformer, Martin Luther, soon after he became a monk, fell dangerously ill. Though he had long sought for pardon, he was filled with terror at the prospect of eternity. An aged monk visited his cell, and reminded him of those words in the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." "Believe," said the old man, "not only that the sins of David or Peter are forgiven, but that your *own* are pardoned." These words were a balm to Luther's wounded heart. He thought no more of gaining heaven by his own righteousness, but he looked with confidence to the mercy of God in Christ. Greatly may he rejoice whose experience enables him to bless the Lord who hath first forgiven him all his iniquities, and then healed all his diseases. Our Lord's pardoning the paralytic's sins before healing his bodily disease, though it does not show that He regarded special suffering as punishment for special sins, nevertheless was calculated to remind him, and all who were present, and all who read the account of the transaction, that sin is the root and cause of all pains and diseases. Much more important is it to have sin forgiven, than sickness or any other bodily evil removed.

3. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.

The scribes who, with Pharisees that were present (Luke v. 17), surrounded Jesus, now began to show their malice toward Him. *They said within themselves*,

&c.—reasoned in their hearts. (Mark ii. 6.) The charge of blasphemy which they brought against Him was based upon an arrogation of the Divine prerogative. They were not wrong in supposing that none can forgive sins but God only. They were wrong in not weighing candidly the testimony of God's miracles. "What are this man's pretensions that, on his own authority, he should pronounce forgiveness of sin—the sole prerogative of God. He is guilty of the rankest blasphemy." As it seems to have been then agreed on all hands, that forgiving of sins was the prerogative of God alone, and that for man to arrogate to himself this power was no less than blasphemy, how can man, without guilt, undertake to pronounce absolutely?

4. And Jesus, ⁴knowing their thoughts, said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?
⁴Ps. cxxxix. 2; Chap. xii. 25; Mark xii. 15; Luke v. 22, vi. 8, ix. 47, xi. 17.

Our Lord, being aware of their thoughts, asked them, "Why do ye secretly meditate evil?" To know the hearts of men, was, with the Jews, a test of the true Messiah's claims. In telling them, then, what the thoughts of their hearts were, Jesus gave them the fullest proof of His power to forgive sins, because God only can forgive sins, and God only can search and know the heart.

5. For whether is easier to say, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*, or to say, *Arise, and walk*? 6. But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) *Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.*

Whether is easier to say, &c. Christ's enemies, as He knew, thought that to *say*, or *claim*, that sin is forgiven, was undoubtedly the easier, particularly so long as inquiry was not made respecting the credentials of the speaker's authority. In order, therefore, that they might doubt no longer of his credentials (which seems to have been the great end of the miracles), the Saviour accomplished the miracle of healing, whereby the blessing of the forgiveness of sins was at once manifested and sealed.

But that ye may know, &c. "By doing that which is submitted to the eyes of men, I will attest my right and power to do that which, in its very nature, lies out of the region of ocular demonstration. From what you shall see, you may conclude

that it is no 'robbery' (Philip. ii. 6) upon my part, to claim the power of forgiving men their sins." The phrase, *the Son of man*, appears to have been taken from Dan. vii. 13, which the Jews understood as referring to the Messiah. (Luke xxii. 69, 70; John xii. 34.) *Power on earth*, the counterpart of *power in heaven*. It could be no superior scientific skill, it could be no mere earthly magnetic power, it could be no accidental coincidence of events. Earth is exclusively the place where sins are committed and remitted. The phrase implies a condition of heavenly glory, in which no one will call in question Christ's right to remit sins. *Then saith he to the sick of the palsy, &c.* "Bed," with the inhabitants of the East, is not that serious and important part of domestic economy that we are accustomed to consider it. It is at best like a very small and narrow sofa, so light as to be easily carried by the occupier himself from place to place, and from room to room, according as caprice or the change of the seasons may require. In general, however, it is nothing more than a mattress, which admits of being spread in a moment on the floor, and which, when not used, is carelessly flung into a corner of the room.

7. And he arose, and departed to his house.

Christ's command was accompanied with Divine power, the helpless man instantly sprang to his feet, lifted upon his head the mattress upon which he had lain (Luke v. 25), and strode with vigorous limbs out of the court (Luke v. 19), through the crowd, which now instinctively made way for him, hastening, under a command so pleasant to obey, first of all to his own house and family, to lend help where he had formerly been a burden, glorifying God (Luke v. 25) for the wonderful cure which he had performed on his body, and for the still more wonderful cure He had bestowed on his soul.

8. But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.

The crowd who had gathered from different points (Luke iv. 17), some, no doubt, in search of spiritual benefit, others to see and hear one whose name was in every mouth, wondered at what they had seen. *And glorified God*—an admirable antithesis,

the enthusiasm of the people, over against the murmuring and malice of the scribes. *Power to men.* From this it would seem that their ideas of Christ were, as yet, very imperfect, and that they looked on Him in no higher light than that of a man acting with delegated authority; whereas, they ought to have concluded that he was the Divine Messiah.

From this narrative learn the following practical lessons: 1. Affliction may prove a great blessing to a man's soul. 2. Whilst it is pleasant to see crowds flocking to the house of God, there is too much reason for the painful fear that many go there, not as humble worshipers, but as censors and spies. 3. All who are themselves in health, and strength, and comfort, ought to be ready to perform the various offices of humanity to those who are in sickness, or in any trouble. Especially ought Christians who have friends and acquaintances under the disease of sin, endeavor to bring them to the Saviour, in a spiritual sense; encouraging themselves from this and similar passages. 4. It is a solemn truth that Jesus knows the thoughts of men, whether they are for good or evil. (Ps. cxxxix. 5.) 5. It is delightful to know that Jesus can still forgive sin. (Acts v. 31.)

9. *And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.—Mark ii. 14: Luke v. 27.

Passed forth from thence, i. e., from the scene of the paralytic's cure in Capernaum, toward the shore of the sea of Galilee, on which that town lay. (Mark ii. 13.) On his way thither the events recorded here occurred. *He saw, that is, looked upon, attentively regarded.* A man named Matthew, elsewhere called Levi. (Luke v. 27; Mark ii. 14.) (See Preface to this Gospel.) *Sitting at the receipt of custom, i. e.,* the place of the receipt of taxes imposed by the Romans on this, as on other subject provinces of the empire. He was actually employed at his calling. The publicans had tenements or booths erected for them at the foot of bridges, at the mouth of rivers, and by the sea shore, where they took the toll of passengers. As the "receipt of custom" at which Matthew was sitting was not in the town, or at the gate, but, as it would seem, by the sea shore (see Mark ii. 13, 14), it is

presumed that he was one of the inferior officers employed to collect the dues levied upon the fish brought to shore, and upon the vegetables and fire-wood received from the other side of the lake.

And he saith unto him, Follow me—giving the words resistless efficacy in the heart of him to whom they were spoken. Doubtless this was not Matthew's first knowledge of the Saviour. The analogy of the class described (chap. iv. 18-22), makes it not improbable that this man, like his predecessors, already belonged, for a shorter or longer time, to the most attentive hearers of the Saviour. But now he is called to accompany Him as an avowed, decided, and constant disciple, and a future Apostle. *And he arose, and followed Him.* We are not to understand that he departed without settling up and arranging his affairs, so that his employers might receive detriment from his change of pursuit, and yet it is plain that unhesitatingly, without the reply of a word, or the least unnecessary delay, he left all in which he had just been immersed, obeyed the summons which was to change the whole tenor of his life.

Note 1. Such is the freeness of Divine grace that it calls and converts when, where, and whomsoever it will. 2. Conversion is as much a supernatural work now, as it was eighteen hundred years ago. (Ps. xxvii. 8.) 3. We must never despair of any one's salvation so long as he lives, after reading of Matthew's case. 4. Conversion now is equally as decisive as it ever was. Matthew's resigning his worldly calling, and worldly gains, was, indeed, peculiar; but this, only as regards the act, and not as regards the state of mind which produced the act, and which is required of all. 5. Instant obedience to what Christ says, is duty. God says, "Believe—do." We are not to discuss the metaphysics of the question, but just believe as God says, and do as God prescribes, and in the effort we will find the strength that is adequate to the occasion.

10. †And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.
‡Mark ii. 15, &c.; Luke v. 29, &c.

And it came to pass. This fact occurred probably some six months after the call

mentioned in the last verse. *Jesus sat at meat*, literally was reclining at table, in allusion to the ancient mode of lying on couches at meals, *in the house*, doubtless Matthew's house. When Christ was invited to any table, He never refused to go. He went mainly for an opportunity of conversing and doing good. His dining with publicans and sinners is not a precedent for us, unless we go as He did—a physician to the sick, an instructor to the ignorant. *Many publicans and sinners*. Under this expression were included all those who fell below the Pharisaic observance of the law. *Came and sat down*, &c. Matthew, having had time to be somewhat established in the faith, his compassion for old friends of his own calling and character, led him to gather them together that they might have an opportunity of hearing the gracious words which proceeded out of his Master's mouth, if haply they might experience a like change. Those who have been graciously delivered from the bondage of sin, will wish others also to be set free.

11. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?—^aChap. xi. 19; Luke v. 30, xv. 2. ^bGal. ii. 15.

Why eateth your Master, &c. This fault-finding question was not addressed to the Saviour Himself. The defeat suffered by the Pharisees shortly before, at the healing of the paralytic, had probably deterred them from coming too frequently in contact with Christ. But though the cavil was addressed to *his disciples*, He answered, not merely to shame the Pharisees and to maintain His own cause, but also and especially in order to come to the help of His perplexed disciples, who were not yet in a condition suitable to defend themselves and Him.

12. But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

Why should a physician be censured for conversing with sick patients? I came into the world to perform the office of a kind physician unto men; surely, then, I should take all opportunities of conversing with them, that I may help and heal them, for *they that are sick need the physician*, but as for you scribes and Pharisees, who are strong and sound, in your own opinion and conceit, I have no hope of doing you

good; for such as *think themselves whole*, in health, desire not the physician's aid.

Very striking is this image of sickness to mark the prostrate condition of man in his sin. The drooping, the disgust with the very sights and sounds which gladdened him before, the feverish restlessness, the parched tongue, the weary limbs, the acute pain, the dull, deep gnawing of mortal disease, the disarrangement of all the functions of the body, the sleeplessness, the delirium, the helplessness and the hopelessness of the poor stricken one, and his death, if his sickness is not removed; surely, all this supplies a wonderful picture of sin in the soul of man, the spiritual disease under which he is suffering, and his melancholy doom, if that disease is not healed by the great Physician. (See Ex. xv. 8; Ps. cxlvii. 3.) Christ is the most skillful physician (Ps. ciii. 3), the best physician, because He cures the better part—the soul (Heb. ix. 14), the cheapest physician (Luke viii. 43; Isa. lv. 1), the most tender-hearted physician (Hos. xi. 8; Ps. cxlvii. 3), the most successful physician (John xvii. 12), the only physician (Acts iv. 12).

13. But go ye, and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

¹Hos. vi. 6; ²Mt. vi. 6, 7, 8; chap. xii. 7. ³1 Tim. i. 15.

Our Lord further defends Himself by reminding them what God had said by His prophet. (Hos. vi. 6; see also 1 Sam. xv. 22.) *I will have mercy*, &c., that is, “although I have appointed the ceremonial law, with all its rites, sacrifices and distinctions, to be a shadow of good things to come, and though I require, in general, obedience to its rules, yet I value not those outward and formal services, in comparison with acts of moral virtue, and deeds of charity, and feelings of mercy; and if there be an occasion in which mercy cannot be shown to a fellow-creature without neglecting some sacrifice or other ceremonial appointment, let the formal duty be omitted, and let the deed of charity be done.”

I am not come to call, &c. We are not to understand that Christ found some who were “whole” and “righteous,” for it is declared that “all have sinned.” He called those scribes and Pharisees so, not because

they were really so, but only because they, with a holy mockery, esteemed themselves so. The language in relation to them is entirely ironical. Here, as elsewhere, we see that our Lord's call to sinners is not a bare call to become His disciples, but a call to *repentance*. Repentance, or godly sorrow for sin, is for the just named "sick," the restoration of the health of the soul. Jesus Christ did not come into the world merely as a teacher, but as the Saviour of that which was utterly lost, and those only can receive benefit from Him who will confess that they are ruined, bankrupt, hopeless, miserable sinners. If we feel ourselves "righteous," He has nothing to say to us; but if we feel ourselves "sinners," we have a warrant for applying to Him, and trusting in Him to our life's end.

14. ¶ Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?

Mark ii. 18, &c.; Luke v. 33, &c., and xviii. 12.

Fust oft. (See Luke xviii. 12.) The Pharisees probably incited these disciples to make common cause with them, which they could the more easily do, as now Jesus was at a feast and John in prison. A life of austere devotion, of the sternest Old Testament spirit, was practised by John and his disciples, many of whom may have been from among the Essenes, and their previous asceticism would lead them to regard with surprise the departure of Jesus and His disciples from the stern habits of self-denial practised by their Master. There seems also to be a tinge of censure in the question.

15. And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

¶ Luke v. 34, 35, John iii. 29; Acts xiii. 2, 3, and xiv. 23; 1 Cor. vii. 5.

Here is an evident allusion to the last testimony of John the Baptist. (John iii.) The children of the *bride-chamber* were the attendant young comrades of the bridegroom, who assisted in the festivities of the wedding. Now that the bridegroom was with the children of the bride-chamber, and it was a day of joy and rejoicing with the disciples, mourning and fasting would be very inappropriate for them. Christ would not discourage His disciples by over-rigorous institutions, and it is unfit

that His religion should be burthened with them. He suits the duties of His people to their circumstances, and kindly proportions their work to their strength, with a tender regard to their weakness, till by degrees they may be fitted for the more difficult and humbling services. What a wonderful intimation does the figure *bridegroom* make of what Christ is to His people! He loves them with a deep and everlasting love, takes them into union with Himself, supplies their daily need, sympathizes with them in all their troubles, bears with all their infirmities, and will one day bring them to share with Him the glory that He has received from His Father, that where He is, they may be also. They are the Lamb's wife. (Rev. xix. 7.)

But the days will come, in which a much greater sorrow will befall My disciples than even that which has now smitten the sorrowing disciples of John. I am not only to be separated from them, but to be taken from them; an evident allusion to the violent death He should die, and then shall they fast. Though this expression does not seem to warrant the inference drawn from it, that when the Saviour left the world, literal fasting from meats and drinks, at certain seasons, was to be the duty of all Christians, yet it may not be doubted that fasting and abstinence were occasionally practised by believers after our Lord's ascension. (See Notes on chap. iv. and vi. 16-18.) The words in this verse appear to have a deeper meaning than any mere abstinence from food. They describe the state of mind in which all true Christians should live until their Lord returns. It is time for daily and hourly self-denial and mortification. The time of fullness and satisfaction cannot be until we see the Bridegroom amongst us again.

16. No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment: for that which is put in to fill it up, taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

For that which is put in, &c. The Saviour gave the murmuring scribes and Pharisees to understand that that which He was bringing in, was not a mere addition to, or complement of that which had gone by. The whole Jewish dispensation was passing away. The dispensation of the Gospel

was at hand. But the latter was not to be thrust into the midst of the former, in order to make it last longer, or wear better. The old dispensation was not the more important of the two, and so the new ought not to be used to renovate and help on the old. The old and the new covenants are both originally from God, and both, as such, are *good*, but they must not be blended together, or mixed up with each other, as if to make but one.

Neither do men put new wine, &c. Bottles, which were anciently made of the skins of animals, would, when they were old, become dry, and incapable of swelling as the new wine would ferment, and hence they would burst, and both the wine and the leather bottles be ruined. It was necessary, therefore, that unfermented wine should be put into fresh skin bottles, so that the bottles might swell as the wine fermented. The *first* parable tells us that the improvement must not be begun externally, leaving the state of the inner man untouched; this second one shows inversely, that the internal renovation must reach to what is outward, and give to this a suitable direction.

18. ¶ While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. 19. And Jesus arose and followed him, and so did his disciples. 20. ¶ And behold, a woman which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment. 21. For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. 22. But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. 23. ¶ And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise, 24. He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. 25. But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose. 26. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

¶ Mark v. 22, &c.; Luke viii. 41, &c. ¶ Mark v. 25; Luke viii. 43. ¶ Luke vii. 50, viii. 48, xvii. 19, xviii. 42. ¶ Mark v. 38; Luke viii. 51. ¶ See 2 Chron. xxxv. 25. ¶ Acts xx. 10. ¶ Or, this fame.

Daughter, be of good comfort, &c. As the woman felt a confidence even in the efficacy of but touching the hem in His garment, so let us even in the absence of all near or vivid conception of Him, when such manifestations are wanting, and all light save that of simple credence, all power save that of naming His name, have forsaken us—let us even in these circumstances of distance and desertion, have but faith in the name, and like the woman cured of her issue, we shall be made whole. *The min-*

strels and the people making a noise. Vocal and instrumental music formed part of the means of expressing sorrow on the loss of friends. Loud and doleful sounds rose immediately from all present when a friend died. (Jer. ix. 17–22.) *Not dead, but sleepeth, &c.* Death is but a sleep; in respect of Him who raised a dead person more easily than we can awake one who is asleep. Even the death of the soul is but a sleep, when God has resolved to awaken the sinner, and to restore to him the life of His grace. The world laughs at the truths which it neither comprehends nor loves, and at those who publish them. A faithful minister keeps on his pace, and ceases not to work the work of God.

And the maid arose. How wonderful that sight must have been! Who that has ever seen the dead can forget the stillness, the silence, the coldness, when the breath has left the body? Who can forget the awful feeling, that a mighty change has taken place, and a mighty gulf been placed between ourselves and the departed? But behold! our Lord goes to the chamber where the dead lies, and calls the spirit back to its earthly tabernacle. The pulse once more beats; the eyes once more see; the breath once more comes and goes. The ruler's daughter is once more alive, and restored to her father and mother. This was omnipotence indeed! None could have done this but He who first created man, and has all power in heaven and earth. (For a fuller exposition of the above verses see on Mark v. 21–43.)

27. And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, ¶ Thou son of David, have mercy on us.

¶ Chap. xv. 22, xx. 30, 31. Mark. 47, 48; Luke xviii. 33, 38.

This miracle, and that which follows, of the dumb demoniac, are recorded by Matthew alone. *When Jesus departed thence*, returned from the ruler's house to His own sojourn. *Two blind men followed him.* They were not blind by nature, but by disease. Blindness is extremely common in the East from many causes; e. g., the quantities of dust and sand pulverized by the sun's intense heat, the perpetual glare of light, the contrast of the heat with the cold sea-air on the coast, where blindness is especially prevalent, the dews at night while they sleep on the roofs, small-pox, old age,

&c., and perhaps, more than all, the Mohammedan fatalism, which leads to a neglect of the proper remedies in time. . . . *Two.* They were partners in sorrow. They may have followed Jesus with their cry for aid immediately on His leaving the house of Jairus. There was the same trial of faith in their case, although in a more mitigated form, as in that of the woman of Canaan. (Matt. xv. 22, 23, compared with Mark vii. 24.) This is the first of the many cases of healing of the blind recorded in the Gospel narrative. (Matt. xii. 22, xx. 30, xxi. 14; John ix.)

Thou son of David. (Matt. xv. 22, xx. 30, 31.) This is the first time we read of this title being given to Jesus, except by the angel Gabriel before His birth. (Luke i. 32.) By this title He was acknowledged to be the Messiah, or Christ, who, as all Jews agreed, was to be *the son of David* (Matt. xxii. 42, xii. 23, and John vii. 42), and by being the Son of David, Jesus had a right to the title of Messiah. (2 Sam. vii. 13, 16.) Can there be a doubt that the faith of these blind men, in thus addressing Jesus, fastened on such great Messianic promises as that in Isa. xxxv. 5? Notice that they believed *by* hearing only; they relied on the testimony of others who had seen Christ's miracles; the eyes of their understanding were enlightened, if their bodily eyes were dark. (John xx. 29) We must never despair of any one's salvation, merely because he lives in a position unfavorable to his soul. *Have mercy on us*—a virtual request that He should restore their sight by removing the cause of their blindness.

23. And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.

The house—His dwelling at Capernaum. The blind men came to him. They found their way in the train of Christ, as if some glimmer of light had already been granted. They evinced a determination to take no refusal in regard to the boon they were seeking. *Believe ye that I am able to do this?* i. e., to cure their blindness. Of course our Lord did not require assurance on this point. (John ii. 25.) As the men had attested their belief in the cry with which they followed Him through the street, we

are to regard Him as having asked this question in order to deepen their faith, to raise their expectation of a cure, and so prepare them to receive it, and the cordial acknowledgment, so touchingly simple—*yea, Lord*, which they immediately made to Him of His power to heal them, shows how entirely that object was gained. Confession confirms faith. (See Rom. x. 10.)

29. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith, be it unto you.

Touched their eyes. This would show that the cure was no accidental circumstance. (See Matt. xx. 34.) On other similar occasions, Jesus used other means. (John ix. 6, 7.) *According to your faith*, &c.—your confidence in me. The meaning is not, receive a cure *proportioned* to your faith, but, receive this cure as *granted* to your faith. Here we see the relation of man's faith and God's gift. "Faith, which in itself is nothing, is yet the organ of receiving everything. It is the bucket let down into the fountain of God's grace, without which the man could not draw up out of that fountain; the purse, which does not itself make its owner rich, but which yet effectually enriches him by the treasure which it contains." Faith is a readiness to receive of God; it is this only which prescribes a limit to Divine love! (See xiii. 58; Mark vi. 5; Acts xiv. 9.)

30. And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straightly charged them, saying, *That no man know it.*

r Chap. viii. 4, xii. 16, xvii. 9; Luke v. 14.

Their eyes were opened. A Hebrew idiom, neither remote nor inelegant, to denote *they received their sight*. The result proved their faith to be perfectly earnest and sincere. Our Lord had before proved Himself one with Him "that giveth breath unto the people," &c. (Isa. xliii. 5), and now it was shown that He it was of whom the Father had said, "I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, . . . to open the blind eyes," &c. (Isa. xliii. 6, 7; see also Isa. lxi. 1, comp. with Luke iv. 18.) We are left to fill up the sketch in the case of these two men. What must have been their feelings as soon as they received sight! O what joy, what ecstasy, what gratitude, would they discover! How would they look and gaze—all things are become new! How would they first fasten their eyes upon

their Benefactor and Deliverer, admiring, weeping, adoring! (Job xlii. 5.)

Straitly, strictly. See that no man know it. Of course those who knew the blind men would perceive the change, and there must have been spectators of the transaction. The men were not to be noisy heralds of their miraculous cure. As our Lord's whole course was sublimely noiseless (chap. xii. 19), so we find Him, although He directed some of His miracles to be proclaimed abroad, repeatedly taking steps to prevent matters coming prematurely to a crisis with Him. As to the present instance, He may have given this strict charge either to avoid needlessly exciting the opposition of enemies, or furnishing plausible accusations against Himself, or because He had performed several miracles that day, and if these men, as they would naturally be inclined to do, should proclaim Him as Messiah, the people, who regarded Him rather in the light of one who was to establish a great temporal dominion, might be induced to take rash measures in seeking honor for Him, and demanding for Him some great dignity (see John vi. 15), thus throwing the people of Galilee into rebellion against their temporal rulers, which was quite contrary to the purposes of Jesus. The inconvenient consequences of a premature disclosure of His deeds of mercy, appear in Mark i. 45. (See notes on chap. viii. 4.)

31. ^aBut they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.—^aMark vii. 36.

It is probable that the fame of this miracle spread far beyond Capernaum. Hence the title, *Son of David*, became now generally known, and Jesus felt all the more inclined soon to leave the district. *Spread abroad, &c.* A similar consequence ensued on all such occasions. (Matt. viii. 4; Mark i. 44, 45, vii. 36.) Obedience is better than sacrifice (1 Sam. xv. 22), even though that sacrifice may appear in honor of God Himself; and we see in this publishing of the miracle, after the prohibition given, a blemish in the perfectness of their faith who did it—a fault, though a fault into which they only, who were full of gratitude and thankfulness, could have fallen. Their motives were doubtless good, but

their conduct was unjustifiable. “However,” says one, “it may be profitable to remark, 1. That honor pursues those who fly from it. 2. He who is thoroughly sensible of God's mercies cannot *long* withhold his acknowledgments. 3. God in general requires that what a man has received, for his own salvation, shall become subservient to the salvation of others (Matt. v. 16), God choosing to help man by man, that all may be *knit* together in brotherly love.” (Ps. lxvi. 16.)

Note 1. We are all by nature spiritually blind; no more qualified, without Divine illumination, for the concerns of the moral world than those blind men for those of the natural world. 2. We are in as hopeful condition as they. In this miracle Jesus holds Himself forth as the all-sufficient helper of sinners. 3. We should imitate these men in an earnest, importunate cry for mercy.

32. ^aAs they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.

^bSee chap. xii. 22; Luke xi. 14.

As they went out. This was indeed a day of marvelous wonders—a bloody issue, death, blind eyes, and dumb lips, all made to yield to Christ's restorative power! *A dumb man*—the dumbness was not natural, but was the effect of the possession. The power of the demons was exerted in various ways. *Possessed with a devil.* A Universalist commentator says that this man was “probably an insane man, who fancied he could not speak, or he would not;” which illustrates the rationalistic character of Universalism. The fact is, that the Jews themselves made a distinction between merely diseased persons and persons who were both diseased and possessed. Mark (vii. 32–35) reports the cure of a deaf mute who was not possessed.

33. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake; and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.

The dumb spake. The record is singularly brief. On the removal of the malignant oppression on the power of speech, it returned, and was used. Here, again, was a fulfillment of a prophecy relating to the days of the Messiah. (Isa. xxxv. 5, 6.) There is a moral dumbness, and the Saviour heals this when He makes any one a new creature. The man had a tongue before, but not a religious one. He spake before,

but now his speech is with grace. Now he speaks of God, for God, and to God. *And the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel*—referring, probably not to this case only, but to all those miraculous displays of healing power which seemed to promise a new era in the history of Israel. “Never before has the appearance of the promised deliverance been so fully realized.” (See Isa. xxxv. 5-7.) Probably, also, the people besides wondering, meant by this language to indicate, as far as they thought it safe to do so, their inclination to regard Jesus as the promised Messiah. This may have led to the sudden and malignant accusation mentioned in the next verse.

34. But the Pharisees said, “He casteth out devils, through the prince of the devils.”

*Chap. xii. 24; Mark iii. 22; Luke xi. 15.

These enemies of our Lord, the same as referred to in verse 11, let it be noted, were unable to deny the fact of the miraculous healing, and therefore used the only other means at their disposal to discredit Him who wrought it, by malignantly accusing Him of impious collusion, connection and fellowship with *the prince of devils*. Satan is afterward so designated, more particularly in chap. xii. 24.

35. “And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness, and every disease among the people.”

*Mark vi. 6; Luke xiii. 22. *Chap. iv. 23.

We have here Jesus presented to us as the untiring and devoted missionary. From the parallel passages we gather that Jesus now traveled along the lake, through *the cities and villages of Galilee*. Accordingly, we distinguish three missionary journeys which He made in Galilee. 1. To the Mount of Beatitudes. 2. Across the sea. 3. Through the valley, along the shore, in the direction of Jerusalem. It is to the last that the text refers. He *went about*, &c.—for it was holy ground wherever He could stand, and it was a sanctuary wherever He could be heard. (See notes on chap. iv. 23.) We should not be content to be Christians for ourselves, to sit in our own room and feast upon the Gospel alone, but should endeavor to supply it to others. We should go and see the poor and the afflicted, and then we will feel for them. It is easy to give

a cold pittance of charity at a church collection, and to think that this is the religion of Jesus, but let us not be deceived. “I was sick, and ye *visited* me.” “Pure religion, before God and the Father, is this, *To visit*,” &c. *Preaching the Gospel healing sickness*. Our Lord’s mercy to the body secured reception for His medicine for the soul. Jesus was an eye-witness of all the ills that flesh is heir to. He saw ailments of every kind, sort and description. We are each dwelling in a poor, frail body. We know not what racking complaint we may have to submit to before we lie down and die. We know not what quantity of suffering we may have to watch as we sit by the bed-side of dear relations and friends. Let us arm ourselves betimes with the precious thought that Jesus is specially fitted to be the sick man’s friend.

36. ¶ “But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.”

*Mark vi. 34. *Num. xxvii. 17; 1 Kings xxii. 17; Ezek. xxxiv. 5; Zech. x. 2.

Saw the multitudes. Galilee was at that time a thickly peopled country; its towns and villages swarmed with inhabitants, so that it got the name of “Galilee of the nations,” or populous Galilee. *He was moved with compassion*. His loving heart could not but feel deep pity, as He saw them ignorant, hopeless, helpless, dying, and unfit to die. This shows that while He was “God over all, blessed for ever,” He was also as truly man. It is the part of a man to be overcome by what he sees. There is something very saddening to a Christian, in looking upon a current of human beings in a teeming city or crowded church, flowing onward to eternity, because the most are perishing souls. It was this that touched the bosom of Jesus. How does such a sight affect us? *Because they fainted*. The epithet “fainted” is applied to them in their character of sheep, who were *worried and exhausted* in the way. *Scattered abroad*, like sheep, which, when driven away from the fold, are scattered over the mountains, and run every one to his own way. *Having no shepherd*. (Ezek. xxxiv. 5, 6.) When sheep driven from the fold, have no shepherd to seek them and bring them back, their case is desperate. So was it with the people of Galilee in Christ’s day. They were a

vast disorganized mass, in wretchedness as the victims of Pharisaic guidance, their souls uncared for, and drawn after and hanging upon Him. If they had had pastors after God's own heart, their case would not have been so bad, but they had not these, and this made Jesus sad.

37. Then saith he unto his disciples, ¹The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. 38. ²Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

¹Luke x. 2; John iv. 35. ²2 Thes. iii. 1.

The harvest truly is plenteous, &c. Our Lord's eye doubtless rested immediately on the Jewish field, but this He saw widening into the vast field of "the world" (chap. xiii. 38), teeming with souls having to be gathered to Him. And the Gospel reapers for this vast white field, where are they? None as yet but myself. Let it be observed: 1. That the world is an harvest field. Like a waving field of golden grain it invites many reapers, and demands haste. 2. That ministers are to be laborers in this field. They are to come into it, not to become lords of it, or to stand idle, but to work. 3. That it belongs to God alone to send forth laborers into His harvest. Colleges can give learning, congregations may elect, bishops or presbyters may ordain; but all will be worthless without the unction of the Holy Ghost. 4. That the number of faithful laborers is comparatively small. 5. That it is the duty of Christians individually, and the church collectively, to pray earnestly and incessantly to the Lord of the harvest to send forth an increased number of faithful

laborers. Otherwise the ripe corn will be shaken, and shed its fruit upon the ground, before it can be cut down and gathered in. The word translated *send forth* conveys the idea of *urgency*, and signifying, as it literally does, "to cast forth;" it implies that nothing but God's powerful and constraining call will ever move men to become ministers and laborers in the Gospel harvest.

This declaration of Jesus to His disciples loses none of its force in its application to the spiritual harvest which is now in readiness for laborers in almost every portion of the world. How small the number of ministers and missionaries scattered over the world! To increase this number there must be prayer to Christ, who is Himself *the Lord of the harvest*. Divine operation will not dispense with human coöperation. God will do, in answer to prayer, what will not be done without prayer. Low faith in the church produces slow development of the work of salvation. Not all Christians have money to give to missions; very few have intellectual gifts, or extensive influence among men; but all believers can pray for the success of the Gospel, and they ought to pray for it daily. Giving money is good; but praying is best of all. Especially is it the duty of the minister of the Gospel to use this weapon. (Acts vi. 4; Eph. vi. 17, 18.) This is the way to win a blessing on his own ministry, and this, above all, is the way to procure helpers to carry on Christ's work.

1. Who was brought to Jesus? 2. How was the paralytic cured? 3. What objection was made? 4. What answer did Christ give? 5. How was Matthew called to be a disciple? 6. What are the practical reflections on this case? 7. What objection was made to Christ's eating with publicans and sinners? 8. What was His reply? 9. Whom did our Lord come to call to repentance? 10. Explain verses 14, 15? 11. How are we to understand verses 16 and 17? 12. Repeat the particulars of the two miracles which follow. 13. What is said about the cure of the blind men? 14. What is meant by "possessed with a devil?" 15. When and why was Christ moved with compassion? 16. What did He say to His disciples?

CHAPTER X.

1. Christ sendeth out his twelve apostles, enabling them with power to do miracles, 5 giveth them their charge, teacheth them, 16 comforteth them against persecutions: 40 and promiseth a blessing to those that receive them.

AND when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

*Mark iii. 13, 14, vi. 7; Luke vi. 13, ix. 1. 10r, over.

And shows that this is closely connected with the end of chapter ix. When he had called unto him—formally, his twelve disciples. It is not the appointment of the twelve, but only their trial mission, which our Evangelist here records.

He gave them power, &c. This was to be an evidence of their commission. It was also a benevolent provision for the sick and afflicted, that this power to heal was given to the Apostles. What an evidence this of Christ's divinity! The power was inherent in Himself. He could not only work miracles, but could enable others to work them in His name. No other instance of such an appointment of this kind ever occurred. God put His Spirit on those whom Moses had appointed, but Moses did not give them power. The spirit of Elijah, in answer to his own prayer, rested on Elisha; Elijah did not give him power. (Num. xi. 16, xvii. 25; 2 Kings ii. 9-11.)

"Though ministers," says an old divine, "cannot be expected to cast out evil spirits, they may fairly be expected to resist the devil and all his works, drunkenness, blasphemy, uncleanness, fighting, revelry, and the like, faithfully reproving them." He whose ministry is not accompanied with healing of diseased souls, was never called of God. But though the requisite spiritual gifts for the ministry must be supplied by God Himself, this does not preclude the importance of human learning. The influence of the Spirit no more renders human learning needless, than human learning supersedes the necessity of Divine inspiration.

2. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, ¹who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;—John i. 42.

3. Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus;

4. ²Simon the ²Canaanite, and Judas ³Isariot, who also betrayed him.

⁴Luke vi. 15; Acts i. 13. ²Greek, Kananite, that is, Zealot, as in Luke vi. 15. ³John xiii. 26.

Apostles. The word Apostle signifies one sent. In the New Testament the term is confined to the twelve, who were chosen by Christ to attend His ministry, and propagate the Gospel after His death.

The following are the names of the Apostles, and the order in which they are given:

MATTHEW X. 2, 3, 4.	MARK III. 16, 19.	LUKE VI. 14-16.	ACTS I. 13.
1. Simon Peter, and	1. Simon Peter.	1. Simon Peter and	1. Peter, and
2. Andrew his brother.	2. James and	2. Andrew, his brother.	2. James, and
3. James and	3. John, surnamed Boanerges.	3. James and	3. John, and
4. John, sons of Zebedee.	4. Andrew.	4. John.	4. Andrew.
5. Philip and	5. Philip.	5. Philip and	5. Philip and
6. Bartholomew.	6. Bartholomew.	6. Bartholomew.	6. Thomas.
7. Thomas and	7. Matthew.	7. Matthew and	7. Bartholomew and
8. Matthew, the publican.	8. Thomas.	8. Thomas.	8. Matthew.
9. James, the son of Alphaeus.	9. James, the son of Alphaeus.	9. James, the son of Alphaeus.	9. James, the son of Alphaeus.
10. Lebbeus, surnamed Thaddeus.	10. Thaddeus.	10. Simon Zelotes.	10. Simon Zelotes, and
11. Simon, the Canaanite.	11. Simon, the Canaanite.	11. Judas, the brother of James.	11. Judas, the brother of James.
12. Judas Isariot, "who also betrayed him."	12. Judas Isariot, "who also betrayed him."	12. Judas Isariot, "which was also the traitor."	

For the history of the Apostles, see Index.

It will be observed that in Luke's catalogue their names are given by couples, doubtless to indicate how they were assorted in sending them forth two by two. It will be noticed, also, that although the arrangement of the names is so unlike in these four lists, the variation is confined to certain limits, as the twelve may be divided into three quaternions, which are never interchanged, and the leading names

of which are the same in all. Thus Peter is invariably the first, Philip the fifth, James the ninth, and Isariot the last, except in Acts, where his name is omitted on account of his apostacy and death.

"The two grand characteristics of the apostolic body," says a modern commentator, "were *Unity and Diversity*."

1. *Unity*—The Apostles were all men; not one of them an angel, not one of them

a woman. They were all Jews; all believers in the unity and holiness of God; all believers in Jesus Christ; were of the same official rank; were one in doctrine and practice and general aim. They were one, not organically, but through the possession of a common life—that derived from Christ.

2. *Diversity*—They were not all Palestinian Jews. Only one had been born into the rights of Roman citizenship. Some of them were married; at least one lived and died unmarried. Some had followed one kind of worldly calling, and some another. Paul was summoned from the highest social position; Matthew from the lowest. While probably all were endowed with an ardent temperament, the temperaments of those best known differed, and only one, Paul, had the temperament to which belong the highest qualities. Some were men of ordinary intellectual ability; others of the highest. One was constitutionally sceptical; another practical; another intuitive; another logical. James was conservative; Paul was progressive; John held the balance pretty evenly between the two. One, in addition to some youthful Greek culture, was learned and trained to think even if judged by the highest Rabbinic standard. The labors, the successes, the trials, of some are narrated, while those of others are kept secret with God. Some are known as writers; some as preachers; others as both preachers and writers. Some spent life chiefly in large cities; others elsewhere. Some were more useful in converting men and organizing them into churches; some in instructing them; others equally useful in doing both. Some were mere narrators of the facts of Christianity; others, bold defenders of the truth against the errorists of their times. Some have a world-wide reputation, while of others nothing is known but their names. Such were the diversities of the Apostles, yet they awoke among themselves no jealousies, no contempt, no coldness. The men were one in sentiment, in doctrine, in purpose, and in joy over each other's success. These diversities are repeated, by divine intention, in ministers of modern times.

5. These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and

into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: 6. "But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. "Chap. iv. 15. "2 Kings xvii. 24; John iv. 9, 20. "Chap. xv. 24. "Acts xiii. 46.

Why Jesus chose and sent forth the twelve, it is difficult to say. Perhaps, if He had taken fewer, it would have been too limited a testimony. Or, perhaps, He selected twelve, because that was the number of the tribes of Israel (Matt. xix.), thus intimating that He was king of Israel. Certainly there was a Divine *idea* in the choice of twelve; this appears from the symbolical usages in the Apocalypse, where (Rev. xii. 1) the woman symbolizing the Church has upon her head a crown of twelve stars, and the tree of life, emblem of Gospel grace, has twelve manner of fruits.

The Samaritans were the remnant of the twelve tribes mingled with the heathen who preceded them, and were settled in the half tribe of Ephraim and Manasseh, or in that part of Palestine so called. Our Lord had preached to their cities in His journey. (John iv.) Shortly after His ascension the Gospel was preached in Samaria. (Acts viii. 5, and xiv. 1, 8.) *But go rather, &c.* For great ends the ministry of the Apostles was to be restricted for the present to the Jews. (Matt. xv. 24.) They were Christ's own people, of whom He came, and to whom He was promised, and were astray in mind and life. After He rose from the dead, our Lord extended the commission of the Apostles to the utmost isles and nations of the Gentiles. (Chap. xxviii. 19.) Even in later times, however, the line or order of missionary exertion was, "to the Jew first," "beginning at Jerusalem." *House of Israel*—a Hebraism for people of Israel. The condition of people before being brought to Christ is a *lost* condition.

7. "And as ye go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

"Luke ix. 2. "Chap. iii. 2; iv. 17; Luke x. 9.

Preaching of the Gospel was the prime object of the mission of the Apostles. It is the special means appointed by Christ for the saving of lost sinners. *The kingdom, &c.* (See notes on chap. iii. 2; iv. 17.)

8. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: "freely ye have received, freely give.

Sick devils—a gradation. The power Jesus gave them to *heal*, He has superabundantly in Himself for our heal-

ing, and He is our Jesus only so far as we own Him for that end. *Lepers*. (See on chap. viii. 2.) The preaching was to be confirmed by the miracle. Ministers should take a deep and tender interest in the sick. *Freely*, &c. This is not inconsistent with the conclusion of verse 10. The laborer is worthy of his hire, but the power freely obtained was not to be made a means of gain.

9. ^{ms}Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor ^{brass} in your purses; 10. Nor scrip for *your* journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: ^{for the workman is worthy of his meat.}
^{Mark vi. 8; Luke ix. 3; x. 4; xxii. 35; 3or *Get*. Mark vi. 8; ^{Gr.} *a staff*. Luke x. 7; 1 Cor. ix. 7, &c.; 1 Tim. vi. 18.}

Provide, &c., that is, for this journey. *Gold silver brass*. Reference is here made to the various coins of money in use among the Jews. *Purses*, literally, *girdles*. The folds of the girdle were used by the Jews to carry money. *Scrip*—a bag or wallet slung upon the person, to contain provision. Neither *two coats*—no new clothes to supply the place of the old when worn out. *Nor shoes*, but sandals (Mark. vi. 9), as less expensive and luxurious. If they had a staff, they were to go forth with it (Mark vi. 8), as they had it at the time; but they were not to seek one carefully, or make it a condition of their traveling. *For the workman is worthy of his meat*. Meat includes all the articles enumerated in verses 9, 10. It is the *workman* who is to get a maintenance. In Luke x. 7, "The laborer is worthy of his hire." This general statement implies *here*, that they might be sure their wants should be supplied without preparations. In 1 Cor. ix. 4, Paul assures us "that they which preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel." The fundamental idea is that they were to go forth to the discharge of their office, without any anxious care for the future, with the slightest provision, and in dependence upon being provided for by the way. Not only should ministers, in their style of living, be careful to avoid the spirit of the world, but all believers should show simplicity and unworldliness in their daily life.

11. ^{And into whatever city or town ye shall enter; inquire who in it is worthy, and there abide till ye go thence.}—^{Luke x. 8.}

Inquire, ask of others. The godly are easily discovered by the godly. *Worthy*, of being your host, until you leave the

city. Do not "go from house to house." (Luke x. 7.) It is a very common thing in the East, when a stranger arrives in a town, to invite him to meals. Be content with such lodgings as have been provided for you, and be not hard to please either in the matter of bed or board. Spend not your time in convivial feasts. Show the people that you are seeking *them*, and not *theirs*. We are not to be fastidious, or fickle, or too much concerned in regard to those things which concern the life of the body.

12. And when ye come into a house, salute it.

The formulâ of salutation is given in Luke x. 5. The custom of saluting friends after this manner is still retained among the Turks and other Eastern nations. The disciples of our Lord were not to neglect the usual forms of politeness and friendship. But this salutation was not to be a mere form, not a compliment only, but much more a prayer and a blessing. Our Lord adopted customary forms and ceremonies, but elevated them to a higher use.

13. ^{And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.}—^{Luke x. 5. Ps. xxxv. 13.}

Let your peace come, i. e., it shall come—the imperative is used for the future. And perhaps many seeming imprecations in the Old Testament may most easily be accounted for by such an explanation—as prophetic predictions of what should happen to the enemies of God and His people. If the house had occupants, who were so disposed to receive the truth as to be worthy of the salutation with which the Apostles entered the dwelling, then the blessing invoked in the salutation was to come upon those occupants, and "rest" upon them (see x. 6), permanently abide, (Phil. iv. 7) and the messengers of Christ would further instruct and pray for them; but where this was not the case, the prayers and endeavors of the Apostles would return in blessings on themselves (see Ps. xxxv. 13), by the assurance of duty performed, and an increase of tranquility and spiritual strength. That which has gone forth from the bounty of God, has not gone forth in vain. Here is a consolation for ministers who seem to themselves to do no good

14. *And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.
 *Mark vi. 11; Luke ix. 5, x. 10, 11. *Neh. v. 13; Acts xiii. 51, xviii. 6.

And whosoever, &c. The Apostles are thus prepared to find some who would refuse to hear their message. *When ye depart out of that house or city*—for possibly a whole town might not furnish one “worthy.” *Shake off*, &c. Guilt is conceived of as adhering to the feet or shoes. (1 Kings ii. 5.) By this symbolical action (which would be perfectly intelligible to the Jews) they would shake themselves from all connection with such, and all responsibility for the guilt of rejecting them and their message. Wherever the word is preached, it is for a testimony, either for or against a people. And if the dust of a minister’s feet whilst alive, and the ashes of his grave when dead, do bear witness against the despisers of the Gospel, how much more will their sermons do this?

15. Verily, I say unto you, *It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.
 *Chap. xi. 22, 24; Luke x. 12.

According to the common conception, the judgment of retribution has already smitten *Sodom and Gomorrah*. (See Gen. xiii. 13; xviii. 20, 21, 32; xix. 24, 25.) According to the steady teaching of the New Testament, however, this judgment, terrific though it was, is only a foretaste to that which is to be expected at the end of days. (See Jude, verse 7.) *More tolerable*—more bearable. *That city*—not the bricks and walls, but the wicked persons in it. Those cities of the plain which were given to the flames for their loathsome impurities, shall be treated as less criminal, and better bear their punishment, on account of its comparative lightness, than those places, though morally respectable, which would not receive Christ’s messengers, nor hear their words. (See on chap. xi. 20–24.)

Here, 1. We learn the high rank which Jesus ascribes to His ministering servants, as well as see a striking revelation of His own self-consciousness that He was Divine. 2. That there shall be a day of judgment. 3. That the sin of those who reject the Gospel must be a wilful sin, which it was in their power to avoid, inasmuch as it increases their guilt. 4. That

on the day of judgment there will be degrees of retribution proportioned to the guilt. 5. That the clearness of the light against which sin is committed aggravates the guilt. 6. That sinners are not to be annihilated, for then, how could it be “more tolerable” for some than others? 7. That of all sinners, the condition of those will be the saddest at the day of judgment, and beyond, who, living under the Gospel, die after all in impenitence and unbelief. To hear of the “great salvation,” and yet merely “neglect” it, is one of the worst sins man can commit (John xvi. 9), and if persisted in, must end in hopeless and fearful ruin.

16. †Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; †be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

*Luke x. 3. †Rom. xvi. 19; Eph. v. 15. †1 Cor. xiv. 20; Phil. ii. 15.

Behold, I send you—thus the dignity of the Apostles’ office is shown. Those who exercise the ministerial function must have a lawful call and commission. (Heb. v. 4; Jer. xxxiii. 32.) *As sheep*, this denotes the character of the Christian mission, and in the midst of wolves, the condition of an unbelieving world. Though the faith was to be propagated only by the mild measures of persuasion, yet even this would not prevent furious and implacable men from employing all the iniquitous contrivances of fraud and violence for its suppression, and against its messengers, meek, harmless and unable to defend themselves. So frankly did our Lord warn His Apostles of the peculiar dangers and trials that awaited them. Their work was to be glorious, but would be hazardous.

Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. Here is the prescription. The serpent was the hieroglyph of wisdom on Egyptian monuments, and to be sharp-sighted as a serpent, was a proverb among the Greeks and Romans. The dove, which was so acceptable, that in the old law God would have it offered in sacrifice, has always been regarded as the emblem of meekness, innocence and purity. (Luke iii. 22.) The Apostles were to be prudent as serpents, in avoiding unnecessary dangers, and by no inadvertency give their opponents advantage against them, and yet to maintain a holy simplicity of soul, and be harmless and inoffensive. The

wisdom and innocence were to be *united*, so that in the union the one might be free from all subtlety, and the other from indiscretion. Wonderful combination! Jesus, here, as always, brings into their higher unity, things which elsewhere oppose and contradict each other. We must have the innocence of the dove, that we may not betray the truth, and the wisdom of the serpent, that we may not betray ourselves. Religion without policy is too weak to be safe; policy without religion is too subtle to be good. (See Acts vii. 22; Num. xii. 3; Dan. v. 14, vi. 4; Acts xxiii. 6.)

17. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; 18. And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

^aChap. xxiv. 9; Mark xiii. 9; Luke xii. 11, xxi. 12. ^bActs v. 40. ^cActs xii. 1, xxiv. 10, xxv. 7, 23; 2 Tim. iv. 16.

In order to occupy a right position with reference to persecutors, they were to beware of *men* generally, whose weakness frequently degenerates into treachery. *For they will deliver you*, &c. Some will accuse you and arraign you for trial. *Councils*. The smaller courts in Palestine (see Deut. xv. 18), subordinate to the grand Sanhedrim, which is, however, included here in the idea. *Synagogues*. For the punishment of scourging, see Deut. xxv. 2, 3. It appears that the Jews caused to be chastised in some part of the synagogue those whom they judged guilty of heresy. (See Acts xxii. 19; Matt. xxiii. 34.)

Governors—provincial rulers, *kings*—the highest tribunals. Accordingly the Apostles were, several of them, obliged to appear before princes, and were severely persecuted by their malicious enemies before Herod, Agrippa, Felix, Festus, Nero, Domitian, &c., as we learn from sacred or profane history. *For my sake*—in consequence of being my followers, and the preachers of my word. *For a testimony against them and the Gentiles*, or, as the passage might be rendered, *to them* (i. e., the Jews), *and the Gentiles*. The meaning may be, either, 1. "That they hearing your doctrines, seeing your miracles, as well as witnessing your simplicity and innocence, and resignation to suffering, may either embrace the truth, or be left without excuse;" or, 2. "This shall proclaim and testify the Gospel to Gentiles and Jews." Some of the best op-

portunities for publicly defending the Messiah's cause were afforded by these arraignments (see Acts iv. 5-22, 29-32, xxii. 1-21, xxiii. 1-11, xxiv. 10-25, xxvi. 1-23; comp. also Acts xvii. 19-34; Phil. i. 12, 13), and, besides, these trials, resulting in martyrdom, would be the highest spiritual confirmation of the Gospel both to the Jews and to the Gentiles.

19. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. 20. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

^aMark xiii. 11, 12, 13; Luke xii. 11, xxi. 14, 15. ^bEx. iv. 12; Jer. i. 7. ^c2 Sam. xxiii. 2; Acts iv. 8, vi. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 17.

Take no thought. Christ does not forbid all forethoughts what to say, but only anxious thoughts, that they should not, like orators, or advocates, strive to make studied pleas, or rhetorical apologies in their public defenses. In preaching the Gospel, all self and self-seeking are completely to cease. Carefulness about rhetorical ornaments restrains and adulterates the spiritual life. *How* relates to the form, and *What* to the substance. *For it shall be given you*, &c. The assistance promised should be so complete that they would be mere instruments, or organs of the Spirit. The highest authority is here given to all the Apostolical defenses upon record, and precludes the supposition of unhallowed anger in such cases as that of Paul's reply to Ananias. (Acts xxiii. 3.) This is so far from being a promise of Divine assistance to unprepared and off-hand preachers, that it is not given even to the Twelve indefinitely or forever, but expressly limited to one particular emergency by the words, *when they deliver you up*, and *in that same hour*.

For it is not ye that speak, &c. The doctrine of inspiration is here stated in its strongest form. And if the Apostles were furnished with this inspiration in their momentary times of trial, and in their oral testimony of Christ, how can it be doubted that, in recording their words for ages for the instruction of the Church and the conversion of the world, they should possess the same high qualifications? (See 2 Cor. xiii. 3; x. 10.) *But the Spirit of your Father*. In Luke xii. 12, "the Holy Ghost." Our Lord, in speaking to His disciples, never, except in the prayer which He

taught *them*, says *our* Father, but either *my* Father, or *your* Father, or both combined, for He is the eternal and only begotten Son of the Father, and we are children by adoption through faith in Him. *Speaketh in you*. In the great struggle between holiness and sin, men are only God's agents and instruments.

21. *And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against *their* parents, and cause them to be put to death.—*Mat. vii. 6, verses 35, 36.*

Rise up—as witnesses and opponents. Our Saviour here teaches that such is the enmity of the world against holiness, and the professors of it, that it will overcome and extinguish even the natural affection of the nearest and dearest relations toward each other. Perhaps it was intimated that some of the nearest friends and relatives of the Apostles would become their most bitter persecutors. The nearest are most easily divided. Difference of faith does much to abate true affection. (*Jer. ix. 4*; *Mat. vii. 6*; *Mark xiii. 12*.) Such atrocities as are here recorded have been perpetrated. Religious quarrels, to the shame of mankind, are the fiercest of all others.

22. And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.
 **Luke xxi. 17.* †*Dan. xii. 13;* chap. xxiv. 13; *Mark xiii. 13.*

Of all men, that is, of all men out of the Christian community. *Tacitus*, the Roman historian, says, like a true Pagan, that "the Christians were convicted of enmity to the human race." Jews hated them as revolters from their own religion. Pagans could tolerate each other, and respect and worship each other's gods. But the Christians abhorred all Paganism, and so all Pagans abhorred them; thus, Christians were hated of all men, whether Jews or Gentiles. *For my name's sake*—for your attachment to me and my cause. (See *Rom. viii. 35-37*; *1 Cor. iv. 9, 10*; *2 Cor. xi. 23-29*; *Heb. x. 32-34*.)

But he that endureth, &c. In view of their persecution, how important that they should keep in view the *end*, the end of their sufferings and the end of life, and the reward to which their labors and sufferings were tending, if they adhered faithfully to their Master! *Saved*—from the displeasure of God and from condemnation. The word *endureth* implies not only *suffering*, but

being *tried*, and *standing the trial*. "Enduring to the end" is the proper evidence of the reality and solidity of the Christian profession, just as "drawing back unto perdition" exposes the want of foundation.

Such were the warnings Jesus gave His Apostles in sending them forth, yet they voluntarily and cheerfully undertook their commission. How is this to be explained? Is there any instance upon record before this in the annals of the world, where twelve, grave sober men, without any reason, and without being misled by any artifice or delusion whatever, voluntarily exposed themselves at the desire of another person to persecution, torment, and destruction? There must have been some cogent reason for such a conduct as this: and that reason could be nothing less than a full and perfect conviction, arising from the miracles which they saw with their own eyes, and which they themselves were enabled to perform, that Christ was what He pretended to be, the Son of God, that all power was given to Him in heaven and on earth, and that He was able to fulfill the promise He had made them of a recompense in a future life, infinitely surpassing in magnitude and in duration all the sufferings they could experience in the present world. This is the only rational account to be given of their conduct.

23. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

**Chap. ii. 13, iv. 12, xii. 15*; *Acts viii. 1, ix. 23, xiv. 6.*
 †*Or end, or finish.* †*Chap. xvi. 28.*

This city—Jesus points in the direction of various cities. The Apostles were not to rush into danger, but, on the other hand, when persecuted in one city, they were, where no great principle was to be abandoned, and no great end to be answered by remaining in the face of persecution and death, to flee to another city of comparative safety, and preach the Gospel. "This flight," says one, "is a *preecept* to those who are highly necessary to the Church of Christ, an *advice* to those who might imprudently draw upon themselves persecution, and an *indulgence* for those who are weak." Here are two extremes to be shunned. We are not under the pleas of prudence, so called, to avoid per-

secution, by silence, cowardice, a compromising line of conduct, and letting others alone, alleging that there is no use in trying to do good to such people; this is one extreme. Neither are we to court persecution, by creating needless offense, committing blunders, and stirring up opposition. In every case of flight we must be determined by concern for the best means of spreading the name of Christ. *Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, i. e.,* shall not have finished passing through the cities, in order to instruct the people and maintain the cause of your Master.

Till the Son of man be come. The Apostles would not have time to visit all the parts of Judea before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, as an instrument in our Lord's hands, which, as a type of His coming to take vengeance on His enemies, is spoken of in a secondary sense, as a *coming* of Christ. (See Matt. xxiv. 27, 37, 39, 44, and Luke xviii. 8.)

24. "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. 25. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" Luke vi. 40; John xiii. 16, xv. 20. "Chap. xii. 24; Mark iii. 22; Luke xi. 15; John viii. 43, 52. "Gr. *Beelzebub*.

All Christians, but especially ministers, are here taught how unreasonable and absurd it is for them to expect kinder usage from an unkind world than He Himself met with. (1 Peter iv. 12.) The *disciple* is not *above*, in rank and worth, his *master*—Teacher. According to many Jewish proverbs, the pupil of the rabbi was far his inferior. *Nor the servant, &c.*—another parallel maxim which our Lord repeats in various connections. (Luke vi. 40; John xiii. 16, xv. 20.) *It is enough, &c.* He who keeps this saying in his heart will never complain of suffering. *Master of the house*—Jesus was indeed the head of a house, having brought up a large family of disciples, and He is also the Head of the household of the Church. *Beelzebub*. This word, which signifies "the lord of flies," and is the Greek form of Baal-zebub, was the name of a god worshipped by the Philistines in earlier times, at Ekron (2 Kings i. 2), and so called as protecting his worshipers from noxious insects, or as being himself worshiped under an insect form. Christ was re-

peatedly charged with being in league with Satan as Beelzebub (chap. xii. 24, ix. 34; Mark iii. 30; John vii. 20); how *much more*, then, might His disciples expect to encounter the same vile epithet and charge?

26. Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed, and hid, that shall not be known.—"Mark iv. 22; Luke vii. 17, xii. 2, 3.

Therefore—although you shall be hated, &c., be not afraid of your enemies, since you have my example, suffer in my cause, and are assured that I will support you, till you have finished your testimony. *For there is nothing covered, &c.* "Your excellence and worth, the truth of your cause, and the purity of your motives, your faithfulness in dispensing the truth, and patience in suffering for it, though concealed by the smoke of present persecution, yet shall ultimately and thoroughly be revealed and made known." Truth will triumph, and the character of its advocates be vindicated. (Ps. xxxvii. 5, 6; 1 Cor. iv. 5.)

27. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in the light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house-tops.

"Luke viii. 10; John xvi. 13, 25; 2 Cor. iii. 12.

In view of the coming development of Christianity, and the certainty that their integrity would in due time be made known and acknowledged, whatever the Apostles had conveyed to them under a figure, *that* were they without a figure to preach to all: what they had been taught secretly, *that* were they openly to proclaim: what they had heard in a corner of Judea, *that* were they to make known all over the world. Both Christ and His Apostles at first spake privately, for fear of the Jews, and the weakness and peril of their cause. The roofs of the houses in the East were nearly flat, and surrounded with a balustrade, so that men might there converse, and even an audience assemble. Preaching on the house-tops is a figure for the most public declaration. At the present day in Palestine, local governors in country districts cause their commands to be thus published.

28. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

"Isa. viii. 12, 13; Luke xii. 4.

Fear not them. Thus is forbidden the sinful, servile, slavish fear of impotent man, which was just condemned. He does

not hold out to them deliverance from death, but encourages them to despise it, which is a much greater thing than to be rescued from it. The words *which kill the body* show that the body may be dead, and the soul alive. *Body—soul.* We have here two parts of man's compounded nature placed in contrast. *But rather fear him—* act as in the presence of, and under a sense of responsibility to, *him which is able*, &c. The fear of man bringeth a snare, but we must make it give way to the expulsive power of a stronger principle, even the fear of God. "I fear God," said *Colonel Gardiner*, "and therefore there is none else that I need fear." We ought to fear God, not only for His greatness and goodness, but also for His punitive justice, as having ability and authority *to destroy both soul and body in hell*. To *destroy* is not to annihilate, but to *ruin*. Our Lord's words teach, not the dismissal of the soul from *existence*, but its catastrophe and ruin *in existence*. And this is an evil, a destruction, which we are bound to *fear*, as a possible reality beyond our bodily death. It is here evident that the torment that awaits the lost will have elements of suffering adapted to the *material* as well as the spiritual part of our nature.

In hell. (See v. 22.) Hell is represented by *Sheol* in the Old, and by *Hades* in the New Testament. The word is used by the sacred writers in several senses, which it is important to distinguish. The Hebrew word, translated *hell* in our Bible, sometimes means simply the *grave*, the receptacle of the dead, or the place of departed spirits, as in Job xi. 7-9; Ps. xvi. 10, cxxxix. 8; Isa. v. 14, xiv. 9; Amos ix. 2, 3; Acts ii. 31; Rev. xx. 14. In other passages it denotes the place of future punishment, as in Ps. ix. 17; Prov. v. 5, ix. 18, xxiii. 14; which punishment consists, in part at least, in the eternal separation of the soul from God and from the presence of His glory, and in the suffering of inconceivable anguish and remorse forever and ever. In the New Testament, hell, as the place of final punishment for sinners, is more distinctively indicated by the term *Gehenna*, or *Valley of Hinnom* (see 2 Chron. xxxiii. 6), which is the word translated "hell" in the verse now before us, also in

Matt. v. 22, 29, 30, xviii. 9, xxiii. 15, 33; Mark ix. 43, 45, 47; Luke xii. 5; James iii. 6. It is also distinctively indicated by such phrases as "the place of torment" (Luke xvi. 28), "everlasting fire" (Matt. xxv. 41), "the hell of fire," "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark ix. 44. See also Matt. viii. 12, xiii. 42, xxii. 13, xxv. 30; Luke xvi. 24; Jude 13; Rev. xiv. 10, 11, xix. 20, xx. 14, xxi. 8.) The Valley of Hinnom (Josh. xv. 8) literally means a gorge south of Jerusalem, running east and west, and intersecting the Kedron at the southeast corner of the city. At this place the idolatrous Israelites burnt human sacrifices unto Moloch, a deity represented by a brass image with the face of a bull. The drum (*toph*) which was used to drown the cry of the victim, gave the place the name of *Tophet*. (Jer. xix. 6.) Here also the offals of the city were ordinarily burned. The name of this ancient, defiled, gloomy, and perpetually fiery recess, became to the Jewish mind the emblem, and the word became the name, of the perpetual fire of retribution in a world to come. Universalists mainly maintain their heresy by the sophism that this Valley of Hinnom was the only hell. But the present text demonstrates that beyond the death of the body, and therefore in a future state, there is a hell or gehenna, which the soul may suffer, more terrible than bodily death, and more to be feared than any evil that man can inflict. God is the author of that evil, it lies beyond death, it is executed upon the soul as well as the body.

29. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. 30. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

†1 Sam. xiv. 45; 2 Sam. xiv. 11; Luke xii. 6, 7, xxi. 18; Acts xxvii. 34.

Our Lord still further encourages them to rely upon Divine protection, by the doctrine of Providence; and not only would He establish the truth, but the *extent* of it. He has two references. One is taken from themselves—the numbering of the hairs of their heads, which they cared so little about. What could express more strongly the minuteness of Providence? The other, from the *sparrow*—the little bird which was sold for an *assarion*, a

Roman coin, equal to one and a half cents of our money—and which could not fall on the ground, exhausted or killed, without the knowledge and consent of God. Of how much *more value* than these little birds, with their instinct, are ye as men in whom there is a spirit, and to whom the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding, and especially as *Christians*, ransomed with a price of infinite value, the temples of the living God, partakers of the Divine nature, and honored with a most important mission? *Fear ye not therefore* (how natural and unavoidable the inference) that God, who takes care of these His *creatures*, which are but animated forms, and perishable, will not take care of you, who are His *children*, with your undying souls.

A general providence involves a particular. It were an inconsistent belief that the mass were in God's hands, whilst the atom was left to chance. We must believe all chance, or else all God. He rules and governs in little things, and in order that He may rule in great things. His providence descends to the minute particles of dust in the summer gale; he numbers the gnats in the sunshine, and the fishes in the sea. While it controls the mighty orbs that shine in heaven, it deals with the drop that trickles from the eye. This particularity of Providence exalts, instead of debases, God. He acts in every thing without growing weary, and is sufficient for every thing, without multiplying Himself. It has been truthfully remarked that "not till belief in these declarations of our Lord, in their most literal sense, becomes the calm and settled habit of the soul, is life ever redeemed from drudgery and dreary emptiness, and made full of interest, meaning, and divine significance." We know that all things work together for good to them that love God. (Rom. viii. 28.)

32. *Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. 33. *But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

34. *Luke xii. 8; Rom. x. 9, 10. *Rev. iii. 5. *Mark viii. 38; Luke ix. 26; 2 Tim. ii. 12.

Another reason is here given for discharging their commission without fear of man, viz.: that on their fidelity in so doing

must depend their treatment by Him who commissioned them. *Whosoever*, whether of yourselves who preach, or those who hear your preaching. *Shall confess me before men, i. e.*, in this present life. To confess Jesus Christ is to own Him as Lord and Master, to follow His precept and example, to suffer for His sake, to love, teach, and practice His doctrine. We refer this great truth to the times of the martyrs, because we will not ourselves be martyrs for the truth. It belongs to all times and all believers, every one in his proper way. (See Rom. x. 10.)

Him will I confess also, &c. The reciprocal act here ascribed to Christ is that of owning as His Apostle, disciple or follower. The time referred to here, as well as in the next verse, must doubtless be the day of judgment. (See Heb. vii. 25; John xvii. 9.)

But whosoever shall deny, &c. Christ may be denied, 1. Doctrinally, by an erroneous and heretical judgment; 2. Verbally, by oral expressions; 3. Vitally, by a wicked and unholy life. (See Titus i. 16.) Those are guilty of this sin, who, from unbelief or indolence, or love of the world, or fear of man, shrink from confessing Him as their Saviour and their King. Let it be observed, 1. That not to confess Christ is in His account to deny Him; 2. That whosoever shall deny Him, shall be disowned and eternally rejected by Him. "He shall have from me his own treatment of me on the earth." (2 Tim. ii. 12.) How dreadful must be the portion of that soul which Jesus denies and renounces! He will refuse to acknowledge it; He will not plead for it, but leave it to reap the consequences of its unbelief or cowardice, renouncing it to the devil whom it chose for its master. It is worthy of notice, that both here and in the Sermon on the Mount (chap. vii. 21–23), the Saviour, *after mention of the Father*, describes *Himself* as the Judge and Arbitrer of eternal life and death.

34. *Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword.

*Luke xii. 49, 51–53.

Think not. The words imply a disposition so to think, or imagine, and act accordingly—that is, to infer from the meekness of Christ's character and His Gospel, that He was to send *peace*, not only in *spirit*, but in *result*, among mankind. *A sword*,

an emblem of contention. We must here remember the difference between a *cause* and an *occasion*. A hospital is the *cause* of healing to the sick; this is its direct object, but in the course of its erection it may be the *occasion* of the loss of life to several workmen. So, too, we say, a missionary went to such a place to *die*, when his object was to preach the Gospel. In like manner we must distinguish between the intentional aim of Christ's coming, and the accidental effect of it. His intentional aim was to plant, propagate and promote peace in the world; but, through the lusts and corruption of men's natures, the issue and event of His coming is war and division, not that these are the genuine and natural fruits of the Gospel, but occasional and accidental only—abnormal consequences of men's alienation and resistance. Strife is not referred to as something good and desirable in itself, but as the only way in which Jesus could erect His kingdom of peace here below upon an immovable foundation. When the Holy One of God comes into contact with an unholy world, a shock and strife is inevitable, and that not only against Him personally, but also among men themselves, inasmuch as these begin to distinguish themselves into adversaries and subjects of His kingdom. (See Luke ii. 34; John ix. 39.)

35. For I am come to set a man at variance ^{against} his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. ^{36.} And ^{37.} a man's foes ^{shall be} they of his own household.

*Mi. vii. 7; Luke xii. 53. †Ps. xli. 9, lv. 13; Mi. vii. 6; John xiii. 18.

For I am come, &c. (See notes on verse 34.) It may be that these special terms were selected because the younger members and the female portion of households were commonly the first to embrace the Gospel. The plain lesson here taught, is, that the Gospel will often produce divisions in families, and that even two persons who are most nearly related may become estranged from one another, in consequence of one being converted and the other not. That this is constantly the case is well known to all who know anything of true religion. So faithful Abraham was at variance with his father, the idolatrous Terah. So religion sets the pious child in opposition to the impious parent. So temperance sets the sober child at variance

with the drunken father. So piety arrays the fashionable, godless mother or mother-in-law, against the pious daughter or daughter-in-law; or the fashionable, frivolous daughter or daughter-in-law against the devoted mother or mother-in-law. (See notes on verse 21.)

The variance here referred to in the domestic circle is a variance, not upon some question of ecclesiastical economy, but about *vital religion*. And even such a division may be much mitigated by the forbearance, tenderness, and gentleness of those who are in the right, in dealing with those who are clearly in the wrong. We should do everything, except compromise duty and living truth, in order to promote peace. *A man's foes, &c.* (See Ps. xli. 9, lv. 12-14; Mi. vii. 6.) This saying had its most affecting illustration in the treason of Judas against our Lord Himself. (John xiii. 18; Matt. xxvi. 48-50.)

37. *He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.—Luke xiv. 26.

Love to Christ, in order to be genuine, must be supreme; earthly affections, when they come into collision with His claims, must be postponed. If one or another dearly cherished object stands on one side, and Christ on the other, we need not love them the *less*, because we cannot go with them, but we must love Him *more*. Without such a spirit no one can be His disciple. How could Jesus, except as God-man, claim this supreme affection. *Is not worthy of me* does not refer to the meritorious character of the action, but to the qualification of the person.

38. *And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

†Chap. xvi. 24; Mark viii. 34; Luke ix. 23, xiv. 27.

Taketh not his cross. This means *Gospel-suffering*. There is here an allusion to a Roman custom, that the malefactor who was to be crucified, took his cross upon his shoulders and carried it to the place of execution, and an obscure intimation of Christ's own approaching suffering on the cross. The duty enjoined is not the making of the cross for ourselves, but the patient bearing of it when God lays it upon our shoulders. The Christian is to have the *spirit* of a martyr and to be *ready* to give up all things, even life itself, for

Jesus. *Followeth not after me.* This denotes *gospel-service*. We must obey Christ's commands and imitate His example. We must set His life and doctrine continually before us, and be steadily correcting and reforming our lives by that rule and pattern.

39. ^aHe that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.
^bChap. xvi. 25; Luke ix. 24, xvii. 33; John xii. 25.

These, or similar words, were spoken on other occasions, as is shown by the references at the close of the verse. The word translated *life*, signifies both life and the soul. It is evident that the word *it*, occurring twice, refers to the life or salvation of the soul, else how can he who *loses* his life, for Christ's sake, be said to *find* it? The meaning of this apparently paradoxical expression is, he who preserves his life and temporal advantages at the expense of his religion, his conscience and regard to Christ, shall lose upon the whole, in a higher sense than he has retained it, as he will thus incur a sentence of final condemnation and destruction; but he who risks or loses his temporal life, or the enjoyments of it, through his conscientious adherence to the truth and faithfulness to Christ, shall find real comfort and happiness therein, and be graciously rewarded in the world to come with eternal life, the highest measure of the highest life of which man is capable.

40. ^aHe that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.
^bChap. xviii. 5; Luke ix. 48, x. 16; John xii. 44, xlii. 20; Gal. iv. 14.

It would cheer the Apostles to learn that some would regard them with favor. There is here a descending gradation, *you Apostles, a prophet, a righteous man, a little one*. The vital union, subsisting between Christ and His followers, rendering every act of love exercised toward them the same as done to Him, is here asserted in the fullest and most explicit terms. The union between Christ and the Father is also affirmed. "Your authority is mine, as mine is my Father's." Men may think it no great matter not to receive or neglect the message and the messengers of Christ, but this neglect or rejection extends beyond them to Christ Himself who gave them their commission, and beyond Him to God the Father, who gave Him His com-

mission; accordingly ministers are called God's mouth (Jer. xv. 19), their message and their mission being both from Him. Jesus observes who is kind to His servants, as Lydia was to Paul, and who throw difficulties in their way, as Diotrophes did to John.

41. ^aHe that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward: and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.
^b1 Kings xvii. 10, xviii. 4; 2 Kings iv. 8.

He that hospitably entertains a *prophet*, a divinely-authorized religious teacher, *in the name of a prophet*, because he is such, from sympathy with him, and a pious regard to the office he bears, *shall receive a prophet's reward*; or a reward proportionable to the worth of the person he shelters and accommodates in time of danger and difficulty, and the assistance rendered him in fulfilling his office as an ambassador of Christ. And he that entertains a *righteous man*, a pious man of private life, *in the name of a righteous man*, because he is such, or with a cordial regard to the virtues of his character, *shall himself receive the reward of a righteous man*. Being one in obedience with the prophet and righteous man whom we receive, according to the voice of the one, and the acting of the other, verily we shall with them share the reward. The allusion may be to the benefits derived by some from the visits of Elijah and Elisha, not to similar rewards, but still great ones.

42. ^aAnd whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.
^bChap. xviii. 5, 6, xxv. 40; Mark ix. 41; Heb. vi. 10.

Little ones. A sweet epithet for *disciples*. They were so called to denote their want of wealth, rank, learning, and whatever the world calls *great*. They were *little* in the estimation of the world, and in their own estimation, and they made no pretensions to what attracts the admiration of mankind. *A cup of cold water.* Among the varied scenes into which the prosecution of their missionary labors would throw them, they might meet with many who, from mere sympathy or kindness, might be disposed to refresh the weary travelers and offer them the shelter and hospitality of their homes, but few would be equally ready to extend their generous offices from

regard to the cause of religion and to the glory of God; and yet so much more excellent and praiseworthy was the conduct of the latter, that they would be rewarded with the special blessing of heaven, even though opportunity or means might prevent their giving a more liberal contribution to the comfort of a disciple than the offer of a cup of cold water. *In the name,*

&c.—because he is a disciple. *He shall in no wise lose, &c.* Marvelous promise! *A cup of cold water* in time, to find its reward, as one of old says, “in a sea of pleasure,” throughout the ages of eternity. There is here no shadow of the denial of the doctrine of justification by faith, but an assertion that works *in faith* are graciously rewarded of God.

1. What power did Jesus give to “his twelve disciples?” 2. Repeat the names of the Twelve Apostles. 3. State something of the history of each of them. 4. What were their two grand characteristics? 5. To whom were the Apostles first sent? 6. What directions were given to them? 7. Explain those directions. 8. What is said concerning Sodom and Gomorrah? 9. What is said of him who “endureth to the end?” 10. Explain verse 23. 11. Why were not the Apostles to fear their persecutors? 12. Why were they to “rather fear” God? 13. What doctrine is taught in verses 29-31? 14. What is said of confessing Christ? 15. What of denying Him? 16. Explain verses 34, 35? 17. Who is not “worthy” of Christ? 18. What is said about “finding” and “losing” “life?” 19. How does Jesus reward kindness to His servants?

CHAPTER XI.

2 *John sendeth his disciples to Christ, 7 Christ's testimony concerning John, 18 The opinion of the people, both concerning John and Christ, 20 Christ upbraideth the unthankfulness and unrepentance of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum: 25 and praising his Father's wisdom in revocating the gospel to the simple, 28 he catcheth to him all such as feel the burden of their sins.*

AND it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

Made an end of commanding. Christ's commissions imply commands. His instructions are ever full, thorough. By not ceasing from His labors, while the Apostles were absent, He gave an example of that faithful service in the Gospel which He required from them. All should be equally diligent to exemplify in their conduct the instructions which, from Him, they communicate to the people. *To teach*, instruct in private, *to preach* in public. *Their cities*—the cities of the Jews in Galilee.

2. *Now when John had heard ^{bin} in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, 3. And said unto him, Art thou ^{he} that should come, or do we look for another?

*Luke vii. 13. 19. &c. ^bChap. xiv. 3. ^cGen. xlix. 10; Num. xxiv. 17; Dan. ix. 24; John vi. 14.

The works of Christ, i. e., His miracles, as appears from verses 3-5. Jesus had done such works before John's incarceration, but oftener after it, and these were re-

ported to him by his disciples, who seem to have had free access to him. *Art thou he that should come, &c.* This question shows that the Jews generally considered the Messiah as at hand, and if Jesus were not He, another must be expected. Nearly nineteen hundred years have elapsed, and no other has come. How can they evade the inference that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah? Some suppose that this message was sent by John for his own satisfaction. If so, the utmost we can suppose concerning him, after remembering the clear evidence he had received of the Messiahship of Jesus (Matt. iii. 16), and the express and repeated testimonies he had borne to this truth (John i. 29, 36, 30, 34), and the high encomium pronounced on him when his disciples left (verses 9, 11) is, that whilst not doubting the Saviour's person, he could not fully understand His mode of acting. Cut off from intercourse with society by being shut up in prison, his mind was in danger of being warped, and of looking at things on the dark side. He was somewhat impatient. Matters moved too slowly for him, especially as he, as a prisoner, was now condemned to involuntary inactivity.

His misgivings were not in their nature *skeptical*, but *anxious*. He was anxious for some speedy and public declaration of the Lord in respect to His Messianic dignity, a declaration corresponding with the expectation which, doubtless, he had formed to himself of the Lord of the threshing-floor with His fan in His hand. (Matt. iii. 12.)

Others regard the message as having been sent *for the sake of John's disciples*. They were somewhat unwilling to acknowledge Christ to be the Messiah who, about that time, was generally expected, because they had such a zeal for the honor of John, their master, that they were not willing to own any one greater than him.

Probably, also, they were prejudiced against the Lord on account of His manner of life, which was very unlike that of John; for Jesus freely mixed with sinners, and was entertained by them, while John had always led a solitary life, and had lived upon the coarsest fare. John, therefore, to whom a delegation had been sent, to know from him whether he was the Christ, now (according to those who maintain this view) sends two of his disciples to Jesus, that they might obtain further satisfaction as to His Messiahship, and have their faith confirmed in Him from whom they had otherwise fled, out of a preposterous emulation.

4. Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: 5. *The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.* 6. And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

^aIsa. xxix. 18, xxxv. 4, 5, 6, xlii. 7: John ii. 23, iii. 2, v. 36, x. 25, 38, xiv. 11. ^ePs. xxii. 23: Isa. lxi. 1: Luke iv. 18; James ii. 5. ^fIsa. viii. 14, 15; chap. xiii. 57, xxiv. 10, xxvi. 31: Rom. ix. 32, 33: 1 Cor. i. 23, ii. 14: Gal. v. 11: 1 Peter i. 8.

Christ did not return a direct answer to their question. He endeavors to convince them, not by words, but by works. He performs several miracles, and leaves them to draw the proper inference. (Comp. the raising of Jairus' daughter, and of the widow's son at Nain, which, in the Gospel of Luke, immediately precedes this embassy. Luke vii. 11, 18.) *Those things which ye do hear and see*, with the reports of which the whole country rang and of which a specification is made in the next verse, not exhaustive, but illustrative by means of a few signal instances. Christ would have men judge of Him and of

others only by their works. This is the only safe way of judging—not by pretension but by demonstration.

The blind receive their sight, &c. Here Jesus not only makes a tacit appeal to His miracles, but also alludes to the prophecies in which the same things are predicted of the Messiah. (Isa. xxxv. 4, 5, 6, lxi. 1.) Miracles were the more striking to John's disciples as he "did no miracle." (John x. 41.) *The poor have the gospel preached to them.* This is mentioned last, as the greatest effort of Divine goodness. It was a sign of the Messiah's times. (Isa. xxix. 19.) The poor were despised in the times of Christ. The teachers of His day sought popularity and the favor of the rich. (John vii. 49, ix. 34, and James ii. 24.) But Christ aims first at the poor. A tender interest for them was shown by Him and His Apostles. It is the duty of the Church, and will be so the end of time, to see that the Gospel is preached to the poor. They have ever been more disposed than other men to hear and embrace the truth as it is in Jesus.

And blessed is he, &c. This was added to correct the absurd emulation of John's disciples. (See on verse 4.) *Not be offended, not stumbled.* Many are offended in Christ, some, at the asserted Divinity of His person, and the meritoriousness of His satisfaction, some at the sanctity and strictness of His laws, some at the free dispensation of His grace, others that the terms of Christianity are too hard, humbling to proud and earthly hearts, and laying too great a restraint upon human nature, others that the world does not believe in Him, that there are so many hypocrites and inconsistent professors of religion, and that His real followers are generally poor and unlearned. But those who believe in Him notwithstanding all these hindrances, shall be in a happy condition here, and, at the judgment day and beyond, learn the deep meaning of our Lord's words in this verse.

7. ^aAnd as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitude concerning John. What went ye out into the wilderness to see? ^bA reed shaken with the wind? 8. But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in king's houses. 9. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.

^cLuke vii. 24. ^dEph. iv. 14. ^eChap. xiv. 5, xxi. 26: Luke i. 76, vii. 26.

As soon as John's disciples had started back to their master, Jesus proceeded to address the people, and this, mainly to remove the unfavorable impression which the question from the Baptist (verse 3) had made on the crowd, but also to anticipate further difficulties conceived as to His own person and work, as well as to show them what benefit they *ought* to have received from John's ministry. John, whom they had gone out into the wilderness of Judea to hear preach, was not like one of the reeds which lined the banks of the Jordan and shivered in the breezes that swept it—not as easily shaken as themselves by every gust of rumor or prejudice, or every change of outward circumstances. Convinced of the truth, he continued to believe and assert it. *Steadiness* is essentially necessary to every preacher, and to every private Christian. We should have an *end* in view in repairing to the ordinances of religion, and that should not be curiosity, or criticism and cavilling, or any outward advantage, such as business, reputation, &c., or the quieting of conscience, but to obtain the conversion of the soul to God, to gain all needful instruction, to have divine things re-applied and re-impressed, and also to aid in upholding the public means of grace for the advantage of others.

A man clothed in soft raiment? John is also commended for his unselfishness, *gravity, sobriety*—high measure of mortification to the world—its glory, honor, ease, and pleasures. The spiritual nature of the Messiah's kingdom is thus intimated. As Christ's forerunner did not resemble any of the officers who attend the courts of earthly princes, consequently Christ Himself was in no respect to be like an earthly prince. A minister of the Gospel should have nothing about him which savors of effeminacy and worldly pomp.

A prophet? Our Lord, with a fine climax in His questions, from a *reed* to a *man* (intending by this that John was no weakling), and then to a *prophet*, gave the people to understand that John, instead of having lost in any respect his claim to the name of a *prophet*, was even exalted above ordinary prophets. He was *more than a prophet*, because he pointed out Christ more clearly and fully than any of the prophets before

him. The ancient prophets beheld Christ afar off, but John saw Him face to face. They prophesied of Him, *he* pointed at Him, prepared His way, foretold that His kingdom was at hand, and had the honor of baptizing Him. He excelled in everything peculiar to a prophet. Thus John's *humility* was commended. He might have been what he would; the people were ready to take him for the Messiah, but he denied that he was the Christ, and only wished to be regarded as His forerunner, willing, but not worthy, to do Him service.

^{10.} For this is *he* of whom it is written, *Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

¹¹ Mal. iii. 1; Mark i. 2; Luke i. 76, vii. 27.

The reason why John was to be accounted greater than any prophet that had preceded him is here given. He was a *messenger*, nay, even *THE messenger before the Messiah's face*. *This is he*. The clearer any ministry is in discovering Christ, the more excellent it is. *Of whom it is written*. In the verse referred to, Mal. iii. 1, *Jehovah*, speaking of the coming of Christ, says "*my face*," and "*before me*," but it is here quoted as the language of the Father to the Son, and He therefore says, "*before thy face*," and "*thy way before thee*," so that, to prepare the way of Christ was to "*prepare the way of the Lord Jehovah*," for "*He and the Father are one*."

^{11.} Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.—See Luke vii. 28.

Jesus here affirms that among the whole race of mankind in all former ages, there was not a greater prophet than John. He was greater than any of the ancient prophets, on account of his wonderful conception and birth, his intimate knowledge of Gospel mysteries (see especially John iii. 27, &c.), his express testimony to the Messiah, his being honored with baptizing Him, and his remarkable success in making way for Him. John was also himself the subject of ancient prophecies, and long expected by the Church. The world thinks that kings, generals and statesmen are the greatest of men, but God measures differently. It was when John was in prison, that Jesus thus commended him. How precious is the thought, to faithful ministers, that though the world may slight and despise them, Jesus will

maintain their honor, support their cause, and prove to them an unchanging Friend! How comforting is it, also, to all true Christians, who are suspected, slandered, and falsely accused, to know that Jesus will never desert any of His people!

Notwithstanding he that is least, &c. As the word *greater*, in this verse, refers to the word *prophet*, which is implied (see Luke vii. 28), so here the same idea is intended—*he that is a very inferior prophet, or religious teacher*. The humblest Gospel minister who sets forth the life and death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, is greater in the kingdom of God, that is, has a higher office in the Church, and a more excellent ministry than even John himself. At the same time, it is true that the weakest believing hearers of Paul would understand things by the light of Christ's death on the cross, which the Baptist could never have explained, and all who have believed in a crucified Saviour have, through the light of the experience of His redeeming power, had deeper insight into the nature, blessings, and course of development of the kingdom of God, than was the portion of John. How great the privilege, and consequently the responsibility, of enjoying the Gospel.

12. ¹And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.—²Luke xvi. 16.

The great commendation of John was that God owned his ministry and made it wonderfully successful. With his ministry the new dispensation began to be introduced, and, though disregarded by many who might have been expected to avail themselves of its blessings, yet from *his days*, or first appearing, *until now* (not much more than two years), great good had been done, many, most unlikely to do so, earnestly sought admission into the kingdom, and the motion became quicker when it came near to Christ the centre. (See Matt. iii. 5, 4, viii. 1, ix. 36, iv. 23–25.) *Suffereth violence*. By the *violent* may be understood either publicans and sinners, &c., or else those who are pressed with ardent desire to be partakers of the kingdom, and in the words, *take it by force*, which signify literally, *seize and take it*, as when men seize and drag away the plunder of a sacked city, we have a strong expression

of the eager joy with which men, in the times here spoken of, thronged to hear from John and Jesus the words of salvation. (See John vi. 15, x. 28, 29.) Happy are they who by a holy violence secure an interest in the kingdom of heaven.

13. ¹For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. 14. And if ye will receive it, this is ²Elias, which was for to come. 15. ³He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

⁴Mal. iv. 6. ⁵Mal. iv. 5; chap. xvii. 12; Luke i. 17. ⁶Chap. xiii. 9; Luke viii. 8; Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 29, iii. 6, 13, 22.

Here is still a further commendation of John. He was the connecting link between the Law and the Gospel. (See Luke i. 17; Mark i. 1; also Acts i. 22.) *The prophets and the law prophesied*. There were prophets also before Moses, and the law being named second, there is a climax, for Moses was the greatest prophet of the Old Testament. The law is mentioned here on account of its prophetic office. *Until John*—continued to instruct concerning Christ. Here was the limit of prophecy and of the Old Testament dispensation; thenceforward is the fulfillment.

If ye will receive it. This may mean that Jesus knew that many would not believe what He was now declaring (which is rendered probable by the obstinate expectation of the Jews to this day, that Elias is personally to come), or, that God constrains not the will, but leaves men free to act as they choose. *This is Elias, &c.* Our Lord here affirms that John was the Elijah spoken of by Malachi iv. 5. John was not Elijah himself, but he had come in the *spirit and power* of Elijah, being fervent in spirit and great in power, turning sinners to the Lord.

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. An expression often used by Christ to evoke attention, or to mark a conclusion from certain premises. (Comp. chap. xiii. 9, 43; Rev. ii. 7.) In the present instance, the inference was obvious—if John was the person to whom the law and the prophets pointed as the forerunner of the Messiah, then Jesus was evidently that personage, and was to be received and obeyed as such.

16. ¹But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, 17. And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced, we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented, 18. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. 19. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, so friend of publicans and sinners. ²But wisdom is justified of her children.

³Luke vii. 31. ⁴Chap. ix. 10. ⁵Luke vii. 35.

Whereunto shall I liken, &c. Our Lord now proceeds to describe and condemn the fickleness and perverseness of the Jews. *This generation, i. e.,* of this age. The question is asked as though it were difficult to find an object with which such men could be compared. In the time of our Saviour it was common for children to play in the market-place at rejoicing and at mourning. One party imitated the glad songs of the Jews at their marriages, and on other joyful occasions, while another party were expected to dance at the sound of their music. But sometimes sullen and wayward children would not join in their amusement. Then the other party would good-naturedly change the play, and imitate the mournful music of funerals, expecting their companions to use sorrowful gestures and to appear to weep, but the same forward children would object to this play also. In a matter of infinite importance the Pharisees had imitated this example. As John led so solitary and so strict a life, being clad in skins, feeding on locusts and honey, and refusing to taste wine or strong drink, they accused him of being demoniacally possessed, saying, *He hath a devil*, he acts like a wild, distracted demoniac, whom an evil spirit drives from the society of men. Then God sent His own Son to address and conduct Himself toward them in a more free and familiar manner; but because Christ manifested a mild and joyous spirit, in no way despising the comforts of life, but temperately enjoying them, these same Pharisees, because they did not find in Him the austere, unbending sternness which they had not been able to endure in John, applied to him the epithets, *glutton, wine-bibber and friend of publicans and sinners*; in doing which, however, they did not consider that these latter words indicated His highest titles of honor. (Luke xv. 2.)

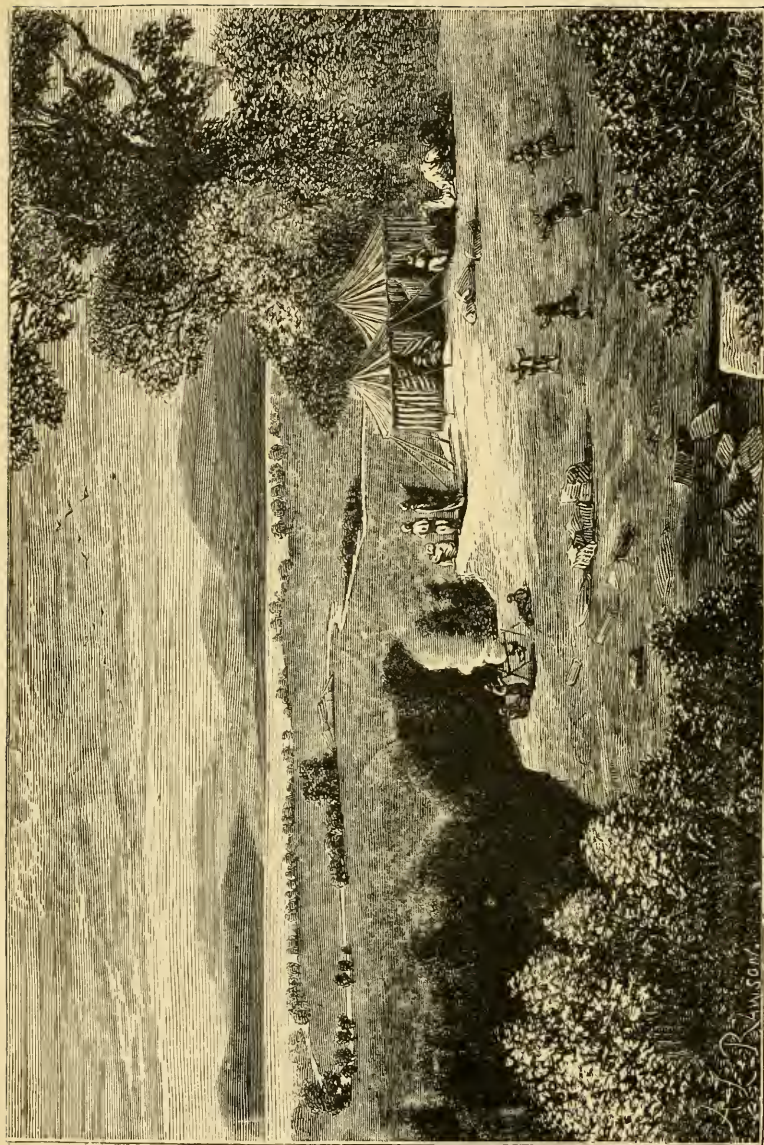
What a contradiction was this! Yet thus do men always and everywhere act when left to themselves. An unbelieving world is equally hard to please in regard to Christians. Are they cheerful? It accuses them of levity. Are they grave? It calls them gloomy and sour. Do they keep aloof from vain, worldly amusements? It calls them puritanical, exclu-

sive and narrow-minded. Do they eat, drink and dress like other people, and attend to their worldly callings and go into society? It sneeringly insinuates that it sees no difference between them and those who make no profession at all.

But wisdom is justified of her children. Wisdom can here be no other than the Divine wisdom which had been revealed by John and Jesus, and in Jesus was personally manifested; *her children* are those who are born of her, and possess a wise heart. The *justification* of wisdom takes place where she is acquitted of accusations of this kind, and acknowledged in her true character. Wise and good men admire the beautiful variety in the conduct of Providence, and in the methods of revealing Divine grace, approve religion in their judgment, honor it in their conversation, and adorn it in their lives. It is the duty of ministers to seek to please all men for their good; but after all their efforts to please all, if they strenuously oppose the errors and vices of the times, they shall please but very few. It is the old and settled policy of the devil to hinder the success of the Gospel, if he can, by exciting prejudice against ministers.

20. ¶ Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: 21. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22. But I say unto you, ¶ It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. 23. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24. But I say unto you, ¶ That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee. 25. Luke x. 13, &c. John iii. 7, 8. Chap. x. 15; verse 24. See Isa. xiv. 13; Lam. ii. 1. Chap. x. 15.

The connection of this with what precedes, and the similarity of its tone, makes it highly probable that it was delivered on the same occasion. *Then began he*—He had not done this before. *To upbraid*, rebuke, reprove. *The cities*—the inhabitants of them. *Woe unto thee*, better, *alas for thee*, an exclamation of pity, no less than an announcement of wrath. Its opposite is *blessed*. *Chorazin. . . . Bethsaida*. There is no reason to doubt that these towns were situated on or near the shore of the Lake of Gennesareth, but the exact location has been much in dispute. *Mighty works*. Our Lord here assumes that miracles performed in the name of God are



BETHSAIDA.

proof of a Divine commission. *Because they repented not.* There were doubtless many who believed on Jesus, but the mass remained in a state of impenitence and unbelief. Christ's great design in His doctrines and miracles was to bring men to repentance, to forsake their sins.

Tyre and Sidon. Two well-known maritime and Gentile cities in Syria or Palestine, remarkable for pride, luxury, and contempt of religion, situated on the shore of the Mediterranean sea: into them it does not appear that Christ ever went, though often very near to them. (See Matt. xv. 21; Mark vii. 24.) Against these two cities Ezekiel prophesies. (xxxviii.) They are now little better than ruins. *For if the mighty works, which were done in you, &c.* Jesus affirms that if the mighty works done by Him in Chorazin and Bethsaida, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, even they, wicked as they were, would have *long ago, i. e.,* of old, abandoned their idolatrous and other sinful habits, and like Nineveh at the preaching of Jonah, *would have repented, &c.* In the East it was common for mourners to put on a garment of coarse black cloth (usually made of hair), which resembled a sack, with holes for the arms, and to strew *ashes* upon the head. Hence this was regarded as the symbol of mourning and repentance.

The words of our Lord are remarkable as revealing the extent of the Divine Omniscience. God knows not only *what will be*, but, (which seems stranger) *what would have been*, under certain conditions. The Saviour here used the language of common life, just as we, if we were speaking of a person who had abused exalted privileges, might select, in order to show our sense of his guilt, the most wicked individual of our acquaintance, and say, even *he* would have acted in a better manner, even *he* could not have withstood such privileges; meaning that such a result in his case might have been reasonably expected. We are not competent to solve every difficulty in this subject, or fully to understand it. Certainly some are more easily wrought on than others, and it aggravates the impenitence of those who have plentiful means of grace, not only that many who enjoy the same are wrought on, but that

many more, who enjoy less, would be wrought on if they enjoyed the same means. (Ezek. iii. 6, 7.)

But I say unto you, &c. (See on chapter x. 15.) Sinners are but *reserved* for punishment. Tyre and Sidon seem to us gone by, but to God it is far otherwise. Time makes no change in His purposes. *Thou, Capernaum.* This was a prosperous city, where Christ had chiefly resided after His entrance upon His public ministry. It was *exalted unto heaven*, as it had, by our Lord's presence, preaching and miracles, enjoyed privileges far above other places. *Shall be brought down to hell.* In this case, the words *heaven* and *hell* correspond to one another as our words *high* and *low*. As the people of Capernaum were elevated on high by religious advantages so, through a neglect or abuse of their advantages, they were exposed to the condemnation of being cast down to an exceedingly low condition of misery—a condition as sad as that of the worst of men. The higher a people rise under the means of grace, the lower they fall, if they misimprove their privileges. *Of the mighty works, &c.* (See on verse 21.) *It would have remained until this day*—Sodom, destroyed for its pollutions, would have continued until that time—having done no such violence to conscience, and so incurred unspeakably less guilt. Repentance on the part of a nation averts its ruin. *But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable, &c.* (See on chap. x. 15.) "It has been indeed," says *Dr. Stanley*, "more tolerable, in one sense, in the day of its earthly judgment, for the land of Sodom than for Capernaum: for the name, and perhaps the remains of Sodom are still to be found on the shores of the Dead Sea: whilst that of Capernaum has, on the Lake of Genesareth, been utterly lost." In the world of woe, their condemnation would be severer than that of many others, than that even of guilty Sodom.

Note, 1. The enjoyment of Gospel ordinances is a great honor to the obscurest people and place. 2. It is not alone the seeing of miracles that is necessary to convert souls. 3. Man is accountable for his belief, and not believing the Gospel is a sin which leads to hell as really as not keeping the ten commandments. 4. They

that have been nearest conversion, being not converted, shall have the greatest condemnation when they are judged. 5. Cities are difficult fields for the spiritual laborer to cultivate. They are so on account of vice prevailing so extensively in them in its producing causes and sad effects, the pressure of business, and also because they unite the extremes of population—the low, sunken and degraded, whom the Gospel cannot reach, and the gay, giddy and godless, for whom it has no attraction. Even Jesus, whilst He met with eminent success in preaching in numerous country villages, and among the hamlets of the poor, yet encountered peculiar obstacles in Capernaum, Bethsaida, Chorazin and Jerusalem. (See on chap. x. 15.)

25. *At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

¹Luke x. 21. ²See Ps. viii. 2; 1 Cor. i. 19, 27 and ii. 8; 2 Cor. iii. 14. ³Chap. xvi. 17.

At that time. And doubtless in the same connection. *Jesus answered and said.* This form of expression is adapted to the train of thought which ran through the preceding discourse. *I thank thee, O Father, &c.* Christ addressed the Father as the proprietor and governor of the universe, who “doeth whatsoever pleaseth Him” in heaven and on earth, and He *thanked* or *adored* Him, and *professed* an entire acquiescence in His wisdom, equity and goodness, which were worthy of all adoration, in that He was pleased to conceal the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven from those who *thought themselves wise and prudent*, refusing either to submit their understanding to God’s teaching, or to seek His guidance unto truth, and depending on their own reason and resources, and at the same time to reveal these mysteries *unto babes*—i. e., to those like little children in being meek, teachable and lovely—conscious of their own ignorance, open to receive truth, and willing to be guided by it.

We are not to understand that God did, by any *positive influence*, hide the proofs of Christ’s mission from the wise and prudent; they had the Scriptures in their hands, they saw or heard of His miracles, and heard, or might have heard, His doctrine, but they were blinded by pride and carnal prejudices, and He was pleased to

give them up to be judicially blinded. God did not put darkness into their minds, but He left them to their own darkness, or denied them that light which they had no desire to see. *Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.* This God had done for wise and gracious reasons, which He was not pleased to assign. (See Eph. i. 9–12.) It *seemed good*, it seemed right to the Infinite Mind. As though Christ had said, “Father, thy choice pleases me, being the choice and good pleasure of thy wisdom.”

The truth which this verse embodies is deep and mysterious. Why some are converted and others remain dead in sins, why America is a Christian country and India is buried in idolatry, we cannot fully understand. The words of the Lord Jesus Christ supply the only answer that mortal man can or ought to give: “Even so, Father,” &c. At the same time it should be remembered that God’s offers of salvation are free, wide, broad and unlimited, and that the same God who does all things according to the counsel of His own will, always addresses us as accountable creatures, as beings whose blood will be on their own heads if they are lost. Let us rest in the conviction that the Judgment day will clear up all, and that the Judge of all will not fail to do right.

27. *All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

¹Chap. xxviii. 18; Luke x. 22; John iii. 35, xlii. 3 and xvii. 2; 1 Cor. xv. 27. ²John i. 18, vi. 46 and x. 15.

This verse expresses the Divine correspondence between the Father and the Son, which had been implied by the thanksgiving of the previous verse. It is a very remarkable declaration of our Lord’s personal and mediatorial work. In His mediatorial office His authority is a delegated one. The Father had *delivered all things unto him*—the whole system of salvation, all power, authority and judgment over all creatures, and He is even to be regarded as the source of light and knowledge, as well as of peace and pardon to the souls of men. None knew Jesus as the Son of God—“the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh”—but the eternal Father, even as none knew the Father, except the Son, neither could any

man truly know the Father, i. e., the depths of His attributes, except as the Son revealed His nature and glory to him; for this was committed to Him as Mediator, in respect of all the sinful race of men. This mutual knowledge of the Father and the Son represents Christ as co-equal with the Father, and is an argument for His Divinity. Jesus is the light; we must walk after Him, if we would not wander in darkness; we must wash in His blood if we would be cleansed and made ready for the great day of account. If we have Christ, we have all things. (1 Cor. iii. 22.)

28. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

After upbraiding the cities wherein most of His mighty works had been done, because they repented not, and then stating the great truth that divine grace is sovereign, so as to humble the proud, our Lord, seeing the disciples crowding around the rabbis, submitting to their severe discipline in order to the attainment of spiritual good, and seeing the people performing costly ceremonies, and wearying themselves to get free from the load of guilt and fear which still pressed heavily upon them, proceeded, from pity to them, to utter this most gracious invitation, offering to them rest in forgiveness and a quiet mind, in a heart chastened to a holy calm, and in the hope of heaven. What Jesus promised *then*, he has both promised and fulfilled ever since from heaven.

Notice, 1. What he promises—*Rest*. Rest from the guilt of sin, a pacified and quiet conscience; rest from the power and misery of sin, by the Spirit's causing us to be crucified to the world and weaned from it, to live, in fact, above it; rest from speculative doubts; rest in trouble, not *from* it, but *in* it, by delivering us from self-will, unbelief and impatience; rest in heaven, after life's toils and conflicts are over. 2. To whom this rest is promised. Every one who desires or needs it; they *that labor and are heavy laden*, and *all* of them; those who are weary in seeking their happiness away from God; those who are bearing the heavy burden of affliction, and the still heavier burden of guilt; those who are attempting to establish their peace with God, and are laboring to erect

an edifice of righteousness out of their own performances. 3. That it is *Jesus* by whom this promise is made. It is the great prerogative of Him who made the soul to impart rest to it. Our Lord here claims this high prerogative of Jehovah for Himself. He does not say, as the prophets of old did, "Turn to the Lord, and the Lord will comfort you," but "Come unto me," *I will give you rest*. Jesus is the source of all happiness, the spring from which flows all the bliss of heaven, and He has all hearts at his command, and can fill them with comfort and joy. "God has so made man's heart for Himself," says *Augustine*, "that it is ever restless until it finds rest in Him."

4. How this rest is to be obtained. By *coming to Christ*. The burdened soul must seek its rest in Him, just as the worldly man seeks his in worldly things. Coming to Christ is the same as believing on Him, but then it is faith in operation, leading the soul to act on what it credits. It is not a *local* coming, which at present is impossible, but a movement of mind and heart unto Him, with a true consent to His doctrine, a hearty and sincere trust in His merits, and such resignation to His guidance as is due to the nature of His character and doctrine.

29. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

John xiii. 15; Phil. ii. 5; 1 Peter ii. 21; 1 John ii. 6; Zech. ix. 9; Phil. ii. 7, 8. Jer. vi. 16.

Take my yoke upon you. We are to come to Jesus also as our *Ruler*. He has His yoke. 1. This includes conditions which His religion requires, such as exclusive trust in the merits of His death as the sacrifice for sin, self-denial and submission to affliction and suffering as in His wisdom He may appoint. 2. Restraints under His discipline, in temper and conduct, being meek, forgiving, merciful and kind, and "walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work." 3. Services which He requires—the services of devotion, of zeal, and of charity. *Learn of me*. We are also to come to Christ as our *Teacher*, sitting at His feet, renouncing all but Him, the teacher sent from God. And what encouragement does He give us to do this? He tells us that He is *meek and lowly in heart*. He will not teach us severely, but be gentle toward

us, even as a nurse unto her children. His gentle spirit and soul-subduing doctrines, can alone give that temper by which the soul of man may come to its true rest. *And ye shall find rest unto your souls*—an emphatic repetition of the last clause of the preceding verse. Another ground of encouragement is given us in the following verse:

30. ^bFor my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.
^{b1} John v. 3.

Christ's yoke is easy because, 1. No rest can be found by rejecting it. The man who bears it not must bear a heavier burden—the burden of bewildering and oppressive ignorance or skepticism. 2. Those who bear it have received a willing mind to do so. 3. Bearing it brings with it the sense of the approbation of God. 4. It conforms to the nature and reality of things. 5. There is a pure satisfaction imparted to the mind, even in the very ex-

ercises of self-denial and self-abasement which Christ enjoins. 6. His presence is promised to those who bear His yoke. 7. It becomes easier as the Christian continues to bear it. 8. The intimate connection between every branch of discipline and the heavenly state, crowns the whole. The Christian knows that he is learning of Jesus to be prepared to find Him his wisdom in eternity; that he is fleeing to His sacrifice in order to overcome death and enter into glory; that he is denying himself to gain the relish for the spiritualities of heaven; that he is cultivating holiness in order to be presented without spot, before God; that he is worshiping Jesus here to be made meet for the high festivals, the holy Sabbaths of heaven; that he is leaving the society of the world, because he is so soon to join "the innumerable company of angels, and the general assembly and Church of the first born."

1. What is said of Christ's example? 2. What message did John send to Jesus? 3. What was our Lord's answer? 4. What did He say concerning John? 5. Explain verse 1. 6. Unto what did Christ liken that generation? 7. What cities did He upbraid? 8. How? 9. What is meant by "hast hid these things from the wise and prudent?" &c. 10. What is the meaning of verse 27? 11. Who are invited to come to Jesus? 12. How are they to come? 13. What shall they receive by thus coming?

CHAPTER XII.

¹ Christ reproveth the blindness of the Pharisees concerning the breach of the sabbath, 3 by scriptures, 9 by reason, 13 and by a miracle. ²² He rebuketh the man possessed that was blind and dumb. ³¹ Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven. ³⁸ Account shall be made of idle words. ³⁸ He rebuketh the unfaithful, who seek after a sign. ⁴⁹ and sheweth who is his brother, sister, and mother.

AT that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn, and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

^aDeut. xxiii. 25; Mark ii. 23; Luke vi. 1.

At that time. A general expression, meaning about the time when the things just spoken of occurred. *Jesus went on the sabbath day*, literally, *sabbaths*. The plural and singular of this word were often used indiscriminately for the seventh day of the week. *Through the corn, i. e.*, the paths which led through corn fields. The fields were sown with corn, in the proper English sense of grain or bread-stuffs, with

particular reference to wheat and barley. *And his disciples*, who had eaten nothing during the day, in accordance with a customary way of appeasing hunger in Palestine at this day, pulled off the heads of grain, and ate them. (See Luke vi. 1.)

² But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.

Some of the Pharisees, it seems, accompanied Christ on this occasion, prompted, probably, by curiosity, in expectation of seeing more miracles. It appears that He did not Himself eat of the barley. (John iv. 32-34.) The allegation of the Pharisees was false, for it was more than the law of the Sabbath (Ex. xvi. 20; Deut. xxiii. 25) said or implied—it forbade servile work on that day, but the act of the disciples was

no servile work. Hypocrites place all holiness in the observance of outward ceremonies, whilst they neglect moral duties. (Matt. xxiii. 24.)

3. But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungered, and they that were with him. 4. How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shew bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? ^b1 Sam. xxi. 6. ^cEx. xxv. 30; Lev. xxiv. 5. ^dEx. xxix. 32; Lev. viii. 31, xxiv. 9.

The Saviour defended His disciples against their accusers. We are thus reminded that though Satan is "the accuser of the brethren" (Rev. xii. 10), yet we "have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," who is ever maintaining the cause of His people, in heaven. Our Lord in His answer referred to 1 Sam. xxi. *The house of God*—in which He dwelt among His people. At the time here mentioned, the tabernacle, which was a portable tent, was at Nob. (1 Sam. xxi. 1.) *The show-bread*, or, *shew-bread*, in Hebrew, "bread of the presence" or "faces," because this bread was to be set continually "before the face of Jehovah." (See Ex. xxv. 23 and 30.) The argument of Jesus was this: "If David, when he was fleeing from Saul, and was overtaken with hunger, took and ate that holy bread, and did this, not because he was called of God to a peculiar work and office in which he might lawfully do things forbidden to others, for that bread was also eaten by *them which were with him* (see Luke vi. 4), why might not my disciples pluck barley on a holy day, when they were hungry?" Our Lord argued for the true construction of the law. We ought not to be *morbidly scrupulous* in observing the Sabbath. Many things may be allowable on it which timid minds consider unlawful. Anything, however, like a violation of the sanctity of the Sabbath by any unnecessary employments or recreations, even such as are proper on other days, is unwarranted.

5. Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?
^aNum. xxviii. 9; John vii. 22.

Our Lord here further vindicates the conduct of His disciples by reference to the example of the priests in the temple, who, on the Sabbath, killed and dressed their sacrifices, and baked the shew-bread, which involved necessary bodily labor,

and which, on the reasoning of the Pharisees, would be accounted a profanation of that day. (See Num. xxviii. 9; Lev. xxiv. 5; 1 Chron. ix. 32.)

6. But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple.—²Chron. vi. 18; Mal. iii. 1.

In making this declaration, our Lord may have made some gesture, indicative of a reference to himself. "Here is one *greater than the temple* (John ii. 21), and, therefore, able to dispense with temple and ritual sanctities when they come in collision with the object of His mission, or the maintenance of His ministers in the performance of that mission." The Jews esteemed nothing greater than the temple except the God who was worshiped in it. Christ, therefore, by asserting that He was greater than the temple, asserts that He was *God*, and this He does in still more direct terms, verse 8, comp. Gen. ii. 3.

7. But if ye had known what *this* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.
^aHos. vi. 6; Mt. vi. 6-8; chap. ix. 13.

Our Lord again refers to the passage quoted in chap. ix. 13 (on which see Notes.) "Had ye understood the great principle of all religion which the Scripture everywhere recognizes, that ceremonial observances must give way before moral duties, and particularly the necessities of nature, ye would have refrained from these capricious complaints against men who, in this matter, are blameless."

8. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.—Luke vi. 5.

The Sabbath is an ordinance for man's rest, both actually and typically, as setting forth the rest that remains for God's people (Heb. iv. 9.) But He who is now speaking has taken on Himself manhood—the whole nature of man, and is rightful Lord over creation as granted to man, and of all that is made for man, and therefore of the Sabbath. The whole dispensation of time is created for man—for Christ, as He is man—and is in His absolute power. Hence the Sabbath having been ordained for man, not for any individual, but for the whole race, it must needs be subject to the Son of man, who is its Head and Representative, its Sovereign and Redeemer. This implies that though the Sabbath, which was established at the end of the creative week, formed a part of the Patriarchal re-

ligion, and was woven into the *moral* code given to Moses, is, in its essence, perpetual, yet the right of modifying and controlling it belongs to Christ, and can be exercised only under His authority.

Accordingly, this right was exercised by Christ. After His resurrection the Jewish Sabbath, which was laid upon the primitive Sabbath, was abolished, and "the Lord's day," or Christian Sabbath, was superimposed upon another day—the *first day of the week*—thus making that day of universal and perpetual obligation. (See Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2; Rev. i. 10.) The obligation and observance of this day are also recognized by Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, A. D. 101; Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, about A. D. 162; Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, who had been a disciple of Polycarp, the companion of the Apostles, A. D. 167; Clement, of Alexandria, A. D. 192; Tertullian, about the same time; Constantine, in the fourth century, and Chrysostom.

The Sabbath is absolutely essential, not only to the animal creation in the service of man, but to man's welfare, physically, intellectually, socially, morally. The infidel actors in the French Revolution abolished the Christian Sabbath and substituted what they called the decades, or every tenth day. After the desperate experiment had been made, *Robespierre* was constrained to say, "The world will go to pieces if we cannot find a God," and in the course of a few years the world fell back into the olden ruts, seized the Sabbath again as too precious to let go. We live in days when anything like a strict observance of the Sabbath is loudly denounced by some as a remnant of Jewish superstition. Vague talk like this has no confirmation in the Word of God. The fourth commandment has never been repealed by Christ, and we have no more right to break the Sabbath, under the Gospel, than we have to murder and to steal. The architect who repairs a building, and restores it to its proper use, is not the destroyer of it, but the preserver. The Saviour who redeemed the Sabbath from Jewish traditions, and so frequently explained its true meaning, ought never to be regarded as the enemy of the fourth

commandment. On the contrary, He has "magnified it and made it honorable."

9. ^aAnd when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue.—^bLuke vi. 6; Mark iii. 1.

When he was departed thence—but "on another Sabbath." (Luke vi. 6.) He went into their synagogue, i. e., the synagogue of the people among whom He had come.

10. ^aAnd behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him."—Luke xiii. 14, xiv. 3; John ix. 16.

An atrophy of the limb, and an inability to move the nerves and muscles, which would cause the limb to be *rigid*, was what the Jews understood by "a withered limb." It was occasioned by a deficient absorption of nutriment in the limb. When once thoroughly established, it was incurable by any art of man. *Is it lawful*, &c. This question was proposed by the scribes and Pharisees (Luke vi. 7), with the hope of finding matter of accusation.

11. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? 12. How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore is it lawful to do well on the sabbath days?

^aSee Ex. xxiii. 4, 5; Deut. xxii. 4. ^bLuke xii. 24. ^cMark iii. 4; Luke vi. 9.

Our Lord answers the question, as was His custom (see xxi. 24), by another question. "Are there not things much less important and earnest than that which I am about to do, which you would not leave undone? Which of you would not draw your sheep from the pit into which it had fallen on the Sabbath; and shall I, the true Shepherd, not rescue a sheep of my fold, a man, that is far better than a sheep? Your own consciences tell you that that were a true Sabbath work, and how much worthier this? You have asked me, Is it lawful to *heal* on the Sabbath? I answer, It is lawful to *do well* on that day, and therefore to *heal*." They can answer Him nothing further—"they held their peace." (Mark iii. 4.)

13. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth, and it was restored whole, like as the other.—^aLuke xiii. 13; Acts iii. 7, 8.

Jesus could have healed the poor man by a word, but He asked him to *stretch forth his hand*. Was not this a strange command? The man might have replied, "I have often endeavored to stretch forth my hand, and have not been able; why should I try again?" But he made no such unbe-

lieving answer; he confided in the power of Jesus, and his attempt was successful—his hand *was restored whole, like as the other*. So is the strengthless soul commanded to commit itself to the Redeemer, and in the effort to do so it will find that power accompanies the precept. Faith disregards apparent impossibilities where there is a command and promise of God. "God's commands," says an old writer, "are grants. When He enjoins us, Repent, or Believe, it is only to draw from us a free acknowledgment of our impotence to perform what He commanded us. This confession being made, what He enjoins He will enable us to do. Man's owning his weakness is the only stock for God to engraft thereon the grace of His assistance."

14. ¶ Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.
*Chap. xxvii. 1; Mark iii. 6; Luke vi. 11; John v. 18, x. 39, xl. 13.

They felt that they could not stand before His arguments, sustained as they were by such signs and wonders. Their credit was in danger; they saw that if Jesus was allowed to go on, their influence and gains would be lost. What then would be done? It was an affair of so much importance that they *held a council* with a view to fix on a plan for destroying Jesus. The enemies of Christ and His cause, when arguments fail, fall to violence. It is a certain sign of a weak cause that it must be supported by passion, which is all tongue and no ear.

15. But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; 16. And recharged them that they should not make him known;
*Chap. x. 23; Mark iii. 7. *Chap. ix. 2. *Chap. ix. 30.

When Jesus knew the murderous designs of the Pharisees, as the time had not come when He was to be delivered up to them, He *withdrew himself from thence*—whither, our Evangelist does not say, but Mark (iii. 7) says, "it was to the sea," to some distance, no doubt, from the scene of the miracle, and the machinations of His foes. *And great multitudes*, &c. The common people were better disposed, and were favorably affected by His miracles and teachings. *And he healed them all*—as many as required healing. *And charged them*, &c. Here again silence was enjoined in regard to His being the Christ. It was not yet time for this to be widely known,

or loudly asserted with such exciting proofs, any more than it was time for Him to die. (See on chap. viii. 4, ix. 30.)

17. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 18. Behold my servant, whom I have chosen, my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles. 19. He shall not strive, nor cry: neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. 20. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. 21. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.
*Isa. xlii. 1. *Chap. iii. 17, xvii. 5. *Luke xvii. 20; John xviii. 36, 38. *2 Cor. x. 1. *Ps. li. 17, cxviii. 3; Isa. lvi. 16; Ezek. xxxiv. 16; Luke iv. 13; Heb. xii. 12, 13.

That it might be fulfilled, &c. The quotation is from Isaiah xlii. 1-4, and though not in the exact words of the original, yet adheres closely to the sense. The Evangelist considers this quietude of our Lord as going to fulfill this prophecy, in which the Messiah is described as establishing His kingdom in the earth by the most silent and unostentatious means and influences. Here is another reason for Christ's frequently seeking retirement. *Behold my servant*. Jesus "took upon Him the form of a servant." (Phil. ii. 7.) It is only in respect of His incarnation and mediatorial work, that our Lord Jesus Christ is called the servant of Almighty God. *Have chosen*. The verb thus rendered, is equal to *set apart as chosen*. *Well pleased*. This acknowledgment of our High Priest was made by the Father at the baptism of Jesus (Matt. iii. 17), and at His transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 5). *I will put my Spirit upon him*. This also was fulfilled at His baptism, (iii. 16; see also John iii. 34.) *Shall show judgment*, &c. Shall teach the law and will of God. *He shall not strive*, &c.—he shall not contend with martial violence, *nor cry*, in a clamorous and turbulent manner, *neither shall any man hear his voice* in the streets, but He shall (as the next verse indicates) manage His administration with great gentleness and sweetness, caution and tenderness.

A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench. By a bruised reed may be meant a musical pipe made of reed, and formerly used by shepherds, which could never be very enchanting; but when bruised, would sound inharmoniously and harshly, and would probably be broken to pieces and thrown aside; or, a reed stalk, commonly found in marshy soils, which, in its best estate is slender

and frail, but when bruised is unable to bear any weight, is unavailing for any useful purpose, and seems fit for nothing but the fire. By "smoking flax" is meant the wick of the torch or candle, made of this material, when the flame is extinct, but the tow retaining some particles of fire, sends forth no useful light, but only offensive effluvium. By these figures are represented persons of very weak and defective attainments in the divine life, or afflicted with outward troubles and inward conflicts, or subject to moral infirmities. Such it is said the Saviour will not overlook or despise. He will not only not destroy or injure them, but He will sustain, strengthen and confirm the bruised reed, and rekindle the smoking flax and cause it to burn clear and bright. That this is implied, is obvious in the delightful addition in which we are told that the work, though opposed, shall be rendered triumphant, *till he send forth judgment unto victory. The Gentiles trust—Hope.* (Comp. Ps. cxlvi. 3; Jer. xvii. 5; Rom. xv. 12; Eph. i. 12.)

22. ¶ Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb; and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.

*See chap. ix. 32; Mark iii. 11; Luke xi. 14.

One possessed with a devil. The evil spirit had exerted his cruel power in depriving this man, who was brought to the Saviour, of sight and speech. In his deep affliction he could not appeal by words to Christ's compassion; he stood before Him with his sightless eyeballs in bondage to the devil. What a spectacle of misery to excite His heart! As Jesus glanced an eye of mercy on him, his lips spoke his release, and in an instant Satan was forced to surrender his captive and flee away. The man was now restored, his tongue was unloosed, and his eyes were opened to behold the world again. How great an event is recorded in the sacred narrative in three or four lines!

23. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?

These fresh displays of love and power surprised and melted the hearts of the people, and they were on the point of publicly proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah. This culmination of enthusiasm awakened the strong reaction of the Pharisees, and led to the sudden and malignant accusation mentioned in the next verse.

24. *But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.

*Chap. ix. 34; Mark iii. 22; Luke xi. 15.

They said, most probably among themselves. *This fellow, &c.,* an expression of contempt, and an affirmation that Jesus did not cast out a demon in which He was not aided thereto by the prince of devils. (See on chap. ix. 34, x. 25.) Unable to deny the fact of the miraculous healing, the ever-watchful enemies of Jesus attempted to discredit Him by charging Him who wrought it, with collusion with Beelzebub. (See x. 25.) Had the Jews been universally or generally converted by Christ's miracles, the skeptic in our day might argue with some plausibility, that the facts had been invented to gratify the national propensity, and had been credited without examination or proof. But, as the case stands, we are now certain that these miracles were wrought in the presence of enemies, and thus subjected to the severest scrutiny, and that they carried with them conviction to multitudes, notwithstanding the fiercest opposition which national prejudice, bigotry and vice could excite, and the strictest search which could be made by the most vigilant hostility.

25. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.

*Chap. ix. 4; Luke vi. 8, ix. 47; John ii. 25; Acts i. 24; Rev. ii. 23.

Knew their thoughts. This assertion of Christ's omniscience is not the less valuable and convincing a proof of His Divinity, because introduced with so little apparent design on the part of the Evangelist. *Said unto them,* without any anger, notwithstanding the very awful and flagrantly wicked charge preferred against Him. However extravagant the charge may be that is made against us, yet, if we speak calmly and sensibly, there is something in human nature that will lead it to listen the moment we do so. In refuting the slander that He is confederated with the prince of darkness, Christ's first illustration is taken from a *kingdom*, a state, a body politic, implying not a mere aggregation of men, but organic life and unity of principle and interest. *Every kingdom divided against itself*—in which there is nothing but divided counsel and separate action, making on one side, and unmaking on the other, setting up and

pulling down, internal discord and civil war—is brought to desolation; or, as Mark has it (iii. 24), “cannot stand,” cannot be established, made to stand, by such a process. The same thing is true in a sphere still narrower, *every city*, with antagonistic elements, and *every house*, composed of hostile and discordant members, *shall not stand*.

26. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? ^aJohn xii. 31, xiv. 30; 2 Cor. iv. 4.

Had the idea of *division*, in the various illustrations given, been the simple one of some opposing others, our Lord would no doubt have applied His argument or principle to Satan's *kingdom* rather than *himself*, but as the Pharisees accused Him of casting out Satan by Satan's own power, and as He here presented the paradoxical idea of Satan as an individual arrayed against himself, we may safely infer that this very paradox was meant to be the point of His whole argument. “If Satan were to cast out Satan, he would commit suicide. Therefore, how can you suppose that he will help me to depress and put down that very kingdom which is his strength, glory and stronghold?” It is an unwarrantable calumny to endeavor to make it believed that a man is an enemy of the Church, because he is trying to cast out error and sin. When Christians keep up needless divisions in the Church, such, for example, as divisions about matters not essential to salvation, about forms and ceremonies, and ecclesiastical arrangements upon which Scripture is silent, they show themselves more foolish than Satan himself.

27. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges.—Mark ix. 38, 39.

Here is a second refutation of the charge of the Pharisees: their objection, by parity of reasoning, would extend to their own exorcists, which they would not have been willing to admit. *Your children*—that is, your disciples. That there were among the Jews *exorcists*, who at least professed to cast out devils, we know from the Apocrypha, from Josephus, and from Acts xix. 12-14. *Therefore they shall be your judges*, to convict them of injustice and malignity in ascribing what Christ did to demoniacal collusion, when they made no such charge

against *them* and their real or pretended dispossession. The corruption of the heart is the cause of the corruption of the understanding and judgment. Passion makes men frequently condemn in some that which they approve in others.

28. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. ^bDan. ii. 44; vii. 14; Luke i. 33; xi. 20; xvii. 20, 21.

The argument here appears to be this: “If these miracles which I work are really wrought by the finger of God (see Ex. viii. 19), and I am clearly proved by them One sent from God, then, whether you will allow it or not, the times of the Messiah have evidently arrived. The kingdom of God has come down upon you unawares, and these miracles are signs that it is so.” There was solemn irony in this suggestion to the leading Jews that, in spite of their unwillingness to see or own it, the Messiah and His kingdom might be come after all. We cannot be assured that God reigns in a soul, but only when the lusts and evil habits which possessed it are cast out, not by other lusts or evil habits, but by the love of righteousness and the hatred of sin, which is done by the finger of God, namely, by His Holy Spirit.

29. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. ^cIsa. xlix. 24; Luke xi. 21-23.

Our Lord here points out the folly of supposing that He acts by a power from, and consequently *under*, Satan, since He evinces *superiority* over Satan by overpowering him, and despoiling him of his authority. When a strong man is robbed, no one imagines that he has robbed himself, but every one regards it as the work of an enemy, superior in power; so, when Satan's instruments and agents are driven out by Jesus, it ought to have been argued that the Prince of this world had been cast out and judged (John xii. 31; xvi. 11) by coming in contact with his conqueror. (See on Luke xi. 21.)

30. He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

The idea is, I am not with Satan, Satan is clearly not with me; we are therefore antagonists: there is hostility between us; it is the woman's seed bruising the serpent's head. *Gathereth . . . scattereth*. These words allude to a *gathering* in harvest. Co-

laborers *gather* in concert, the ravager of their fields *scattereth* the produce. Here note, 1. That Christ is engaged in an important contest, and calls upon us to take part with Him. The cause which He has undertaken is the cause of truth, of righteousness, and of God, against the interests of falsehood, of sin, and of Satan. 2. That for any one to be with Christ in this contest, is to embrace the Gospel, obey its precepts, openly profess his adherence to the Saviour, take up his cross, deny himself and follow Him, for only by being *with* Jesus, can any amount of victory over Satan be obtained or hoped for, and who-soever contributes not to His spiritual harvest, scatters to the wind. 3. That there can be no neutrality in this matter. All those who are undecided and half-hearted, who appear to be between Christ and the world, who inhabit the confines of religion and irreligion, are, how much soever they may wish to be accounted otherwise, *against* the Son of God.

31. ^c Wherefore I say unto you, ^d All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: ^e but the blasphemy *against* the *Holy Ghost* shall not be forgiven unto men. 32. And whosoever ^f speaketh a word against the Son of man, ^g it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever ^h speaketh against the *Holy Ghost*, ⁱ he shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

^d Mark iii. 28; Luke xii. 10; Heb. vi. 4, &c., x. 26, 29; 1 John v. 16. ^e Acts vii. 51. ^f Chap. xi. 19, xiii. 55; John vii. 12, 52. ^g 1 Tim. i. 13. ^h Mark iii. 29.

Wherefore, *i. e.*, in view of the impious words of the Pharisees, the sin of which is shown in the verse immediately preceding, and which was at least a close approximation to the unpardonable sin about to be referred to. *All manner of sin*—all sorts of sin. *Blasphemy* is mentioned by name, and by itself, as being peculiarly atrocious. This word, in the original, is of the same signification as the word *calumny* in ordinary use. Though it has special reference to God, yet it also refers to the reproach or slander of men—the defamation of what is good, noble and holy, on its appearance in the world, with malicious intent. It is an aggravated form of sin—both a species and aggravation of general sin. *Shall be forgiven*, may, or can, upon repentance, through the atonement, be forgiven. In Mark iii. 28, the language is still stronger: “All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme.”

Up to this point blasphemy forms the climax of sin, but of sin which may still be forgiven, because, in his fanatical enthusiasm for what he deems noble, good and holy, a man may overlook and misunderstand even a higher manifestation of it. How comforting the thought that though *all sin* will be followed with *sorrow*, yet there is only *one* sin that cannot be pardoned. How glorious the atonement by ^a which blasphemy may be forgiven! (See Ezek. xxxiii. 11, xviii. 23, 31; Acts xiii. 38.) *But the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.* This is explained in the latter clause of verse 32.

And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him. The distinction made in this verse seems entirely unaccountable if made between the second and third Persons of the Godhead (who are of equal sanctity), simply as such and without anything to qualify or specify the statement. This difficulty disappears, however, in observing that the person mentioned in the first clause is not the Eternal Word, or Son of God, but *the Son of man*, a phrase which describes the Saviour in His humiliation, in the form of a servant, as He was while resident on earth. A contrast is here drawn between slandering “the Son of man” while His Godhead was thus veiled, and, as it were, in abeyance, and slandering the same blessed Person after the blaze of glory which *the Holy Ghost* was soon to throw around His claims, and in the full knowledge of all that. This great *first-mentioned* sin was committed by those who did not know Christ to be the Messiah in the days of His humiliation, and did not receive Him, believe Him, or obey Him, but ignorantly rejected and crucified Him (see Luke xxiii. 34; Acts iii. 17; 1 Cor. ii. 8; 1 Tim. i. 13), and many of whom, so sinning, were pardoned we cannot doubt, as, for example, on the day of Pentecost, after Peter’s preaching.

But whosoever speaketh against the *Holy Ghost*, &c. It will be noticed that in verse 32, it is, “whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man,” &c., but here, “whosoever speaketh” (without the addition) “a word,” thus drawing a distinction between the person from whom, by reason of preju-

dice or ignorance, a word of blasphemy might escape against Christ, whom in His form as a servant he may possibly mistake, and the person who speaks decidedly against the Holy Spirit. In each case, however, it should be remembered that the sin may be committed in *thought* or in *act* as well as in *speech*. The meaning of these words is by very high authority understood to be, that when Christ should rise from the dead (Rom. i. 4) and ascend into heaven, and, being exalted at the right hand of the Father, send forth the Holy Spirit on His apostles and disciples, enabling them to perform various wonderful works in His name, in proof of their testimony concerning His resurrection and ascension, whosoever shall blaspheme this last and most complete attestation to Jesus as the promised Messiah, and, from determined enmity to Him and His kingdom, ascribe the operations of the Holy Spirit to Satan, *it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come, i. e., neither during his present life, nor in his endless existence beyond the grave*, the expression being a strong negative, an emphatic *never*. (Mark iii. 29.) It does not by any means follow from the words, "neither in the world to come," that any sin not forgiven here will hereafter be forgiven. This was a form of speech common among the Jews when they asserted strongly that any thing should never be done. Absolution is publicly pronounced on believers at the judgment, but their sins were forgiven in this life. The tremendous sin here denounced was committed by those who, after the day of Pentecost, persisting in unbelief and obstinate impenitence, and resisting the ministration of the Holy Ghost, were given over to a reprobate mind. That this was the state of many of the Jews, appears from several places in the Acts, and especially Acts xxviii. 25-28. (See also 1 Thes. ii. 15, 16.) The sin, therefore, to which our Lord here refers, seems to be the sin committed by any one in continuing to oppose the Gospel from deliberate malice, while at the same time the Holy Ghost has convinced the mind of its truth. (See Heb. vi. 4. &c.; x. 26, 27; also 1 John v. 16, from which it appears that there is but one un-

pardonable sin, and all these are *it*.) It is the sin of deliberately neglecting God's truth, while the truth is clearly known with the head, and deliberately choosing sin and the world—the sin committed by those who (as in the case of the Hebrews just referred to) are the subjects of deep convictions and powerful impressions. It is a combination of light in the understanding, and determined wickedness in the will, not one particular *act* of sin, but a malignant state of heart against God and His cause, which at length reaches a fearful consummation. (2 Tim. iii. 8; Jude iv. 12, 13.) Pharaoh, Saul, Ahab, Judas Iscariot, Julian and Francis Spira are prominent and fearful illustrations of our Lord's meaning.

The question, why this sin shall never be forgiven, is sufficiently answered by the reply, because God has willed it so. It is a limitation dictated by sovereign wisdom and righteousness. No sin can be forgiven without repentance and through the sacrifice of Christ; *but* repentance is the gift of God, and as the blasphemer against the Holy Ghost drives from him the only Being who could give repentance (Acts v. 31), and treats the blood of the covenant wherewith He (Christ) was sanctified as an unholy thing, he seals himself up, under final and total apostacy, until the day of doom. (Heb. vi. 7, 8; 1 Tim. iv. 2.) That those who are troubled with fear that they have committed the unpardonable sin, are just the persons who have not committed it, is the judgment of all the soundest divines. This grief is itself a proof that they have not committed that sin because it is a mark of that sin to be accompanied with a hard and impenitent heart.

33. Either make the tree good and his fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt, for the tree is known by his fruit.—Chap. vii. 17; Luke vi. 43, 44.

The meaning is, consider or hold the tree to be good if the fruit be good. These words have a double reference: to Jesus, who could not be evil, for His works were good, to the Pharisees, who could not be good, because their works were evil. (See on chap. vii. 17.) *For the tree is known by his fruit*. A man may be known by his actions, as a tree may be known by its fruit, yet not by a single action, but by a series of actions, not by a particular act,

but by our general course. The habitual conduct of a pious man *must* be good; the habitual conduct of an unconverted man *must* be evil. There cannot be a permanent contrariety between a moral agent's moral actions and his moral dispositions.

34. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? ^afor out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

^bChap. iii. 7, xxiii. 33. ^cLuke vi. 45.

Jesus, by thus calling the Pharisees a *generation*, or brood of *vipers*, as John had called them (Luke iii. 7), points out the diabolical nature of their hypocrisy. He declared them to be the seed of the old serpent, and the children of Satan. They had accused Him of casting out devils through the power of Satan, while they themselves belonged to the family of the wicked one. *How can ye*, &c. A strong expression of what is deemed impossible. Man is dependent on God's grace for that change which alone can enable him to do right. *For out of*, &c. "That of which the heart is full," says *Leighton*, "runs out by the tongue; if the heart be full of God, the tongue will delight to speak of Him, and if nothing but earth is there, all that man's discourse will have an earthly smell." (See Ps. xxxvii. 30, 31, xl. 8, 9; Prov. x. 20.) It is not true, as some allege, that no one can know anything of the state of another's heart, and that, although men are living wickedly, they have *good hearts*. A man's conversation is one indication of the state of his heart.

35. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things.

^aPs. xxxvii. 30, 31; Prov. x. 20, 21; Eph. iv. 29; Col. iii. 16.

A *good man*. The Saviour regards no man as naturally good, in the Pelagian sense of the word, but speaks of the sinner who has become good through grace. Both the *good* and the *evil* man He sets forth as they commonly reveal themselves outwardly, without, however, denying that even the good has his weak, and the evil man his better side. The heart of the one and of the other is the magazine, or store-house, out of which perpetually proceeds what therein was in no small measure hidden.

36. But I say unto you, "That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

^aEcd. xii. 14; Rom. ii. 16; Eph. v. 4, 6. ^bProv. xiii. 3; James ii. 21, 25.

Every idle word. Not only for the "evil things," that is, the blasphemous words which they utter, will men be called to account, but even for their *inconsiderate* and *unreal* words. *Idle*, literally, *objectless*, *effectless*, *useless*, seems to mean something *more* than unprofitable, and *less* than mischievous. Such words will have to be reckoned for *because* they are vain and fruitless. At the last day our words, as an outward expression of our hearts, will be produced as *evidence* of our state before God, and it is only good words that will then justify us, or show that we were born again and washed in Christ's blood. If for idle words we are to be accountable, how much more for bitter, malicious words, especially those uttered against God's people, whom He esteems His precious ones, His treasure! Let us resolve, by God's grace, to be more careful over our tongues, and more particular about our use of them. (Ps. xxxix. 1; exli. 3; James iii. 2.)

38. ¶ "Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee."

^aChap. xvi. 1; Mark viii. 11; Luke xi. 16, 29; John ii. 18; 1 Cor. i. 22.

It was not with a *sincere* desire to be assured of the truth of Christ's Messiahship that the scribes and Pharisees wished for a *sign*. Perhaps they wished some splendid show in the sky. They had already witnessed enough of miracles to convince them of this, if they had been open to conviction. (John xv. 24.) It is always one mark of a thoroughly unbelieving heart to pretend to want more evidence of the truth of religion. To one who has a sincere faith, it is enough that God has once declared Himself. He who is not content with this wants faith, not proofs.

39. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: 40. "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly: so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

^aIsa. lvii. 3; chap. xvi. 4; Mark viii. 38; John iv. 48. ^bJonah i. 17.

Christ, knowing that they were *determined* not to believe in Him, refused their arrogant demand, but gave them the *sign of the prophet Jonas*. The word *adulterous* is here used in a spiritual sense; in the Old Testament it refers to *idolatry*, but as the Jews, in Christ's time, were not guilty of idol-worship, it refers here to practical infidelity, impiety, apostacy from spiritual

religion. Hence, they were not only an *evil*, but *adulterous* generation. *For as Jonas, &c.* As though our Lord had said, "you ask a sign from heaven, but the only sign I shall vouchsafe you, is a sign from earth. As Jonah, though there was but little belief that he would return from the fish, yet was restored alive unto the dry land again, so shall the Messiah, though there be as little belief of it, after three days, be taken out of the jaws of death and restored unto the land of the living." In the history of Jonah (Jonah i. 17) we read only of "a great fish." Here we are told it was a *whale*, the only creature besides man whose creation is specially recorded (Gen. 1. 21), although the original word denotes *any large fish*. Dr. Thomson insists that we should believe the fish to have been a whale, regarding the absence of whales in the Mediterranean at the present day as creating no difficulty, since "the multiplication of ships in this sea, after the time of Jonah, frightened them out of it, as other causes have driven all lions out of Palestine, where they were once numerous. . . . Our Lord calls it a whale, and I am contented with His translation; and whale it was, not a shark."

As to our Lord being *three days and three nights in the heart of the earth* it is to be noted that, as is usual in all languages, the Jews in particular denoted a *part* of a day by the name of the *whole*. The very same quantity of time thus described, and which, in reality, was only *one whole day*, a *part* of two others, and two *whole nights*, is termed *three days and three nights* in the book of Esther: "Go, neither eat nor drink *three days, night or day, &c.* (iv. 16.) Afterward it follows (chap. v. 1): "On the *third day*, Esther stood," &c. (See, also, 2 Chron. x. 5; comp. with verse 12.)

So, as a child was to be circumcised when *eight days* old, both the day of his birth and circumcision were two of these *eight days*. Again, as among us, the time of twenty-four hours is called a *day*, so among the Jews it is sometimes called a *day*, and sometimes a *night and a day*, as in Gen. chap. i.: "The evening and the morning," or the *night and the day* were the *day*. The reasons of our Lord's remaining in the grave just the time that He did, may be

thus stated: 1. To fulfil the *ancient prophecies* and *his own prophecies*. (See 1 Cor. xv. 4; Matt. xii. 40; Lev. xxiii. 10, &c.; Ps. xvi. 10; Matt. xvi. 21, xvii. 22, 23, xx., xviii. 19.) 2. That, on the one hand, He might be dead long enough for no doubt to remain of the reality of His death; and, on the other hand, He might revive soon enough for His body, which had never known sin, never to know corruption. (See again Ps. xvi. 10, also, John xi. 39.) For the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, which was a *consequence* of Christ's rising on the third day, see on chapter xii. 8.

41. "The men of Nineveh shall rise in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold, a greater than Jonas is here."
 *Luke xi. 32. *Jer. xlii. 11; Ezek. xvi. 51, 52; Rom. ii. 27. *Jonah iii. 5.

Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian empire. It was a very ancient city. It was built by Nimrod. (Gen. x. 11.) *Jonah*, son of Amittai, the fifth of the minor prophets, is generally considered as the most ancient of the prophets, and is supposed to have lived B. C. 840. It is here affirmed that the people of Nineveh, who had among them for a short time a prophet—a person unknown—of a different nation and religion, and working no miracles, and yet repented under his preaching, and this too only to avoid temporal evils, would stand at the bar of God, to put to shame, by their example, the Jews of Christ's day, because they repented not to obtain everlasting salvation, though having among them the mightiest and most faithful preacher that ever warned a people. The sins of unbelief and impenitence are greatly aggravated from the means afforded by God to bring men to faith and obedience.

42. "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, a greater than Solomon is here."

*1 Kings x. 1; 2 Chron. ix. 1; Luke x. 31.

The allusion here is to the queen of Sheba. Her name is not known at all. *Sheba* (or *Saba*, of profane history), is a province in the northern part of Arabia, between the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. It was probably settled by Sheba, a descendant of Shem, and the inhabitants are called Sabeans. (Job i. 15.) *The utter-*

most parts of the earth, &c.—a hyperbole, found also in the best Greek writers, for a great distance. The queen may well be supposed to have had some traditional knowledge of true religion, and, in the commercial intercourse of her country with that of the Hebrews, might have heard much of the wisdom and piety of Solomon. *And behold, a greater, &c.* In order to feel the power of this comparison, we must realize to ourselves what is written in the Old Testament regarding Solomon. (1 Chron. xxii. 9, 10; 1 Kings ii. 19, 27, 31, iii. 1, 9, 12-14, 16-28; 2 Chron. ix. 29.) Here, and in the end of the preceding verse, the Greek word translated “a greater,” is, literally, “a greater thing.” May it not be that the “thing” referred to is “the sign?” There is One here who is a sign of far greater moment than either Jonah or Solomon. The point in which the queen of the South surpassed the Jews of our Lord’s time, and put them to shame, was *faith*. She had faith enough to come a long journey to hear a wise man. The Jews, on the other hand, had “the wisdom of God” actually in the midst of them, and yet they would not believe. (See on preceding verse.)

43. *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.—Luke xi. 24. *Job i. 7; 1 Peter v. 8.

Had there been no reality in demoniacal possessions, would our Lord thus have appealed to a case of this kind? *Is gone out.* The language suggests to us a strong contrast between this case and those in which our Lord openly interposed and “cast forth” the devils by His word. Sometimes an evil spirit *forsakes* his habitation. The devil having left his *house* is here represented in allusion to the common notion that evil demons had their haunts in lonely and desolate places (see Isa. xiii. 21; Rev. xviii. 2), to have traveled through *dry* or desert places, but to have found no *rest*, no satisfaction and repose. (Isa. lvii. 21; comp. xlvi. 22; Job i. 7 and ii. 2.) Our enemy, we know, walks about seeking whom he may devour. (1 Peter v. 8.)

44. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished.

Perhaps this devil had left the man, hoping to make new conquests, and to in-

crease the number of his victims, but when disappointed, he thinks of returning to his old abode. He claims the heart as his own property—“*my house*.” On his return, he finds no obstacle to regaining possession of the soul he once inhabited. Nor is the house less acceptable to him because it is *swept*. He is greatly satisfied with some appearance of reformation, certain significant tokens of cleanness, for he knows that these are all for him. Better still for him, it is *garnished*, too. Many ornaments are found within. The soul has put forth some of its inherent powers. It has enriched itself from the stores of art, science and philosophy. It has shown rare skill in works of social benevolence. It has gained a good name for integrity and uprightness. And all this is gain to the evil re-possessor, not to the rightful owner of it. All these he takes into his hand and turns them to his own bad purpose of keeping the soul still farther from God, and making use of it for the enlargement and increase of the dominion and the power of darkness.

45. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation. *Isa. vi. 4, x. 26; 2 Peter ii. 20-22.

The unclean spirit will not re-enter weak and alone, but selects associates to share his spoil. *Seven* is often used in Scripture in an indefinite sense for “many” or “several.” It also often implied with the Jews something *perfect, completed, filled up*, which is the proper import of the Hebrew word. *More wicked.* There are degrees of wickedness even among *devils*, and, no doubt, pre-eminence in wickedness is their glory. It had been better for this miserable man if the first inmate of his heart had never quitted it. His last state was at least seven times worse than the first. How infinitely better would it have been for him if, when the devil had left him, he had opened his heart to the gracious Saviour! Even as a house forsaken by man becomes the habitation of beasts and birds, so does the heart, when Jesus is absent, become the habitation of evil spirits. Many, alas! who make a profession of religion, and seem to make some progress in reformation, when they turn away from the truth and relapse into old evil habits, become worse than

ever before. *Even so, &c.* From the case of the demoniac this impressive warning is suggested. The Jewish nation, by the preaching of John and of Jesus, had a great deliverance offered to them. Fearful in proportion would be their condition in rejecting this deliverance. The end of the matter was, as we learn from Josephus, that they relapsed into a state of crime, confusion and misery, to which the Gentile world has no parallel.

46. ¶ While he yet talked to the people, behold his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.

¶ Mark iii. 31; Luke viii. 19-21. ¶ Chap. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3; John ii. 12, vii. 3, 5; Acts i. 14; 1 Cor. ix. 5; Gal. i. 19.

The earnestness and assiduity of Christ in teaching the people, notwithstanding the opposition of the Pharisees, gave disquietude to His friends. (See Mark iii. 20, 21.) They wished Him to desist from His labors, and they seem to have engaged Mary to concur in the design, which was, doubtless, reprehensible, as it implied sentiments of Him derogatory to His perfect wisdom and excellence. *Brethren*, or near relations. Some think the word means the children of Joseph by a former wife, or His cousins. For the wide signification of "brethren," see Gen. xxxi. 46; Matt. xiii. 55, xxvii. 56; Mark iii. 18; Gal. i. 19.

47. Then one said unto him, Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

As the crowd was so great as to render it impossible for any one on the outside to directly address Jesus, the report of His mother and brethren being present, and desiring to speak with Him, was made by the person whom doubtless His relations had sent for this purpose.

48. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

We must not suppose from this answer that Jesus intended any disrespect to, or felt no regard for His mother, or any of His relations, for we know that He bore to His mother such affection, that, when hanging on the cross, he commended her with His expiring breath to the care of His beloved disciple. (John xix. 27.)

49. And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! 50. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

¶ John xv. 14; Gal. v. 6, vi. 15; Col. iii. 11; Heb. ii. 11.

Christ here re-affirms the sentiment uttered while sitting in the temple in the midst of the doctors, that He has higher affinities and relationships than those of an earthly nature. *Stretching forth his hand toward his disciples, He said, Behold, &c.* As He speaks alone of *mother* and *brethren*, it is probable that Joseph was now dead. The fact that our Lord, among the possible relations which human beings can sustain to Him, does not include that of father, may, however, also be well explained from His unwillingness to attribute to any human being the relation which God alone sustained to Him.

What is included in doing the will of God? *It is to believe.* This is expressly stated as being the Father's will. It is more than a common faith: the devils believe and tremble; but many who profess Christianity have never trembled before God. This faith is connected with experience; it is of the operation of God, and works by love. *It is to obey.* Obedience is the practical evidence of faith. Faith may be compared to a tree planted in the garden of the soul, rooted and grounded in Christ, covered with the green leaves of a lively profession, watered with heavenly showers, and yielding the fruits of obedience, and the graces of the Spirit. Our obedience must be right in its principle, sincere in its motive, evangelical in its spirit, cheerful in its manner, and universal in its application. "Whosoever." There is no restriction but that which we put on ourselves. We cannot go beyond the Gospel commission, for it extends to sinners whose iniquities have reached unto heaven, are as black as hell, and numerous as the sands on the sea-shore.

Observe, 1. That those united to Christ *in spirit*, are nearer to Him than those related to Him in the *flesh*. With what sacred dignity does this invest all true believers! 2. All true Christians are obedient to God. (Ps. cxix. 5; Rom. vii. 22-5.) But though they do not keep the Divine commandments perfectly, as Jesus did (John vi. 38), they are comforted by knowing that He loves them. 3. How absurd, from this passage, is the idea that Mary is our intercessor with Christ or God.

1. What did the disciples in passing through the corn field? 2. How did Christ vindicate their conduct? 3. Who is Lord of the Sabbath? 4. Why? 5. When was "the Lord's day" substituted for the Jewish Sabbath? 6. How did Christ answer the objection to His healing on the Sabbath? 7. How was the cure effected? 8. What was the effect upon the Pharisees? 9. What is meant by a "bruised reed" and "smoking flax"? 10. What other miracle was now wrought? 11. What charge was brought against Jesus? 12. How did He answer it? 13. What is said of "the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost"? 14. What is said of "a good man"? 15. What of idle words? 16. Explain "the sign of the prophet Jonas." 17. What is affirmed of "the men of Nineveh"? 18. What is said of "the unclean spirit"?

CHAPTER XIII.

3 *The parable of the sower and the seed: 18 the exposition of it.* 24. *The parable of the tares, 31 of the mustard seed, 33 of the leaven, 44 of the hidden treasure, 45 of the pearl, 47 of the dragnet cast into the sea: 53 and how Christ is contented of his own countrymen.*

THE same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea-side. 2. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.—Mark iv. 1. Luke viii. 4. Luke v. 3.

Same day—the day of the transaction of the last chapter. *Out of the house* in which He had healed the demoniac and denounced the Pharisee. (Mark iii. 19.) *Sea-side*, the shore of the sea of Galilee. *Into a ship*, or, rather, *the vessel*, or *boat*, the article indicating a particular vessel usually kept there. It probably belonged to some of the "fishermen" (see chap. iv. 22), and seems to have been kept on the lake for the use of Christ and His Apostles. Our Lord went into the boat, that He might be less incommoded, and better heard by the people.

3. And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow: Luke viii. 5.

A *parable* (the word being derived from a Greek work signifying to *compare together*), is a *similitude*, in which one thing is compared to another, especially spiritual things to natural, by which means those spiritual things are better understood, and make a deeper impression on an honest and attentive mind. There are seven parables recorded in this chapter. Behold. Our Lord addressed both the ear and the eye. Probably He saw at no great distance from Him a husbandman who was scattering seed in the furrowed field. This parable is recorded also by Luke (viii. 4, &c.) and Mark (iv. 3, &c.), on which see notes. *A sower went forth to sow.* Our Lord Himself is to be regarded as the Chief Sower. His entrance into the world was a going forth to sow. Others were only able to

sow because He had sown *first*; they did but carry out the work which He auspicated and began.

4. And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way-side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

That is, some fell on the hard foot-path which skirted the edge of the field, or, perhaps, ran by way of short cut through the middle of it, where the glebe was not broken, and so it could not sink in the earth, but lay exposed on the surface, till at length it became an easy prey to the birds, such as in the East are described as following in large flocks the husbandman as he scatters the seed corn. It is not said that the sower sowed the seed by the way-side, on the rock, among the thorns, and into good ground, but that it "*fell*" there. The sower sowed well. It was the *soil* which was evil.

5. Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: 6. And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

Stony places. Not places in the field abounding in small stones, for then would seeds germinate in the crevices between; but to places, underneath which were large flat rocks, covered with a thin surface of earth, which prevented the seed from having any depth of root. *Forthwith*, &c. While the rock below hindered it from striking deeply downward, it put forth its energies the more abundantly in the stalk. It was not rooted in that deep, moist soil, which would have enabled it to resist the scorching heat of the sun, and being smitten by that, withered and died.

7. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up and choked them:

This portion of seed wants neither root nor depth of earth. It grows up, but the misfortune is, that the *thorns* grow up with it. Under this term may be included all

rank weeds, varying with countries and climates, which infest the soil and hurt the harvest; the roots drinking up the sap of the ground, while the branches veil off the sunlight.

8. But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty fold, some thirty fold.—Gen. xxvi. 12.

This portion of seed fell into soil free from rocks and thorn-bushes, and was productive. The terms *hundred fold*, *sixty fold*, *thirty fold*, are used as round numbers to express the varieties of increase from a moderate to an abundant harvest, there being so much yielded for each grain that was sown. The return of a hundred fold for one is not unknown in the East.

9. ¶ Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.
 Chap. xi. 15; Mark iv. 9.

This expression is recorded by all the three Evangelists, and seems to point out the special importance of the parable. (See on chap. xi. 15.)

10. ¶ And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

This question indicates that this was a new form of our Lord's teaching.

11. He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

Chap. xi. 25, xvi. 17; Mark iv. 11; 1 Cor. ii. 10; 1 John ii. 27.

It is given unto you. As a reward of your diligence and desire to be informed (Luke viii. 9), these things shall be explained to you. *Mysteries*, &c.—things respecting the Messiah's kingdom; things which cannot be known until they are revealed. To them it is not given, they shall be left in darkness, and shall have their voluntary ignorance punished with judicial blindness.

12. ¶ For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

Chap. xxv. 29; Mark iv. 25; Luke viii. 15, and xix. 26.

The gifts we have, will either be continued to us and increased, or taken from us, according as we do or do not employ them for working out our own salvation, for promoting the glory of God, and for the edification of our brethren. There is no surer way to thrive in grace, and increase in gifts, than to exercise and improve them. *Even that he hath*, in Luke, (viii. 18), "seemeth to have." Men only seem to have what they do not use, and mere shows of religion will be lost and forfeited.

13. Therefore speak I to them in parables; because they, seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand. 14. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, 'By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive.' 15. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

Is. vi. 9; Ez. xii. 2; Mark iv. 12; Luke viii. 10; John xii. 40; Acts xxviii. 26, 27; Rom. xi. 8; 2 Cor. iii. 14, 15.

Therefore, &c. Parables not unfolded and understood, are a veil (as here) to the multitude, and in that view they are a great judgment. Our Lord did not begin to speak in parables until His miracles were malignantly ascribed to Satan. (Luke v. 30.) *Because*, &c., i. e., "whilst they see with the eyes of their bodies the miracles I perform, they see the facts done, which they cannot gainsay, but they will not take in the clear evidence, full proof, and certain demonstration given thereby of my Messiahship, and whilst hearing the sermons preached by me, whether with or without parables, they hear my voice, the sound of it, but will not understand my voice internally, spiritually and experimentally." *Is fulfilled*, &c., rather, is fulfilling, or is receiving its fulfillment. (Is. vi. 9, 10.) It was a generic description of character fulfilled equally truly by the Jews of the days of Isaiah, and the Jews of the days of Jesus. *Shall not understand*. The word *will* instead of *shall*, would more exactly express the thought.

Heart is waxed gross. Here is the reason why those withholdings of truth are inflicted—the minds of the people had grown too gross to receive it. *Their ears*, &c., literally, they hear heavily with their ears. *Their eyes*, &c.—they have done it themselves, preferring darkness to light. *Lest at any time*, &c., which shows that being turned from their evil ways, and being delivered from their miserable state, was possible for them. The original expression rendered *lest*, is frequently used to indicate, not the *design* for which a thing is done or permitted, but a *result*, or consequence of that thing. It is a law of God's spiritual kingdom, that resistance to truth hardens the heart, and this resistance by men may be so continuous and intense, that the truth, not only does not benefit them, but damages and condemns them.

16. But *blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.* 17. For verily I say unto you, *That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.*
¹Chap. xvi. 17; Luke x. 23, 24; John xx. 29. ^mHeb. xi. 13; 1 Peter i. 10, 11.

Christ now pronounces His disciples happy, in that they were permitted to see not only the outside shell of truth, but the inner kernel, to understand the great truths of the Gospel, which He was then unfolding to them. *Prophets and righteous men*, as Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, David, Solomon, Hiezekiah, Jehoshaphat, Josiah, and the other Old Testament saints represented by them, to whom the times of the Messiah, His character and kingdom, were all a matter of profound interest, had earnestly longed to hear and see the things which the disciples were seeing and hearing, but were denied the privilege. The men of old saw them only by faith in types, but the disciples saw them with their bodily eyes, as living and present realities. Enormous advantages are enjoyed by believers who have lived since Christ came into the world, compared with those of believers who died before Christ was born. It is the difference of twilight and noonday, of winter and summer, of the mind of a child and the mind of a full-grown man. Let us never forget that in proportion to our advantages will be our responsibility.

18. ^fHear ye therefore the parable of the sower.
^mMark iv. 14; Luke viii. 11.

Not merely *understand*, but *hear*, with the spiritual perception accorded to you. Our Lord in this case became His own interpreter.

19. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.
^cChap. iv. 23.

Those here represented are such as, by deep-rooted prejudices against Christianity, have minds which are impenetrable and inaccessible to conviction; also the thoughtless, the inattentive, the inconsiderate, the trifling, the gay, who think of nothing beyond the present scene, and who do not consider themselves as in the smallest degree interested in a higher invisible world. They *hear the Word of God* in general, but pre-eminently His Gospel, the message of salvation through Christ, but do not *understand* it, do not perceive its

meaning, feel its force, or believe it. As an effect of the refusal of the hard heart to let the seed penetrate into it, Satan comes and "catcheth away that which was sown in their hearts." (See Eph. ii. 2; 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.)

20. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it. 21. Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.
^fIsa. lviii. 2; Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32; John v. 35. ^aChap. xi. 6; 2 Tim. i. 15.

These, too, *hear the word*, and receive it with delight. It is not, however, a joy springing from the greatness of the benefit, even after all the counterbalancing costs and hazards are taken into account, but a joy arising from overlooking and leaving out of calculation those costs and hazards. Their convictions are mistaken for conversion, admiration of the preacher's eloquence for attachment to the Saviour (Ezek. xxxiii. 30-32), an appreciation of the moral beauties of the Gospel for an appreciation of its holiness, and the pleasures of emotion, or such gratification as taste enjoys in a beautiful discourse, for the pleasures of piety. *Not root in himself*, such as Peter had (John vi. 68), and the Hebrew Christians (Heb. x. 34), and Paul (2 Cor. iv. 17.)

But dureth for a while, &c. In this case Satan cannot merely come, and, as in the last, take the word out of the heart without further trouble; the word has found some place there, and it needs that he bring some trying, if not directly hostile, influence to bear upon it. Nor need this influence be as cruel as the persecution the saints of old endured. (Heb. xi. 37.) For experience shows that a sneer from some leading spirit in a literary society, or a laugh raised by a gay circle of pleasure-seekers in a fashionable drawing-room, or the rude jest of scoffing artisans in a workshop, may do as much as the faggot and the stake to make a fair but false disciple deny his Lord. *Offended*, ensnared and led into evil.

22. He also that receiveth seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

^fChap. xix. 23; Mark x. 23; Luke xviii. 24; 1 Tim. vi. 9; 2 Tim. iv. 10. ^sJer. iv. 3.

As principal antagonists to the efficacious working of the Divine word, Christ mentions *the care of this world*—care for our

present livelihood, the pressure of an earthly existence—the *deceitfulness of riches*, the pleasures which riches procure, the glittering side of this life, both with poor and rich, with those who are in quest of them, and those who already have them, because both look upon them as the highest good, and put their confidence in them. (See Gal. v. 6, 19–24; Eph. ii. 3; 2 Peter ii. 18; 1 John ii. 16.) It should be remembered, however, that *only where the seed and the thorns grew together*, was the mischief done. There is a place for cares, and for riches too—a place in which they help, and do not hinder the kingdom of God. Kept in its own sphere, the lawful business of life becomes a protecting fence around the tender plant of grace in a Christian's heart.

23. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it: which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty.

The fourth class of hearers *hear the word* willingly and with attention, and *understand* it, receive it in faith, obey it, and thus experience its power. The expression *good ground*, does not imply that any one's heart is naturally good, or even can become so without the grace of God. The *ground*, here, like the *tree* in another analogical lesson, is not good until it is *made* good. The fairest sense of this expression is, "an unprejudiced heart, willing to be taught," such as was peculiarly lacking among the Jews in our Lord's time, and such as the Bereans had. (Acts xvii. 9.) *Beareth fruit*. (Gal. v. 22; 1 Cor. xiii. 4–7.) If there be no fruit, there can be no Christianity. Fruit is the test of the tree, character the symbol of principle. *Some an hundred-fold*, &c. That some portions of the good ground produced a larger return than others, corresponds with what we see. There are diversities in the amount of energy exerted by believers as fellow-workers with God in their own sanctification, and diversities, accordingly, in the fruitfulness which results in the life of Christians. Jesus does not teach that either of the first three is fated to remain what he is. The first may become what the fourth is, as the fourth may have once been what the first is. "It has been noticed, also," says *Alford*, "that the first is

more the fault of careless, inattentive *childhood*, the second of ardent, shallow *youth*, the third of worldly, self-seeking *age*."

Observe, 1. This parable is addressed to *hearers* of the Gospel: those who *refuse to hear* are elsewhere in the Scriptures noticed and condemned. 2. The four classes of hearers described, include the whole mass of hearers. 3. As all assemblages of hearers may be resolved into four divisions, we have here decisive proof of our Lord's prescience. 4. It is a solemn thought that only in one out of the four classes of hearers, the seed brought forth fruit. 5. The minister's vocation is one involving much labor. 6. The Gospel is always fruitful seed in regard to its divine virtue, but not in regard to its actual effects. 7. The minister receives from Christ the seed which he sows, but it must also have become, through spiritual experience, his own possession. (Ps. cxvi. 10; 1 John i. 1–3.)

24. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

As the main design of the parable of the sower is to exhibit the kingdom in its relation to unbelieving men, most of whom, in various forms and with various measures of aggravation, ultimately reject it, the main design of *this* parable is, to exhibit the kingdom in its relation to the wicked one, who endeavors by cunning stratagem to destroy it. *A man which sowed*, &c.—a husbandman who took great pains to have a field sown with wheat of a superior quality.

25. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

Slept. Where there is supineness, and not due care and culture, errors and vices spring up in the mind, like weeds in a field neglected. We seldom see the origin of spiritual errors and corruptions till they have taken root and begun to cover the land. *Enemy came*, &c. Here is an allusion to the custom in Oriental countries, of some secret enemy trying to ruin the crop of him whom he hates, by intermingling with it noxious weeds. The question which has been asked in all ages and countries, How came moral evil into the world? still remains unanswered. We cannot, with our feeble intellect, fathom the counsels

of the Most High. It is enough for us to know, as we are told in the beginning of the Bible, that he who brought sin or moral evil into the world was the devil; so our Lord here confirms this by declaring that an "enemy" hath done this, the same inveterate, implacable enemy of the human race, who was the original author of all our calamities, and who at this moment is the prime mover and great master-spring of all the wickedness and all the misery that now overwhelm the world.

Tares—*Lolium temulentum*, or darnel, a kind of false wheat, in all respects so like the genuine wheat that even an experienced eye cannot distinguish the two plants till they are in ear: the distinction then is manifest, and every one may observe it. *Went his way*. How emphatic these words! He knew that he had only to sow the seed and let it alone. So Satan knows that the doctrine which he sows in the human heart will take deep and rapid root, and need but little culture. Besides, in this kind of work it is for his interest to be as little *seen* as possible!

26. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. 27. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

To guard against the annoyance above referred to, and many other injuries, the occupiers of land in the East keep a number of servants as scouts, who are distributed over the property, and whose business it is to be on the look out—the hope of the harvest chiefly depending on their fidelity and vigilance. The simultaneous report of these *servants*, testifying what each had observed in his own district, was a sad confirmation that the existence of the noxious weeds was not a slight or partial evil.

28. He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? 29. But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. 30. Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.—Chap. iii. 12.

An enemy, &c. (See on verse 25.) *Wilt thou then*, &c. The interest which these servants took in their master's property, is worthy of imitation by all from whom service to their superiors is due. *Nay*, &c. The tares were injurious to the wheat, but

not so much so, as the loosening of the roots occasioned by pulling up the tares. Here were two evils, one of which was to be endured for a season, lest the other and greater should take place. *Gather ye first the tares*. In the East, the immemorial custom in reaping has been, either to lop off the ears singly by the stalk, or to pluck up the grain by the root, and as, by either of these means, the ears are successively grasped by the hand of the reaper, it is easy to perceive how the tares would be separated. *Gather the wheat*, &c. Here comes out the love of Christ for His people, or rather the value He sets on them. *My barn*. It is a prepared place. Heaven is prepared for Christians, while, amid the storms and vicissitudes of life, they are preparing for it. O what a day will that be when *all* Christ's redeemed ones are gathered to Himself!

31. ¶ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, ¶ The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field. 32. Which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

¶ Isa. ii. 2, 3; Mi. iv. 1; Mark iv. 30; Luke xiii. 18, 19.

To animate His disciples, lest they should be discouraged at the small beginning of the Gospel, our Lord proceeds to foretell its great and glorious success. (See Ezek. xxvii. 22–24; Ps. lxxx. 8.) *Mustard seed*. The mustard-tree is known to the modern nations of Palestine by the name of "Khardal," or "Chardal." *Least of all seeds*, &c. Though the mustard-seed is one of the smallest of all seeds that are known to grow into a ligneous substance, it often produces, in Judea, a tree of considerable size; hence the aptness of this tree for the purpose of our Lord, inasmuch as the point presented by Him is not greatness in itself, but the greatness of the tree compared with the smallness of the seed from which it springs.

How small and insignificant, to outward sense, was the kingdom of heaven at its commencement!—a weak babe sleeping in the manger, the dying sufferer on the cross, fishermen and publicans his followers, and, besides the twelve, the whole multitude of disciples amounting to but one hundred and twenty. (Acts i. 15.) But a year after, the adherents of Christianity became more numerous. Roman emper-

ors and heathen philosophers, sometimes by force and sometimes by argument, tried to check its progress, but in vain; in a few hundred years the religion of the despised Nazarene—the religion which began in the upper chamber at Jerusalem—had overrun the civilized world. *So that the birds, &c.* Even though this clause may have been introduced to complete the image of a goodly tree, yet it is also to be recognized as a prophecy of the refuge and defense that should be for all men in the Church, how that multitudes should thither make their resort, finding their protection from worldly oppression as the satisfaction for all the needs and wants of their souls. (See Ezek. xvii. 23.)

33. ¶ Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.—Luke xiii. 20.

To the agricultural analogy just given, our Lord adds another, borrowed from domestic life and female industry, as if to leave no part of every-day experience unemployed in the elucidation and enforcement of religious truth. *That* parable exhibits the kingdom in its own independent existence, inherent life, and irresistible power; *this one* exhibits it in contact with the world, gradually overcoming and assimilating and absorbing that world into itself. *A woman.* In the Scriptures the Holy Spirit is frequently referred to in such terms as these: "As a mother comforteth her son, so will I comfort you." "Born of the Spirit." *Three measures of meal.* A measure was the third part of an ephah, and these three were the usual quantity for a baking. (Gen. xviii. 6; Judges vi. 19; 1 Sam. i. 24.) *Till the whole was leavened.* There are some who see in the three measures the constituent parts of our compound being, soul, body and spirit. But it is more than probable that our Lord had not in His mind any of the various allegorical meanings which have been attached to these words. (See on Luke xiii. 21.)

The following points are noticeable in the parable: 1. As "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," so our holy religion had but a small beginning in the world, and has also in the human heart. 2. As this leaven was a foreign importation, so Christianity was not of an earthly origin,

and divine grace is something introduced into the soul from without. 3. As leaven is of an assimilative nature, so the Gospel transforms society into the likeness of itself, and divine grace makes the subject of it a new creature. 4. The Gospel, like leaven, is diffusive in the world and in the individual heart. 5. The Gospel, and divine grace, like leaven, work silently, gradually and outwardly; beginning in the centre, they reach an external development. 6. The Gospel and Divine grace, like the leaven, are destined to work on until their saving power reaches the full completion of its design—until the whole mass is leavened. Their triumph is sure. "The earth shall be covered with the knowledge of the glory of God, even as the waters cover the sea." "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

34. All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: 35. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."

¶ Ps. lvi. 2. —Rom. xvi. 25, 26; 1 Cor. ii. 7; Eph. iii. 9; Col. i. 26.

All these things spake Jesus, i. e., on this occasion, refraining not only from all naked discourse, but even from all interpretation of these parables to the mixed multitude. *Spoken by the prophet.* (Ps. lxxviii.) The Psalms are classed with the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. This Psalm is ascribed to Asaph. As its author proposed to recount God's former dealings with His people not in a plain, prosaic style of declaration, but under the cover of poetical expression, which to some minds has a measure of obscurity as well as of interest, so the Saviour veiled his instructions under the cover of parables. *Kept secret,* or unrevealed of God. *From the foundation, &c.,* that is, from the beginning of the world, from the first creation of man.

36. ¶ Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. 37. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man. 38. ¶ The field is the world, the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one: 39. The enemy that sowed them is the devil: the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. 40. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. 41. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity: 42. And shall cast them into

a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. 'Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

¹Chap. xxiv. 14, xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15, 20; Luke xxiv. 47; Rom. x. 18; Col. i. 6. ²Gen. iii. 13; John viii. 41; Acts xiii. 10; 1 John iii. 8. ³Joel iii. 13; Rev. xiv. 15. ⁴Chap. xviii. 7; 2 Peter i. 2. ⁵Chap. iii. 12; Rev. xix. 20, and xx. 10. ⁶Chap. viii. 12, verse 50. ⁷Dan. xii. 3; 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 53. ⁸Verse 8.

After dismissing His sea-shore congregation, our Lord returned to His usual residence in Capernaum. *Declare, explain to us. Son of man*, the most frequent title by which our Lord designates Himself. It is here evident that though the parable refers generally to the contest ever existing in the world between good and evil, holiness and sin, light and darkness, yet it has special reference to those manifestations of it which have taken place since the Divine power of Jesus Christ began to be displayed in the kingdom founded by Him. (See on verse 39.)

The field is the world. That the Church is not here meant is manifest, because, 1. Then there should be absolutely no discipline; no man should be shut out from communion, however heretical his opinions or vicious his practice might be. 2. Our Lord here uses the word *world*, not in a parable, but in the *explanation* of a parable, so that we have here His own definition of the *field*. 3. In Christ's commission to His servants, He uses the same word as here, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel unto every creature." *The good seed, &c.* Here we see truths incorporated and embodied in living and responsible men. (See Hos. ii. 23; Zech. x. 9.) Christ places His beloved ones in the world, spreads them over it, as the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world." *The wicked one, i. e., the devil.* Some people deny the existence of the devil, but the Lord Jesus Christ has no doubt on that point. The children of the wicked one and the children of the kingdom live together in the world, eat of the same bread, breathe the same air, and look upon the same light. *The devil.* (See on chap. iv. 1.)

The harvest is the end of the world. To the question which often presses upon thoughtful minds, Why are the wicked permitted to live? it may be replied, 1. If sinners were immediately punished, this world would not be a state of probation; obedi-

ence would not be voluntary, but forced. 2. If the wrath of God instantly crushed every transgressor, He would be the destroyer rather than the governor of the world. 3. Mankind are so variously and intimately blended together, that it is scarcely possible to strike an individual only without affecting others. God would rather spare a thousand enemies than injure one friend. 4. The goodness of God is to be acknowledged in this dispensation. He "is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

And the reapers are the angels. See verses 41, 49, where the ministry of angels at the day of judgment is more particularly referred to; also chap. xxv. 31; Mark viii. 38; 2 Thess. i. 7; Rev. xiv. 19. The lot of the tares is to be gathered into bundles (verse 30) and consumed with fire. (See Heb. vi. 8.) *All things that offend*, literally, *all the stumbling blocks*, which are causes of offense and falling away from the truth, *and them which do iniquity*—evil persons. We have a proof of our Lord's prescience in the assumption that both wheat and tares should continue until the end of the world. *A furnace of fire.* The woe of hell is here described by death by fire, that most fearful of all forms of punishment, which was in use among the Chaldeans. (Jer. xxix. 22; Dan. iii. 6.) *Wailing and gnashing of teeth* are expressive of rage and impatience (Acts vii. 54), under the sense of intolerable pain and unutterable loss. Evil associates will increase each other's misery in the world of woe.

Righteous—those who possess God's favor. *Shine forth, &c.* (Dan. xii. 3.) This denotes their glory and blessedness, increased through the far-extending, benignant, blessed and happy influence which they exercise upon others. *The kingdom of their Father.* God is the Father of the righteous, they are His children, an intimate, blessed society. (John xvii. 23.) When comparing the glory of the righteous to the sun, our Lord is not to be understood as affirming its uniform equality, for as here He distributes in various degrees His gifts among the faithful, so also will He crown them with glory on the last day. *Who hath ears, &c.* (See on verse 9.)

44. ¶ Again, The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.
Phil. iii. 7, 8. Isa. lvi. 1; Rev. iii. 13.

The kingdom of heaven is not merely a general, it is also an individual, thing. Each man must have it for himself, and make it his own by a distinct act of his own will. *Treasure*. As men are naturally worldly in their tastes and associations, Christ here addresses them through such a medium. *Hid in a field*. The allusion is to the custom in old and Eastern countries, where there were no banks, and the state of society was unsettled and insecure, of depositing money and other valuables in the earth, which, long after, the owner having died or moved away, some one plowing or digging in the field might find. (Job iii. 21; Prov. ii. 4; Jer. xli. 18.) What a treasure is the Gospel! The tongue of an angel could not describe its value and preciousness. It meets and relieves every want of the soul, blesses us with all spiritual blessings, profits in the day of wrath, delivers from death, and ennobles in the world to come. (See Ps. xix. 10; exix. 72, 127; Prov. viii. 10, 11, 19; Col. ii. 3.) This precious treasure is deposited in the Word of God.

Hath found, i. e., has begun to perceive the hidden mystery of the knowledge of Christ. No *seeking* is here presupposed, though, properly, all acting and striving on the part of man is a seeking after a treasure, after well-being, repose, peace. Though there is nothing casual in the salvation of a sinner, as to God, yet to *himself* the event may be wholly unlooked for. He is sometimes found of those that sought Him not (Isa. lxxv. 1), as in the case of Matthew, the Samaritan woman, and Saul in his journey of iniquity. *He hideth*, as the only way in which he could secure possession of it. The true Christian will make known the treasure to others, as Andrew did to Simon. (John i. 40, 41.) If he hide it, it will not be lest another should find it, but lest he himself should lose it. The man acts promptly and earnestly.

For joy thereof. Whatever there may have been of sacrifice before, there is now no more; self-denial is no longer painful, it is joy and bliss; what no external vio-

lence could have torn from the heart, the love of the world, fleshly wisdom, self-righteousness—all is abandoned. (Phil. iii. 4-11; Luke x. 42; Acts v. 40, 41.) *Buyeth that field*. We can offer no equivalent for salvation, nor is this the meaning of the words. In *this* way, were we to buy it, it would not be "without money and without price." The treasure in the field of the Word is *already a bought* salvation. The meaning is simply *exchange*, as in buying we part with something to gain something, hereby showing our estimation; for what stronger proof can we give of our valuation of an object, than parting with all we have for the sake of it.

45. ¶ Again, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls: 46. Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

Prov. ii. 4, iii. 14, 15, and viii. 10, 19.

A merchantman. A lucrative branch of commerce carried on among the ancients was the search and the sale of pearls. This man was *seeking*—seeking, too, *goodly pearls*—pearls of value. Thus he represents, not the man who is living for sensual objects, such as pleasure, the acquisition of money, or distinction, but the man who is awakened to a sense of his destitution, and has begun to seek the true happiness, which he knows must exist somewhere for him, endeavoring to add attainment to attainment, sincerely, according to his light, and perhaps imagining that he shall find satisfaction in knowledge, science and accomplishments. His conscience is uneasy. He does not, perhaps, yet know that the object of his search is but *one*, for he is seeking *many* goodly pearls, but this will be revealed to him in due time. Such men, perhaps, were Simeon (Luke ii.), and Nathaniel (John i. 45.)

One pearl of great price. The vast sums which the wealthy and luxurious of that age gave for pearls of a superior size and the finest lustre, almost exceed belief. Julius Cæsar presented Servilia, the mother of Brutus, with one which cost L.48,457. The celebrated pearl ear-rings of Cleopatra were valued each at L.161,458. Clodius possessed one of nearly equal value. Lollia Paullina, a celebrated beauty, in the reign of Tiberius, wore two pearls of such an immense cost that the historian describes her as carrying a whole estate on her ears.

The king of Persia has a pear-shaped pearl so large and pure that it has been valued at L.100,000. The largest round pearl that has been known, belongs to the Great Mogul, and is about two-thirds of an inch in diameter.

Went and sold. The pearl seems to have been to the man an unexpected and surprising discovery, but when it was found, he went home and converted all his property, including the pearls previously purchased, into money, and bought it, and found it in measure far surpassing all his expectations. So, when the awakened soul comes to perceive the unparalleled, inconceivable riches of God's mercy in Christ, it gives up all to obtain it; the resolution is instantly taken, the transaction is irrevocably closed, and it finds in this *one* thing all it desires. (Luke x. 41, 42.) As in the *last* parable we have the believer hiding the precious Word with Christ in it within his heart, so in *this* one we have the believer setting forth the preciousness and glory of Christ before men, wearing this "pearl of great price" as his unspeakably costly ornament, and so "adorning the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things."

47. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: 48. Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. 49. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just: 50. And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.—Chap. xxii. 10. *Chap. xxv. 32. †Verse 42.

Two points of difference are manifest between this parable and that of the tares, which it somewhat resembles. *There*, the ungodliness of profession will be *seen* to be mingled more or less with the reality of true godliness until the end comes; *here*, the end will show *what* the net is gathering, but as it is dragged along it is *under* the water, and so out of view. *There*, we see the representation of the *vital* power of the Word in "the children of the kingdom;" *here*, we behold the *judicial* power of the Word in retaining its hold on every one with whom it is brought into contact, unto the judgment of the great day.

A net. The drag-net, here meant, is shot in a semicircular form into the sea. One side is kept close to the bottom by weights, and the other side drawn toward the surface by corks or bladders. When it is

drawn, both ends are slowly and steadily brought toward the land. *The sea* represents our world, with its restlessness, mutableness, storms, perils, its numerous and various population, and all these feeling at home in it. The casting of the net into *the sea*, and not into a single stream, as hitherto, exhibits the Gospel as mercifully designed for the race of mankind in its *universality*; none so *deep* that it does not descend to them; none so *high* that it does not reach them; none so *bad* that they are cast out, and none so *good* that they are passed by. It is not enough that the Gospel exist, it must be *preached*.

Which, when it was full. The Gospel cannot be preached in vain. Those who live in a Gospel land are necessarily embraced in the net. Whether they wish to be so or not, an invisible, all-embracing ministry is stretched over them, drawing them, generation after generation, gradually, secretly, surely, toward the boundary of this life, and over it into another, so that in this sense the net *gathers of every kind*, though this phrase means also men of every rank, class, nation, color. *So shall it be, &c.* As the fisherman, after hauling the net to the shore, separated the *bad*, i. e., the decayed, and hence useless, from the *good*, so at the judgment, which is the end of the world, *the angels shall come forth* and make a permanent separation between the righteous and the wicked, showing, as they do so, that the Gospel must be either "a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death." (On verses 49, 50; see on verses 41-3.)

51. Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. 52. Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe *which* is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure *things* new and old.—Cant. vii. 13.

Unto them—to the Twelve, He had spoken the first *four* parables in the hearing of the mixed multitude; the last *three* He reserved till He and the Twelve were alone. (Verse 36, &c.) The disciples having declared that they understood the parables, our Lord reminded them of the *use* they should make of the things they had learned; they should store them up in their minds, that they might have them ready upon every occasion, even as a master of a family provides all things necessary for different circumstances, and produces

them when wanted. The teachers among the Jews were called Scribes. The disciples were to become teachers, and would need a great store of truths for the instruction of others. Some of these truths might be called *new*, because not known to them before, and some *old*, because already familiar to their minds.

53. ¶ And it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

Departed thence—left Capernaum.

54. *And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, inasmuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this *man* this wisdom, and these mighty works? 55. *Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, *James, and *Joses, and *Simon, and *Judas? 56. And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this *man* all these things?

*Chap. ii. 23; Mark vi. 1; Luke iv. 16, 23. *Isa. xlix. 7; Mark vi. 3; Luke iii. 23; John vi. 42. *Chap. xii. 46. *Mark xv. 40.

His own country, i. e., Nazareth, the town of His childhood and youth. *He taught them in their synagogue*, or recognized place of worship. Though they had formerly maltreated Him, time had calmed their rage, and He was now suffered to teach without molestation. *Whence hath this man, &c.*, referring to the clearness, depth and wonderful power of His discourse. *Mighty works*, literally, *these powers*. Jesus had before told them from whence. (Luke iv. 18.)

Is not this, &c. All these inquiries, evidently expressive of contempt and unbelief, were no less absurd. The things which they implied were no arguments at all against Jesus, for a man's doctrine is not to be judged by his genealogy, but by the grounds which He adduces in order to establish it. *Brethren . . . sisters*. Are not their names all familiar to us, as members of a family in low and humble condition? From what source, then, we repeat, hath this vile impostor these marvelous powers, unless from the Satanic agency attribut-

ed to him by our scribes and religious teachers?

57. And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, *A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. 58. And he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

*Chap. xi. 6; Mark vi. 3, 4. *Luke iv. 21; John iv. 44. *Mark vi. 5, 6.

Offended in him. The inhabitants, by reason of the low state of the family of Jesus, and through ill-will from various causes, stumbled in respect to Him, and were induced to reject His claim to be the Messiah. *Not without honour, &c.* This is stated as a matter of general experience—as wide as life. Strangers judge of a minister only by his public acts or his official conduct, while his friends and neighbors have their minds so occupied with minor matters, such as the follies of their childhood and youth, and their education, that the greater are obscured to their vision. Then, again, it is one of the evil propensities of our nature, that envy arises from seeing former equals outstrip us. This is especially characteristic of coarser natures like the men of Nazareth.

He did not many mighty works there. He knew that His miracles would be disregarded and condemned by anticipation; and, besides, it is probable that the people did not afford Him an opportunity of performing miracles of power and mercy, such as alone lay within the bounds of our Lord's mission; hence, though He did *some* mighty works (Mark v. 5), He did not waste His divine power by doing *many*. *Unbelief*. Behold in this single word the secret of the everlasting ruin of multitudes of souls! They perish forever, because they *will* not believe. There is nothing beside, in earth or heaven, that prevents their salvation. (John v. 40.)

1. What is the first parable recorded in this chapter? 2. Who is the sower? 3. What is the seed? 4. How many kinds of soil are mentioned? 5. What classes of persons do they represent? 6. Explain verse 12. 7. What is meant in verses 16 and 17? 8. What things are we to observe concerning the parable of the sower? 9. What is meant by the "tares?" 10. Explain the parable of the grain of mustard seed. 11. Who are "the children of the kingdom?" 12. Who, "the children of the wicked one?" 13. What is to be done with the tares? 14. What is the destiny of "the righteous?" 15. What is the next parable? 16. Explain it. 17. Who is the "merchant-man?" 18. What is the "pearl?" 19. What is the "net?" 20. What, the "sea?" 21. What is said of the scribe, instructed unto the kingdom, &c.

CHAPTER XIV.

¹ *Herod's opinion of Christ.* ³ *Wherefore John Baptist was beheaded.* ¹³ *Jesus departeth into a desert place: 15 where he teacheth five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes: 22 he walketh on the sea to his disciples: 34 and landing at Genesareth, healeth the sick by the touch of the hem of his garment.*

AT that time, Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus.—Mark vi. 14; ix. 7.

Herod. This was Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great and of Malthace, a Samaritan. *Tetrarch* originally meant a ruler of a fourth part, of a kingdom, for instance, but came to be applied as occasion required, like any other general name of office. Herod Antipas was tetrarch of Galilee and Perea.

² And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist: he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him. ³ For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. ⁴ For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. ⁵ And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

^aMark vi. 17; Luke iii. 19, 20. ^cLev. xviii. 16; xx. 21. ^bChap. xxi. 26; Luke xx. 6.

It immediately occurred to Herod that he had not long before most cruelly and wantonly murdered John the Baptist, an innocent, virtuous, holy and faithful man, and now he imagined that Jesus, whose fame was spreading, was the Baptist risen from the dead. A most striking instance of the force of conscience over a guilty mind. *For Herodias' sake.* Herod was living with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. He sent for John, expecting him to sanction his course, but the Baptist rebuked the adultery, and was cast into prison, which, as Josephus tells us, was the strong fortress of Macherus, in Perea, east of the Jordan. *It is not lawful, &c.* Thus plainly and boldly answered John, with a full knowledge of the danger he incurred in so doing. Noble example of fearless fidelity in proclaiming the truth! *When he would, &c.* Two considerations restrained Herod from putting John immediately to death: 1. From the Baptist's popularity, he was apprehensive that any violence offered to him might occasion a general insurrection against his government. 2. He himself regarded John with respect and veneration for his purity of character and the very courage with which he had condemned his licentious conduct.

(Mark vi. 20.) Hence he only cast him at present into the prison.

⁶ But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. ⁷ Whereupon he promised with an oath, to give her whatsoever she would ask. ⁸ And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger. ⁹ And the king was sorry: nevertheless, for the oath's sake, and them that sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. ¹⁰ And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. ¹¹ And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother. ¹² And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

^{c2} Chron. xxii. 2, 3; Mark vi. 24. ^dDan. vi. 14, 16. ^{e2} Chron. xxvi. 16; John ii. 30; Rev. xi. 7.

Daughter of Herodias—by her former husband. Herod was pleased, not only with her graceful movements, but at this evidence of her and her mother's desire to contribute to the entertainment of himself and his guests. "A sedate and devout Christian," says one, "leaves dancing to goats, calves and children, and orders his steps according to the Word of God, and not the directions of the dancing master." *Promised with an oath, &c.* A very inflated and braggart promise, from one who was only governor of two provinces of Judea, and which he held as the vassal of the Roman emperor! How inconceivably foolish, rash, and mad, such an oath, on such an occasion! *Instructed of her mother,* more strictly, being wrought upon, instigated, and impelled by her mother. There is nothing so bad or devilish which an adulterous and shameless woman would not undertake and perform. (Prov. xxiii. 27, 28.)

Was sorry. The savage request of Salome appalled even the unfeeling heart of Herod himself. But, absurdly conceiving himself bound by his oath, and afraid lest he should be reproached by those around him with having broken his promise, thus exhibiting the sort of faith which the duellist or gambler does, he preferred the real guilt of murder to the false imputation of perjury, and granted the request. Then, without even the form of a trial, and privately, and in prison, the faithful reprover was slain; and his head, the veins bleeding, the hair clotted with gore, the eyes all wan and half open, was brought in a large dish, and given as a dutiful present from a guilty daughter to an adulterous and murderous mother, who (as Josephus

tells us) stuck the tongue full of needles! Blessed martyr! Dark and cheerless was the end reserved for thee, but now thou hast thy Master's benediction—"Blessed is he whosoever is not offended in me" (Matt. xi. 6), and hast found the life thou gavest away. (Matt. x. 39.)

An historian tells us that Anetas commenced a war upon Herod, to avenge the insult of his daughter, and, in an engagement with Herod's army, defeated it with great slaughter. Afterward Herod and Herodias were banished by the Roman emperor to Lyons, in France, where they passed the remainder of their lives in disgrace. Another historian says that Salome met with a violent and untimely death. But though bold offenses are sometimes overtaken with punishment in this life, it is not always so, and this very fact is one of the things which prove a day of judgment. The wicked shall not go unpunished. The world shall yet know that there is a God that judgeth the earth. The blood of John the Baptist, and James the Apostle, and Stephen—the blood of Polycarp, and Huss, and Ridley, and Latimer, shall yet be requited. (Isa. xxvi. 21; Eccl. vi. 8.)

took up the body, &c. The disciples of the martyred prophet were permitted to enjoy the melancholy satisfaction of burying the mangled corpse. Whether the head was returned for interment, or whether the ladies kept it for further entertainment and insult, we know not; doubtless the disciples obtained it if they could. With bursting hearts these bereaved disciples *went and told* Jesus of their trouble. He could have explained the dark, perplexing event. He knew that John was taken away from the evil to come, and was spared the sight of His own ignominious death. But we do not know what He said to comfort these mourners. Yet we may be assured that He who "wept" by the grave of His friend Lazarus was not likely to receive such intelligence without deep emotion. None can sympathize with the sorrowful as the Son of God can. He came "to comfort all that mourn."

13. ¶ When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities. Chap. x. 23; xii. 15; Mark vi. 32; Luke ix. 10; John vi. 1, 2.

Jesus had heard that John was put to death, and most probably, also, that Herod thought that He was John risen from the dead, and desired to see Him. He, however, wished to avoid the court of Herod, and the snares of the tyrant, and even the more populous parts of the country, lest the people, enraged at the murder of John, and prone to sedition, might rise into actual rebellion, and He incur the blame.

Departed thence by ship. A comparison of this passage with John vi. 1, shows that Jesus retired to the eastern shore of Lake Tiberias, *i. e.*, the Sea of Galilee. From Luke also (ix. 10) we learn more particularly that He went to the vicinity of Bethsaida. There was a town of this name (also named Julias) on the east of the sea, as well as one on the west. *Into a desert place,* a thinly-settled place. When the crowd were aware of Christ's withdrawal, they flocked after Him.

14. And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them; and he healed their sick.—Chap. ix. 36; Mark vi. 34.

Uninvited as this intrusion of the multitude on the privacy of our Lord and His Apostles seems to have been, it elicited no rebuff from Him. On the contrary, He whose meat it was by day, and sleep by night, to do good, embraced the opportunity for bestowing upon their souls instruction (Luke ix. 11), and upon their bodies health and healing, thus teaching us by example that no occasion for a good work should be unacceptable to us, and that spiritual alms should be mixed with bodily relief.

15. ¶ And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past, send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals. Mark vi. 35; Luke ix. 12; John vi. 5.

The miracle, the record of which properly begins here, is one of the few which are recorded by all the Evangelists. They narrate it with that variety of manner, yet agreement in fact, that evinces independence of relation, with common truth at bottom. The suggestion of the disciples, that the crowd should be sent to the neighboring hamlets to seek the refreshment they required, as well as their inquiry (Mark vi. 37), show that the people had not brought provisions with them.

16. But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat. 17. And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

When Jesus, in order to try them, and awaken their attention to what was to follow, commanded the disciples to furnish the multitude with food, in ignorance of their Master's will, they alleged their inability to comply with His order, in view of the scantiness of their supply of food.

18. He said, Bring them hither to me.

These loaves, which were of barley, were the kind of bread then and still eaten by the poor of Palestine. With this small stock of homeliest fare, the Lord undertakes to feed all the multitude—*about five thousand men, besides women and children* (verse 21), a whole number, probably, not far from ten thousand persons! It was proper the loaves and fishes should be placed before Jesus, that His creative power might be definitely exerted, and its effects more fully seen by the multitude.

19. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, ^bhe blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to *his* disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.—^cChap. xv. 36.

Our Lord, through his disciples (Luke ix. 14), caused the crowd to recline on the "green grass," at that season of the year a delightful resting place, and which both by Mark and John is noted to have abounded in the place.

What a scene was then presented! The ranks of guests rising in lines on the ascending slopes—their canopy the evening sky—their table, the green earth. There stands the master of the feast, majesty and benevolence beaming in His countenance, as He looks around on the gathered throng. By His side stand the disciples, with their eyes directed to Him, awaiting His command. He takes the scanty and humble provision into His hand before them all, probably elevating it in the sight of the people, and having blessed and broken it, He delivered it to the disciples, who in their turn distribute it to the different tables, if such they might be called, the marvelous multiplication taking place, so that all were satisfied.

Thus, that which the disciples thought an impossibility, became a palpable fact—they fed the thousands with the few loaves and fishes. What does this teach us? That to use what we have is the way to

get more. The man who will make good use of the little religious light he has, is sure to get more. We are not told how the food was multiplied on this occasion. As it is not possible for us to realize to ourselves any act of creation, it was wisdom in the sacred narrator of this miracle to leave the description of the indescribable unattempted. Wonderful as this miracle was, the same power that was seen in it, is displayed every day—in the seed of the corn that shoots into the stalk, the blade, and the ear, and in the acorn developing itself into the gigantic and overshadowing oak. But we are so accustomed to these things that we call them natural occurrences, and only when the same result is achieved by a more rapid, or more startling process, do we call it a miracle.

20. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

^bEx. xvi. 8, 12 • 1 Kings xvii. 12, 16; 2 Kings iv. 43, 44; Prov. xlii. 25.

All, though in a state of extreme hunger, were fully satisfied. None of our Lord's miracles were better attested than this. Five or more thousand witnesses could not be deceived. It was done openly. The want of food, and the impossibility of obtaining secret supplies without detection, were known to all the people. Their senses convinced them that the miracle was real, they *saw* the small provision enlarged, they *heard* the blessing given, they *felt* the food in their hands, they *tasted* it, and were satisfied that what they received was real fish and bread. In after days, the disciples, in proclaiming Jesus as able by his death to save the souls of all believers, would remember with joy this wonderful occasion. The Greek word translated *baskets* means a wicker basket, such as the Jews were remarkable for taking on a journey to carry, it is said, both their provisions and hay to sleep on, that they might not have to depend on Gentiles, and so run the risk of ceremonial pollution. It was just in such a basket that Paul was let down from the wall. (Acts ix. 25.) The *fragments that remained* were a greater quantity than the original provision.

In the increase of the loaves and fishes, notwithstanding the large distribution, we have an apt symbol of that love which exhausts not by loving, but really grows after

all its outgoings on others, and of the multiplying which there ever is in a true dispensing. (2 Kings iv. 1; Prov. ix. 24.) By feeding the hungry we shall often enrich ourselves, for God will bless our earthly substance. How much more will the humble Sabbath-school teacher and the devoted missionary find that the Christian receives in the ratio in which he gives, so that the greatest giver is always the greatest receiver!

21. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Five thousand is doubtless here used for a round number, but was exact enough for all practical purposes. (See on verses 18 and 20.)

22. ¶ And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

Constrained—urged, induced. *Into a ship*, the boat in which they had come to the east side of the sea. *Unto the other side, i. e., of the sea of Galilee, "toward Capernaum"* (John vi. 17), to Bethsaida, not the town of that name on the north-east coast, but the city of Andrew and Peter, near Capernaum.

23. ¶ And when he had sent the multitude away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

¶ Mark vi. 46. ¶ John vi. 16.

A *mountain*, literally, *the mountain*, a part of that range by which the lake of Genesareth is encircled. "To conceive of Jesus as praying only, or chiefly, to set us an example, misses the great truth that prayer, as communion with the Infinite Spirit, is felt even by a sinless being to be the normal state of the soul. Neither secret communion with God nor vigorous out-door work should be neglected. Let him who desires to be always in society, consider how different is his choice from that of Jesus. Solitude is needful to prevent the bad effects of necessary intercourse with the world. He who, like Isaac, meditates alone, will soon, like Isaac, find a friend to whom he can be joined in heart—the marriage of spirit with spirit; Christ the husband, himself the bride. Solitude may be the hot-house of sin. One may go into the mountain to pray, but take the multitude with him." Beautiful thought! while we are toiling with the storms of life, Jesus, on the mount of glory is interceding

for us. *When the evening was come*. In verse 15, *the evening* was mentioned, before the people were miraculously fed. The Jews reckoned two evenings, one from three o'clock until sunset, the other from sunset till dark. The Evangelist here refers to the *second* evening. *He was there alone*—none to interfere with the season of devotion which He sought. Private prayer was our Lord's usual practice. Our active engagements in ministering blessings to others should not prevent our private communion with God.

24. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.—¹Isa. liv. 11.

Midst of the sea. John says (vi. 19) *five-and-twenty, or thirty furlongs*, about four miles. *Wind was contrary*. The gale was not only one of extreme violence, but directly against their course, so that they made slow progress. (See John vi. 18; Mark vi. 48.) How sudden are the transitions in human experience, from sunshine to storm, and from storm to sunshine! A few hours before, the disciples had been dealing out the miraculous stores to the joyous groups on the green grass, the Great Shepherd of Israel Himself tending them with loving interest; but now the sky is clouded, the Shepherd has left, and the sheep, under a clouded sky, are scattered like broken reeds in the trough of the sea! Let us not calculate too fondly or confidently on the permanency of any earthly good.

25. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

Fourth watch, i. e., between three and six o'clock in the morning. Jesus went to them. Mark says (vi. 48) that "he saw them toiling and rowing." (Ps. xxxiv. 15; ciii. 13.) *Walking on the sea*. Those angry waves that tossed the ship of His disciples to and fro, obey the Son of God, and become a solid floor under His feet. That liquid surface, which was agitated by the least breath of wind, bears up the feet of our Redeemer like a rock.

26. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

¶ Job ix. 8; Ps. xciii. 3, 4; civ. 3; Rev. x. 2, 5, 8.

How great the contrast—the heaving waters, the perturbed disciples, and the calm, majestic tranquility of the Great Lord! Jesus would appear to them first

like a dark, moving speck upon the waters, then as a human figure; but in the dark, tempestuous sky, and not dreaming that it could be their Lord, they take it for a spirit, and are seized with great fear. Herein the weakness of their faith is indicated. Had not Christ *constrained* them to enter into the ship, and were they not in the path of duty? How, then, should any evil befall them? It is a great comfort to *us* when we can feel sure that we are doing the will of God, for whatever trouble may threaten us, we can trust Jesus to bring relief in the storm.

27. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid.—Acts xxiii. 11.

Be of good cheer, &c. It is I, your Lord and Master, I who have often before spoken peace in your hours of trouble, I who but a few hours ago had compassion on the multitude, think you I will not much rather have compassion on *you*, my own sheep, who “follow me, and know my voice?” The expression, *It is I*, what was it but the voice which cried of old in the ears of Israel, even from the days of Moses, “I am,” “I, even I, am He?” Jesus will not *always* deny His people the sensible comforts of His grace and presence; generally in the darkest hour of their trial, when least expected, He reveals Himself. (Isa. xli. 10, 34, xliii. 1, 2.)

28. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

If it be thou, &c. This may mean that he wished a confirmation of the real presence of Christ by another miracle, or perhaps we may give it in this sense, *since or inasmuch as it is thou*, and then the general sentiment would be, *inasmuch as it is thou*, I am so relieved of fear, that I am willing at Thy command to step forth from the ship, and come to Thee upon the water. It is more than probable, however, that Peter had more ardor than his faith would justify. His faith was mixed with vain glory. There was a measure of presumption in it. His mind was not resting solely on Christ, he partly gloried in himself. Of course the Lord will select *me* to be the hero. It is those who feel their unfitness to occupy important stations, who are strengthened when exalted to them. Let us not rashly ask Jesus to bid us come

unto Him on the *water*, but ask Him rather to come unto *us* in the *ship*.

29. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

Come. Our Lord did not quite say *come to me*, but *come*, and Peter did *come*, but not quite to Jesus. Jesus came to him. *He walked on the water*—so that Peter actually performed the miracle.

30. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

The wind was as boisterous before, but Peter “*saw*” it not, seeing only the power of Christ, in the lively exercise of faith. Now he *sees* the fury of the elements, and immediately the power of Christ to bear him up fades before his view, and this makes him *afraid*, as how could he be otherwise without any *felt* power to keep him up? He then *begins to sink*, and finally, conscious that his experiment has failed, he casts himself, in a sort of desperate confidence upon his *Lord* for deliverance. Peter looked at the waves and listened to the wind, instead of looking to the Lord. If we look at the trial, and not at Him who sends it, we may well be alarmed.

31. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

Mark iv. 40; xvi. 14; Luke xxiv. 25.

And caught him. This shows that Peter was not far from his Master when his faith failed him and he began to sink. Thus the soul of the believer often faints through doubt and distrust, even when within reach of an Almighty Saviour upon whom to recline. *O thou of little faith, &c.* Jesus did not find fault with him for *coming*, but for *doubting*. It was not that he trusted his Master too much, but too little. On various occasions Jesus showed the importance of a persevering confidence in His power. When He stretches forth His hand, and shows us His salvation, He makes us wonder that we could have doubted His power and grace at all.

32. And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

Now were literally fulfilled the words of the Psalmist, “He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.” (Ps. cvii. 29.) As it was with this ship so shall it be with the Church of God, which

has been, and is yet to be, environed with storms. Jesus has not left the foundering vessel to reel and plunge amid those moral tempests that are to close the great drama of time! No!—"in the fourth watch of the night"—when the darkness is thickest and the billows highest, "He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." Just as the new creation is about to put on its full robe of morning light, He will hush every billow, and mooring His vessel on the heavenly shore, take His storm-tossed Church to be *forever with its Lord*.

33. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, *Of a truth thou art the Son of God.* ^{Ps. ii. 7; chap. xvi. 16, xxvi. 63; Mark i. 1; Luke iv. 41; John i. 49, vi. 69, xi. 27; Acts viii. 37; Rom. i. 4.}

There was something in *Christ's* walking on the sea and stilling the tempest, so indicative of divine majesty and power, that it caused them to lose sight of that equally wondrous miracle of the loaves and fishes, wrought but a few hours previous. (See Mark vi. 52.) *Worshipped him*. Reverently bowing and making the following confession: *Of a truth thou art the Son of God*. Not merely the Messiah in the ordinary sense, but with special reference to His Divine character as revealed in the New Testament. The words are equivalent to the memorable confession made soon after, "thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Chap. xvi. 16; see Ps. lxxxix. 25.)

34. ¶ And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret. 35. And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased: 36. And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and was many as touched were made perfectly whole.

¹Mark vi. 53. ²Chap. ix. 20; Mark iii. 10; Luke vi. 19; Acts xix. 12.

The district of Gennesaret extended along the west side of the lake, to which it gave its name, nearly four miles, and was in breadth, upon an average, about two miles and a half. It is supposed to have been the same as Chinnereth, or Cinnereth, in the Old Testament. (See Num. xxxiv. 11.) It is likely that our Lord landed not far from Capernaum, which some think was situated in the land of Gennesaret, for He very soon went to that city. (John vi. 24, 59.)

As the inhabitants had previous knowledge of Jesus, they flocked to Him with their sick, only desiring leave to touch the *hem*, or *fringe* of His garment, and this being done, they were all immediately and perfectly healed. The healing virtue, however, lay not in their finger, but in their faith, or rather in Christ, whom their faith apprehended. "I feel," says *Chalmers*, "as if a great lesson hung on the efficacy of a touch, though it was only on the hem of the Saviour's garment. I feel as if it corresponded to faith in His name, when the power of conception was dull and feeble—so that we could frame no apprehension of His person. When I labor under the want of a lively manifestation, let the sound of His name uphold my confidence and be as ointment poured forth. But, O my God, that this confidence might continue undisturbed, do Thou cleanse my heart of all regard for iniquity!"

1. What is said of Herod the tetrarch? 2. Why was John imprisoned? 3. What of Salome? 4. What became of Herod, Herodias and Salome? 5. What course did the disciples pursue in relation to John's body? 6. What miracle is here recorded? 7. Mention the particulars of it. 8. What lessons does it teach? 9. How did Jesus approach the disciples on the sea? 10. How were they affected by the sight of Him? 11. What did our Lord say to them? 12. What did Peter say and do? 13. What took place in "the land of Gennesaret?"

CHAPTER XV.

³ Christ reproveth the scribes and Pharisees for transgressing God's commandment through their own traditions: *Teacheth how that which goeth into the mouth doth not defile a man.* ²¹ *He heareth the daughter of the woman of Canaan,* ³⁰ *and other great multitudes:* ³² *and with seven loaves and a few fishes again feeds the multitude by miracle.*

THEN came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, ² Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.

^aMark vii. 1. ^bMark vii. 5. ^cCol. ii. 8.

Why do thy disciples, &c. (See Mark vii. 2, 5.) Though these scribes and Pharisees were the professed guardians of the sacred oracles, and professed to believe in God's inspired Word, the first fault they found with Jesus was, not that He transgressed that Word (for the Mosaic law did not require this washing of the hands), but that He transgressed the *tradition of the elders*, or those who had obtained among the people a distinguished name for wisdom. *They wash not their hands*, &c. For aught we know the disciples were as cleanly in their habits as the Pharisees, but in part, at least, through the influence of Jesus, they had ceased to wash their hands *as an act of religious importance*. Of this these hypocrites from Jerusalem complain. It is doubtless a criticism upon Jesus rather than upon the disciples.

³ But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? ⁴ For God commanded, saying, ^aHonour thy father and mother: and, ^cHe that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. ⁵ But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, *It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;* ⁶ And honour not his father or his mother, *he shall be free.* Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. ^dEx. xx. 12; Lev. xix. 3; Deut. v. 16; Prov. xxiii. 22; Eph. vi. 2. ^eEx. xxi. 17; Lev. xx. 9; Deut. xxvii. 16; Ps. xx. 20, and xxx. 17. ^fMark vii. 11, 12.

Why. Our Lord replies as they had questioned Him. He here tears up the very foundation on which their whole reasoning was erected, and shows, by a manifest example, how tradition is often at variance with the Divine laws. Filial duty is most strongly enjoined in the law of God, and the neglect of it is represented as a very great sin. One of the proper modes for a child to express toward a parent that respectful affection which the word *honor*, in the fifth commandment, requires, is for the child to support the parent, either wholly or in part, when the parent's circumstances require and the child's permit this. To *curse* a parent, to

treat a father or mother with disrespect or cruelty, is condemned in the strongest terms in the Divine law. *But ye say*, &c. Allusion is here made to a method of rendering void the precept to relieve parents, practiced by the Jews at this time. It was held by the traditions of the elders, that if a son made a formal devotion to sacred purposes of those goods which he could afford for the relief of a parent, it was then not lawful for him to succor a parent. And, what was most strange, he was not held to be bound by his words to devote his estate to sacred uses, but not to relieve the parent he was inviolably bound. It seems probable that the Pharisees devoured the offerings which they instructed sons to make. *He shall be free*, that is, from the command of God mentioned in verse 4. (See Mark vii. 12.) That these words are in italic, shows that they are not in the original Greek, but are inserted by the English translators on their own authority, in order to make sense. *Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect*—set it aside, cancelled it. Hypocrites have ever been more zealous for forms of human appointment than the law of God.

⁷ ^sYe hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, ⁸ *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.* ⁹ But in vain they do worship me, *teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

^aMark vii. 6. ^bIsa. xxix. 13; Ezek. xxxiii. 31. ^cIsa. xxix. 13; Col. ii. 18, 22; Titus i. 14.

Ye hypocrites. They were so called, 1. Because they placed holiness and religion in ceremonies of human invention. 2. Because being so superstitiously careful to avoid bodily pollutions, they left their hearts within full of hypocrisy and iniquity. One evidence of this was their attempt to get rid of the duty of providing for needy parents, under an appearance of piety toward God. *This people.* The pronoun here implies contempt. The *heart* alone worships God by its approach. *In vain do they worship me*, &c. The services they profess to perform to me, are performed from a regard, not to my authority, but to the authority of men. Their worship cannot serve the purpose of worship. It cannot be acceptable to me. It cannot be useful to them.

10. And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: 11. Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

*Mark vii. 14. *Acts x. 15; Rom. xiv. 14, 17, 20; 1 Tim. iv. 4; Titus i. 15.

Jesus applied the principle to the ease before them. "Food, even although, from being eaten with unwashed hands, not so clean as it might be, cannot make a man morally impure," but such "evil thoughts," or rather "wicked reasonings" as come out of the mouths of the pharisaic scribes, when "they make void the commandment of God through their traditions," they indeed make a man morally impure. My disciples, in neglecting a mere human tradition, have incurred no guilt, have done nothing to displease God, but these men, with all their pretended sanctity, who would bring them in guilty before God, unfit for fellowship with Him, make it evident, by their wicked reasonings, which "proceed out of their mouth," that in their inner man they are "full of what is abomination" to Him who requires "truth in the hidden part." Intemperance in food or drink may indeed morally defile a man, but even in this case the pollution would arise from the wickedness of the heart.

12. Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this saying?

This saying, i. e., His reply in verses 3-9, or perhaps the declaration in verse 11. These Pharisees were rendered indignant, not less by the superiority of Christ's arguments, than by the diminution of their reputation with the multitude. They had come to beat, not to be beaten; but now by a well-known traditional tenet of theirs, they were convicted of a direct violation of God's law.

13. But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. 14. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

*John xv. 2; 1 Cor. iii. 12, &c. *Isa. ix. 16; Mal. ii. 8; chap. xxiii. 16; Luke vi. 39.

Every plant. Referring to the teaching and traditions of the Pharisees, not to their persons. At the same time we should also bear in mind what was said in chapter xiii. about the identification of individuals with the doctrines which they professed. We are not to fight with carnal weapons, but wait, preach, protest, pray. Sooner or later, as *Wycliffe* said, "the truth shall prevail." *Let them alone.* Have nothing to do with

them. Do not desire their patronage or coöperation. With all their sanctimonious pretensions to wisdom and piety, they are the stupid and wicked teachers of a stupid and wicked people. And as *blind leaders of the blind*, they will precipitate themselves, along with those who have committed themselves to their directions, into the pit of perdition.

Though to all men, especially to well-meaning though mistaken brethren in Christ, we ought to avoid giving unnecessary offense, yet, as our Lord's conduct here shows, with regard to everything in the shape of religious doctrine, which we cannot find in the Bible—with regard to everything in the shape of religious institution, unsanctioned by its authority, we ought not to refrain from speaking the truth, from the fear of giving offense to influential, and, in a worldly point of view, respectable men.

15. Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.—*Mark vii. 17.

The word *parable* here means the *weighty sentiment* expressed in verse 11. It is not that Peter did not understand it, but he found it difficult, from his prejudices, to distinguish between the symbol and the reality. Indeed he could hardly believe his ears, that a distinction of meats availed not, and therefore asks an explanation. (See Acts x. 9, &c.)

16. And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding?—*Chap. xvi. 9; Mark vii. 18.

Are ye—My own disciples, *also*, that is, as well as the Pharisees, *yet*, after all my example and instruction, *without understanding*, of the difference between physical uncleanness and moral defilement? There is a slight shade of censure, that His disciples did not understand what was addressed to the multitude (verse 11), with the command that they, who were far below the apostles in spiritual discernment, should hear and understand it. (Isa. xxviii. 9, 10.; Heb. v. 12.)

17. Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? 18. But those things which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart, and they defile the man.—*1 Cor. iv. 13. *James iii. 6.

Familiar though these sayings of our Lord have now become, what freedom from bondage to outward things do they proclaim, on the one hand, and on the other, how searching is the truth which

they express—that nothing which enters from without can really defile us, and that only the evil that is in the heart, that is allowed to stir there, to rise up in thought and affection, and to flow forth into voluntary action, really defiles a man!

19. *For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: 20. These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man.

*Gen. vi. 5, and viii. 21; Prov. vi. 14; Jer. xvii. 9; Mark vii. 21.

Evil thoughts, such as the Pharisees entertained in evading the fifth commandment—the first motions of sin in general, as well as wicked designs. *Murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts*, sin against the sixth, seventh and eighth commandments. The plural number adds emphasis. *Blasphemies* (sins against the third commandment), indicate concealed and open enmity (blasphemy against God and man). How appalling is this black catalogue! Such is the description by the tender, merciful, truth-speaking Saviour, of every human heart in its natural state. How much reason have we to pray for a clean heart! (Ps. li. 10.) *These are the things*—not all the things, but plentiful specimens of them. Men are inclined to lay the blame of their sins on temptation—the tempter, and so to excuse themselves; but our Lord tells us *they proceed out of the heart. Defileth not a man.* In the very word *man* lies an argument: for the spiritual nature, which is the better part in man, is not reached by outward filth. “And yet,” says one, “how many scruple to commune with unwashed hands, but scruple not to commune with unwashed consciences!”

21. † Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. 22. And behold a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David: my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. 23. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, send her away: for she crieth after us. 24. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 25. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. 26. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs. 27. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. 28. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. *Chap. x. 5, 6; Acts ii. 25, 26, and xiii. 46; Rom. xv. 8. *Chap. vii. 6; Phil. iii. 2.

Tyre and Sidon. The two great Phœnician seaports lying upon the Mediterranean Sea in the north-western part of Judea, but here denoting the territory generally to the frontiers of which Jesus now came.

A woman of Canaan. She was a Gentile, Living at a distance from the Lord, and from all the privileges of Judea, she may have become acquainted with the character of Jesus by the fame occasioned by His discourses, and the miracles He had performed, either for the benefit of His own people or for the good of others. *Came out of the same coasts.* In making this visit, how many obstacles had she to encounter, arising from distance, delicacy, danger, duty to her daughter, &c. *Cried unto him*, &c. Mark the brevity, fullness and earnestness of this petition! Her addressing Jesus under the character of *Lord* and *Son of David*, amounted to confessing Him to be the Messiah. *Have mercy on me*, &c. So entirely had she made her daughter's misery her own, that she seeks mercy for herself.

Answered her not, &c. “The Word has no word, the Fountain is sealed, the Physician withholds his remedies.” How unlike His accustomed kindness this silence of our Lord! Who could understand this as any other than a repulse? But the petitioner relies upon His promises as a rock which cannot fail her. Many times, in our experience, we cannot explain God's proceedings, but have to wait and wonder, and wonder and wait. But let us not construe rashly His dealings with us, lest we misconstrue. “*The Lord trieth the righteous.*” If we would be really blessed of Him, the determination of Job must be ours. “*Though he slay me yet will I trust him.*” Though our trials should be severe, and our prayers be unanswered, we must continue to pray. Behind a frowning cloud He often hides a smiling face. *His disciples came*, &c. The expression is an equivocal one; let us hope that, unable to hear that mother's voice unmoved, they took up her cause—“yield to her request, heal her daughter, for it is wretched to hear her reiterated supplications.”

I am not sent, &c. Here is a kind of exclusion, which seems to place her beyond the reach of His communion. Jesus had come solely to the Jews, in the sense that His personal ministry was to be exercised only within the limits of Judea. How must this reply have affected the poor petitioner. Silence was discouraging, but

this must have been more so. That might be imputed to other causes; she might suppose He was considering her request, and though He had said nothing in her favor, yet He had said nothing against her: this, however, is not only giving her a denial, but giving the *reason* of it, which would seem to render it irrevocable. To an eye of sense, it would now seem to be a lost cause. It is not so, however, to an eye of faith.

Lord help me. The more she was repulsed, the closer she crept to Him. Sent to me or not, here Thou art, Oh, Saviour of the unfortunate! Called or not, here am I, a wretched mother! Thou *must* hear and answer my petition. *It is not meet, &c.* The *children* are the Jews, the *dogs* are the Gentiles. Feeling herself unworthy, she is not offended by the seeming severity of this reply. *Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat, &c.* How invincible a faith, what wonderful perseverance, what deep humility! The Saviour could not cast her lower than she was content to cast herself. No term of reproach that He could apply to her, which she was not most willing to accept, and from which she could not gather arguments for His mercy. Even the very depth of her degradation only forms a stronger plea for the extension of His love. If a dog, then still one of the household, with no title indeed to the children's bread, but with a stronger claim upon the crumbs than one more distant, though less degraded.

Great is thy faith, &c. Her faith, overcame obstructions, not physical, as in the case of the paralytic, for whom the roof was uncovered, not personally hostile, as those of Bartimeus, who cried the more for the rebuke he received from those who were near Jesus, but obstructions apparently in Christ Himself. *Be it unto thee, &c.* What a God-like declaration is this! Her faith had entreated Him as LORD, and as such He now addresses her. "Satan shall be dethroned, and thy daughter shall be healed." *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.* "Thy faith can be trusted, it will dictate that which is right." Illustrious woman! She has conquered the King of kings and Lord of lords; all the perfections of Deity now come forth to her help;

Omnipotence moves at her bidding to effect her desire; her will for a time is as the will of God. *And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.* Here is additional evidence that the woman's faith was *great*. She doubted not the word of Jesus, nor asked for a sign that her desire was granted, but without delay departed to her home, in the confidence that her daughter was well.

29. [†] And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee, and went up into a mountain, and sat down there.—[‡] Mark vii. 31. [‡] Chap. iv. 18.

Departed . . . thence unto the sea of Galilee—from the north-west to the north-eastern part of Galilee. *Went up into a mountain*, literally, the mountain, *i. e.*, the mountainous ridge environing the lake. *Sat down there.* He did not volunteer to bid the people approach, but awaited them.

30. [‡] And great multitudes came unto him, having with them *those that were* lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet, and he healed them: 31. Inasmuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see; and they glorified the God of Israel.—[‡] Isa. xxxv. 5, 6; chap. xl. 5; Luke vii. 22.

Great multitudes, &c. His fame had before filled that region (iv. 25); and now, on His coming thither, the people gathered around Him in great numbers, to be healed. *Maimed.* This word means those who had lost an arm, or a leg, or a foot, and hence hardly any of the miracles of our Lord were more illustrious and amazing, than the recovery of such. We have no reason to doubt that at the resurrection morn the limbs which any of God's people may have lost, will be restored to them perfect and beautiful. *Cast them down, &c.*—brought them before Jesus and laid them down, as expressive of the humility of their submission. It may be that we ourselves owe to the kindness of our friends, under God, in times past, the salvation of our souls; a mother who long prayed for us in secret and with many tears, or a relative who expostulated with us in the days of our folly, persuaded us to go to the house of God, and encouraged us to forsake the world, and to serve the Lord. *And he healed them.* There is no ailment of heart, no spiritual complaint, Jesus cannot cure. *Glorified the God of Israel.* They all, whether Jews or Gentiles, acknowledged this to be a wonderful work of mercy, wrought by the God of Israel, and such as no other god was able to do.

32. ^bThen Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.—^cMark viii. 1.

I have compassion. While the people forget hunger in admiration, Jesus pities them, and is not affected by their praise of His miracles. A great crowd of men and women is always a solemn sight. It should stir our hearts to feel that each is a dying sinner, and each has a soul to be saved. Of all the feelings experienced by our Lord when upon earth, there is none so often mentioned as “compassion.” This should encourage all who are hesitating about beginning to walk in God’s ways, as it shows that the Saviour will receive them graciously, forgive them freely, and abundantly supply all their need. *They continue with me*—other sufferers being laid before Him from time to time. *And have nothing to eat*—their supply of food was now exhausted. It was the interest of the people to remain with Jesus, and yet He seized that as a reason for conferring a new benefit upon them. *I will not send them away fasting*, &c. How beautiful that He who governs angels, should condescend to notice even the humblest wants of the human body! He never sent men away in want.

33. ^cAnd his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude?—^d2 Kings iv. 43.

This miracle must not be confounded with the similar one recorded in chapter xiv. 15–21. That was performed for the inhabitants who followed Jesus and anticipated His debarkation from the western side of the lake, and took place upon the plain of Butaiha, near the village of Bethsaida. This took place when Jesus was secreting Himself from Herod Antipas, having rapidly and quietly passed to the coast north-east of the lake, out of the dominion of Herod, and it is in the country, probably, of the Decapolis, that the miracle takes place.

Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, &c. It may seem strange that the disciples should ask this question the second time. (Chap. xiv. 17.) But can we remember no similar instance of forgetfulness in our own history? Has not the Lord, on many occasions in time past,

gone beyond our highest expectations? And yet are we not prone in every fresh difficulty to doubt His power and His faithfulness? Ever thus is it in times of difficulty and distress; each new difficulty appears insurmountable, as one from which there is no extrication. (See Ex. vii. 1–7, xvi. 13; Num. xi. 21, 22; 1 Sam. xvii. 34–37; 2 Chron. xv. 7, 8; Ps. cvi. 13.) Besides, even remembering how their Master had once spread a table in the wilderness, we can readily see how the disciples might have doubted whether He would choose a second time to put forth His creative might; at any rate, they had not the boldness to call for a miracle. Whenever we are placed in difficulties, we should remember “the years of the right hand of the Most High.”

34. And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes. 35. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. 36. And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. 37. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full. 38. And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children.

^aChap. xiv. 19. ^e1 Sam. ix. 13; Luke xxii. 19.

(On verses 35–38; see notes on chap. xiv. 15–21.) *Gave thanks.* What a beautiful model and precedent for us! The Lord of Glory gave thanks for the bread that He held in His hand. It is right to give thanks even before food (Acts xxvii. 35), and then it is the same as a *blessing*, for it is an acknowledgment of the Divine goodness for the past and the future. *And they did all eat, and were filled.* The bread here distributed signified that flesh which Jesus would give for the life of the world. Too many persons have no appetite for the heavenly feast; they sit as God’s people sit, but they partake not of the sacred fare; they go away to feed again upon ashes, and at length die without having tasted of *that bread*, which if a man eat, he shall live forever. *Baskets*—“hand-baskets,” i. e., baskets with handles. But those mentioned in the former miracle, were suspended from the shoulder. *Four thousand men*, &c. On the same principle referred to in notes on xiv. 21, we may suppose the whole number fed on this occasion, to have been no less than eight thousand. It may be noticed that with regard to numbers, Matthew is of all

the Evangelists the most particular. This, from his previous occupation, was to be expected from him.

39. ^f And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coast of Magdala.—^f Mark viii. 10.

The multitude—the four thousand whom he had miraculously fed. *Took ship*—the vessel, mentioned in chap. xiv. 33. *Magdala*. Mark (viii. 10.) says, *Dalmanutha*. The statements are easily reconciled. *Magdala* was one of the many “Migdols” (watch-towers) of Palestine, and from it the sur-

name “Magdalene” was probably taken, to denote the residence of one of the Maries. It is probably the modern *el-Medjel*, on the west side of the lake of Galilee, about three miles north of *Tabariyeh*. *Magdala* and *Dalmanutha* were contiguous, so that it might with propriety be said that our Lord came into the vicinity of the one or the other. *Dalmanutha* may have been a village, but it cannot now be identified with certainty.

1. What did the scribes and Pharisees say to Jesus? 2. How did He answer them? 3. Explain verses 13 and 14. 4. What did Peter ask of Jesus? 5. What was his reply? 6. What does Christ say proceed out of the heart? 7. Who approached Jesus in behalf of her daughter? 8. State the particulars of the interview. 9. Also the result. 10. What lessons does this case teach? 11. What is said of Christ's healing? 12. Why is this miracle of feeding the multitude not to be confounded with the similar one in chapter xiv.? 13. After this miracle, where did Jesus go?

CHAPTER XVI.

1 *The Pharisees require a sign, 6 Jesus warneth his disciples of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, 13 The people's opinion of Christ, 16 and Peter's confession of him, 21 Jesus foresheweth his death, 23 reproving Peter for dissuading him from it: 24 and admonisheth those that will follow him, to bear the cross.*

^f *THE* Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven.

^a Chap. xii. 38; Matt. viii. 11; Luke xi. 16, xii. 54-56; 1 Cor. i. 22.

Tempting. i. e., desiring to entrap Jesus. *A sign from heaven.* Probably they wished some peculiar manifestation from thence, as “fire from heaven” (1 Kings. xviii. 23-38), or a glorious appearance in the sky.

2. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, *It will be fair weather*: for the sky is red. 3. And in the morning, *It will be foul weather* to-day: for the sky is red and lowering. *O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky;* but can ye not discern the signs of the times? 4. ^a A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. ^d And he left them, and departed.

^b Chron. xii. 32. ^c Chap. xii. 39. ^e Jonah i. 17; Luke xi. 29.

“You are quite competent to determine the weather by the face of the sky, and, if you were teachers of the truth, and exercised the same simplicity of purpose and careful observation, you would be able to pronounce upon the age of the world at which we are arrived, and the facts that are before you, from signs that are as unequivocal and decisive as those that

relate to the foul or the fair weather.”

Our Lord refers here to the evidence furnished by the accomplishment of the ancient prophecies (xliv. 10; Isa. xi. 1. xxxv. 5; Dan. ix. 24), and by the miracles he performed, that the time of the Messiah was at hand. Christians should watch the moral aspect of the times. *A wicked, &c.* (See on chapter xii. 39.) *Left them*—in mingled sorrow and displeasure. A cavilling spirit may drive away the Son of God. There is only *one* greater calamity than being left by Jesus; it is, to hear Him say, “Depart from me.”

5. ^f And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. 6. Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. 7. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is because we have taken no bread.* 8. ^g Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? 9. ^h Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? 10. ⁱ Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? 11. How is it that ye do not understand that I spake *it* not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? 12. Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

^e Mark viii. 14. ^f Luke xii. 1. ^g Ex. xii. 15, 19; Lev. ji. 11; 1 Cor. v. 6, 8; Gal. v. 9; 2 Tim. ii. 16, 17. ^h Chap. xiv. 17, John vi. 9. ⁱ Chap. xv. 34. ^k Acts xxiii. 8.

To the other side—to Bethsaida Julias, whither Christ had gone. *Had forgotten,*

&c. The disciples must have been far from any longing for luxuries, when they took so small care even for the very necessities of life. *Take heed*, &c. Zeal for purity of doctrine is necessary. Error in *principle* is the parent of vice in *practice*. *Leaven* here denotes false doctrine, because it spreads, works secretly and silently, and insinuates itself into and changes the whole character. *It is because*, &c. The disciples thought that as they would now have to buy bread, Jesus wished them to be careful that it might not be such as had been subjected to the leaven of the Pharisees, lest they should be polluted by it.

O ye of little faith, &c. Jesus rebuked them for their want of *faith* and of *spiritual understanding*. How could they suppose that the leaven of the Pharisees was worse than any other leaven? How could they imagine that He would utter so solemn a warning on so petty a subject? Had He not lately shown them that nothing but *sin* could pollute? Had He not lately shown them His power in a miraculous way to supply food? (See xiv. 15-21, xv. 22-8.) As the result of these inquiries, the disciples were made sensible of their mistake.

13. ¶ When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples saying, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" 14. And they said, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." 15. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16. And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17. Mark viii. 27; Luke ix. 18. "Chap. xiv. 2; Luke ix. 7-9. "Chap. xiv. 33; Mark viii. 29; Luke ix. 20; John vi. 69, xi. 27; Acts viii. 37, ix. 20; Heb. i. 2, 5; 1 John iv. 15, v. 5.

Cesarea Philippi, a town in the northern part of Judea, in the vicinity of Mount Hermon. *Whom do men*, &c. Jesus proposed these inquiries in this the beginning of the *second great division* of His ministry on earth, introductory to His sufferings and death, that He might take occasion from the confession of His disciples as to His Messiahship, to grant them a deeper view into the nature of His *work*, and to establish them more firmly in their faith in His *person* and His character. *Some say* *John the Baptist*. This was an echo of that which was talked of at Herod's court. (Chap. xiv. 2; Luke ix. 7-9.) *Elias*. (Comp. Mal. iv. 5.) *Jeremias*. The belief prevailed from the passage last quoted, that at the time of the Messiah different prophets would again appear, and the Jews

held Jeremiah to be the greatest of the prophetic class. *One of the prophets*, some one of the Old Testament prophets. It should not surprise us to find the same variety of opinions about Christ and His Gospel in our times. God's truth disturbs the spiritual laziness of men, obliges them to think, and makes them begin to talk, reason, speculate, and invent theories to account for its spread in some quarters, and its rejection in others.

Whom say ye, &c. Having heard the echo of the people's views concerning Himself, our Lord will now hear an expression of the living, personal and independent faith of His disciples, to whom He had given occasion to mention the several errors of the world in relation to His person, that they might be the more fully convinced that their faith did not proceed from themselves. Peter's reply was in his own name, as the oldest and leading disciple, and in that of his brethren. He did not reply, "we say," lest that should not appear decisive enough, but, as if he said, we have not the least doubt of it. *Thou art*, &c. It is a most concise and yet comprehensive confession of faith. The veil of Christ's human nature did not prevent the eye of the disciples' faith discerning Him in His true character. What a noble confession was that by which, notwithstanding the great, and wise, and learned of the nation to which the disciples belonged, saw no beauty in their Master, *they acknowledged Him the Christ, the Son of the living God!* (See Dan. ix. 21.) *Living*—a character applied to the Supreme Being, not only to distinguish Him from the dead idols of paganism, but also to point Him out as the source of life, *present, spiritual and eternal*. We make a proper use of those mistakes and false conjectures which prevail in the world, when we make them contribute to our establishment in the truth.

17. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 18. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

•Eph. ii. 8. •1 Cor. ii. 10; Gal. i. 16. •John i. 42. •Eph. ii. 20; Rev. xxi. 14. •Job xxxviii. 17; Ps. ix. 13, cviii. 18; Is. xxxviii. 10. •Chap. xviii. 18; John xx. 23.

Though it is not to be doubted that Peter, in this noble testimony to Christ, only expressed the conviction of all the Twelve, yet since he alone seems to have had clear enough apprehensions to put that conviction in proper and suitable words, and courage enough to speak them out, and readiness enough to do this at the right time—so he only, of all the Twelve, seems to have met the present want, and communicated to the saddened soul of the Redeemer, at the critical moment, that balm which was needed to cheer and refresh it. Nor is Jesus above giving indication of the deep satisfaction which this speech yielded Him, and hastening to respond to it by a signal acknowledgment of Peter in return. *Blessed art thou*—highest blessings, to be the confessor and Apostle of the *Son of God*. *Bar*, which signifies *son*, was added to the name Simon, to distinguish him from others of the same name. *Simon* means “hearing,” and *Jona* means “dove.” *For flesh and blood*, &c. Simon, like Paul, had “not conferred with flesh and blood,” (Gal. i. 16), that is the lips of frail and fallible humanity had not been his instructors in the great mystery of the Gospel: neither had the suggestions of Reason guided him to the discovery of so great a truth, but he had derived his teachings directly from God Himself. The connection between the word “*for*,” and the preceding part of the verse, shows in what the blessedness of Simon eminently consisted. “No man can say that Jesus is the Christ, except by the Spirit,” and Peter, in an eminent degree, possessed the Spirit. (Chap. xi. 27.)

The word *revealed* does not seem, in this place, to mean the immediate communication of knowledge by inspiration, but the removing of those proud and carnal prejudices which *veiled* the hearts of others, that they could not understand what was in itself most plain. A conviction was wrought in Peter’s mind of his Master’s Messiahship, by His miracles and doctrines, but this was, nevertheless, the result of the Divine influence upon his heart—he was “taught of God,” and “his understanding,” as to this subject, “was opened to understand the Scriptures.”

I say also unto thee—as thou hast borne

such fearless and correct testimony to my character. *Thou art Peter* (*petros*), i. e., “a stone.” The word in Syriac is *Cephas*. (See John i. 42). *Upon this rock*—this true confession of thine—that I am THE MESSIAH, that I am come to reveal and communicate THE LIVING GOD, that the dead, lost world may be saved—upon this very rock, Myself, thus confessed, alluding probably to Psalms cxviii, 22, which see. It will be observed that our Lord did not say, *on thee, Peter, I will build*, &c. (which would have been natural, if such had been his meaning), but *changed* immediately the expression, and said, *upon this rock*, &c.—thus showing that he neither addressed Peter, nor any other of the Apostles. The word *petra*, here translated *rock*, has the generic sense, a *mass*, or *ledge* of rock, and is never used in the signification of *petros* (Peter), a *single stone*. It is employed here, not only to distinguish the word from *petros*, the proper name in *thou art Peter*, but as more consentaneous with the idea of *foundation*, which in the case of edifices designed to be durable, was composed, if possible, of the firm and stable rock. (See chap. vii. 24.)

I will build my church. ‘God had a church in the world from the beginning, and it was built on the rock of the promised seed. (Gen. iii. 15.) But now it was requisite that the church should have a new charter, as Christian, in relation to a Christ already come. The word “church” means literally those *called out*. Jesus here calls the church His own. This is a magnificent expression concerning Himself—nowhere else occurring in the Gospels. Christ as the Master-builder, builds his church by persons commissioned by Him, acting under His direction, and assisted by His spirit, and this building is a progressive work. The church is “the blessed company of all faithful people.” It is the whole body of believers of every age, and tongue, and people. (Eph. i. 22; i. Cor. x. 32.) It is a church composed of all who are washed in Christ’s blood, clothed in Christ’s righteousness, renewed by Christ’s Spirit, joined to Christ by faith, and epistles of Christ in life. It is a church which is one body, which has only one Head, and Jesus Christ Himself “is the Head of the

body." (Eph. v. 25-27; Col. i. 18.) Observe the remarkable reference to the Trinity, in the building (Eph. ii. 18-22), where the character, privilege, ground, manner and object of the building are described. Let it be observed, it is not *thy* church, but *mine*. Peter remembered this, when he cautioned ministers *not to lord it over God's heritage*.

That Peter was not designated as *the rock* on which the church was to be built, is evident. "Rock" is the regular figurative expression in the Scriptures for a Divine Protector. (Deut. xxxii. 4, 18, 30; 2 Sam. xxii. 2, 32, and many other places.) Paul testifies that Christ was the rock of the primitive church (1 Cor. x. 4), and a *foundation*. (1 Cor. iii. 2.) Peter proclaimed this truth. (Acts iv. 11, 12.) He testifies that he, with the rest of the believers, was built on this foundation. (1 Peter ii. 5.) In the same epistle (chap. i. 1.) he designates his office or title as *an apostle*, not *chief bishop*, and in chap. v. 4, he expressly styles Jesus Christ "the Chief Shepherd." The other Apostles, as well as Peter, are represented as being the foundation of the church. (Eph. ii. 20; Rev. xxi. 14.) The powers conferred upon Peter were soon, even if not now, conferred upon the other Apostles (John xx. 23), and indeed upon the entire church. (xviii. 18.) Peter himself never assumed official authority over his fellow-Apostles. Paul so conducted himself toward Peter as to show that he recognized in him no superiority of rank. On one important occasion (Acts xv.), James towers quite above Peter in perception and influence. (Gal. ii. 11-14.) Clearly, therefore, Peter was only *one of the builders* in this sacred edifice. (Eph. ii. 20.)

The gates of hell, &c. "Gates" are tropically put for persons assembled there for business. The infernal powers are here represented, who, from their invisible stronghold, manifest their visible hostility. *Shall not prevail*—shall not overpower. The battle may waver long and fearfully, but the rock-built fortress shall finally prove victorious. The everlasting love of God, the mediation and intercession of Christ, and the Divine promises, all insure this. "The Church of God," says Dr. Krummacher, "is like a palm tree, which

flourishes the more vigorously the more it is pressed down. Every embarrassment is to her but as the weight to the clock, which keeps it going; and the most violent storms are to the Church but a brisk wind in the sails, which impels the vessel more rapidly toward the harbor." Let us rejoice in the security of Christ's Church, and desire above all things to be true members of it. How Divine its origin, how inestimable its privileges, how vast its honors, how imperishable its happiness! *And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven*. To understand this as meaning that the right of admitting souls to heaven was to be placed in Peter's hands, is preposterous. This office is the special prerogative of Christ Himself. (Rev. i. 18.) It has to do with admission to and rejection from the membership of the Church. All the authority it conveyed was soon expressly extended to *all the Apostles*. (See chap. xviii. 18; also, John xx. 23; 1 Cor. v. 3, 5; Eph. ii. 20; Rev. xxi. 14.) In chapter xviii. 18, let it be observed, it was directed by our Lord that where there was a quarrel between brethren, it was to be brought, in the last resort, before the Church, or Church meetings (as explained in verse 20), whose decision was to be final, and the Saviour adds, "Whatsoever ye"—the plural number—"shall bind on earth," &c. Such honor does the Lord of the Church put upon its lawful assemblies.

Whatsoever thou shalt bind, &c. How are we to understand this? As meaning that Peter was to have any power of forgiving sinners? Such an idea is derogatory to Christ's special office as our Great High Priest. It is certain that in any literal and authoritative sense, such power was never exercised by one of the Apostles, and plainly was never understood by themselves as possessed by them or conveyed to them. The power to intrude upon the relation between men and God, cannot have been given by Christ to His ministers in any but a *ministerial* or *declarative* sense—as the authorized interpreters of His word, while in the *actings* of His ministers, the real nature of the power committed to them is seen in the exercise of *church discipline*. As for the special inspiration the

Apostles received, to lay down rules and regulations for the guidance of the Church on disputed questions, *binding* or *forbidding* some things, and *loosing* or allowing other things, as, for example, the decision of the council at Jerusalem, that the Gentiles need not be circumcised. (Acts xvi. 19.) This was a commission specially confined to themselves. In discharging it they had no successor. With them it began, and with them it expired.

20. "Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. 21. From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. 22. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. 23. But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me: *Satan: *thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. *Chap. xx. 17; Mark viii. 31, ix. 31, x. 33. Luke ix. 21. *Chap. xx. 6, 7. *See 2 Sam. xix. 22. *Rom. viii. 7.

Tell no man. The premature and unreserved avowal of this truth must, without perpetual miracles, have excited the ill-judging populace to such measures, as would have given the scribes, priests and Pharisees an occasion against Jesus, and even rendered the Romans jealous of His popularity, and thus He might have been cut off before His time. Christ's Messianic life had to be actually completed before His disciples were to testify of Him as Christ. Nay, the Lord Himself was to be the first publicly to announce it to the people, in the hour of His trial, so soon to be followed by His death. (Matt. xxvi. 64.)

From that time, &c. Now Jesus announces His coming sorrows more distinctly than He had done before. He did this, 1. To show the disciples that he was really God (as they had just before confessed Him to be), by His foretelling things to come; 2. To convince them more and more of their error, that He was to reign as a temporal prince; and, 3. To prevent them being offended at His sufferings, and to prepare them for their own. *Jerusalem.* The place where He was to suffer. (Luke ix. 31; xiii. 33.) There is the site of the Old Testament theocracy. There have the sacrifices of the law, and the blood of the Old Testament atonements, shown forth His death for ages. And from there, the royal city of David, must go forth an announcement of the kingdom of the Son of David to all the world. *Suffer many things, arraignment,*

trial, execution. Be killed. Prefigured by the killing of the paschal lamb. (Comp. Ex. xii.; 1 Cor. v. 7; Isa. liii. 7; Acts viii. 32; John xviii. 40.) *Raised again.* (See on chap. xii. 40.)

Took him. Suddenly interrupted Him, or, perhaps, took Him aside. *Rebuke him.* Earnestly remonstrate against what Jesus had said about suffering and dying. *Be it far, &c.* "God forbid," or "Be merciful to Thyself." It is an exclamation of surprise and tender solicitude. Peter's motives were good; but how little did he know then (though he afterwards knew it so well), that the destinies of the world hung upon that being done which he said *should not* be done. *And said unto Peter.* Jesus, who, in Peter's remonstrance, beheld, with pain, the instinctive abhorrence of the natural mind to the doctrines of the cross, replied to him by a rebuke, the sternness and severity of which come out strongly in contrast with the commendation the same Apostle had lately received. (1 Cor. x. 12.) *Get thee behind me, remove out of my way;* be not an obstacle in my path of duty. *Satan.* Peter, though a true believer, yet on this occasion acted the part of Satan, or an evil counsellor, toward his Master. Our Lord would have us regard the crucifixion as the central truth of Christianity. Right views of His vicarious death, and the benefits resulting from it, lie at the very foundation of Bible-religion. The sum of all our hopes must be, that "Christ has died for us." (1 Thes. v. 10.) Never let us forget this. On matters of Church government, and the form of worship, men may differ from us, and yet reach heaven in safety. On the matter of Christ's atoning death, as the way of peace, truth is only one. If we are wrong here, we are ruined forever.

Savourer. This formula means, well inclined to, well affected to. *The things that be of God, i. e.,* things heavenly, pure and divine, pleasing to God, as opposed to *those that be of men, i. e.,* such as man, in his fallen state, sets his affections upon. Suppose that the pretended successors of Peter inherit all the prerogatives he had, then, if they inherit his succession as the rock, how do they get rid of the succession, "Get thee behind me, Satan?" It will not

do to take Peter's mantle when he speaks truth and is praised, and to throw it away when he commits sin and states error. They must not take the kernel and cast away the shell, take the good and reject the bad. They must take the succession as a whole, or not at all. They must take Satan Peter as well as Rock Peter.

24. ¶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it. 26. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? 27. For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. 28. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

¶ Chap. x. 38; Mark viii. 34; Luke ix. 23, iv. 27; Acts xiv. 22; 1 Thes. iii. 3; 2 Tim. iii. 12. ¶ Luke xvii. 33; John xii. 25. ¶ Ps. xlix. 7, 8. ¶ Chap. xxvi. 64; Mark viii. 38; Luke ix. 26. ¶ Dan. vii. 10; Zech. xiv. 5, xxv. 31; Jude 14. ¶ Job xxxiv. 11; Ps. lxi. 12. Prov. xxiv. 12; Jer. xvii. 10, xxxii. 19; Rom. ii. 6; 1 Cor. iii. 8; 2 Cor. v. 10; 1 Peter i. 17; Rev. ii. 23, xxii. 12.

If any man, &c. Observe our Lord's terms of discipleship. An impostor would have made easy conditions, and promised a pleasant and prosperous career, to induce people to follow him, but Jesus pursued the opposite course. 1. *Deny himself.* We are to deny ourselves our earthly desires for ease, pleasure, riches, esteem, and to resist the most clamorous solicitations of our pride, ambition, avarice, and carnal self-love. The injunction does not solely or mainly refer to the renunciation of vice, which, of course, is to be renounced, but to the advantages of this life of which the followers of Christ must be prepared to suffer the loss with an undisturbed mind. 2. *Take up his cross.* (See on chap. x. 38.) 3. *And follow me,* that is, obey my commands and imitate my example. One of the ancients observes: "Because, after the cross, we require a new strength, He adds, 'and follow me.'" "And this," remarks another, "is because it may happen that a man may suffer, and yet not follow Christ, that is, when he does not suffer for Christ's sake."

Save his life, &c. (See on Matt. x. 39; Mark viii. 35; Luke ix. 24.) This was a truth of infinitely deep significance for the first disciples of the Lord, who, for His sake, left all; yet not less significant is it for the history of the development of the Christian life of each one. (See on chap. x. 39.)

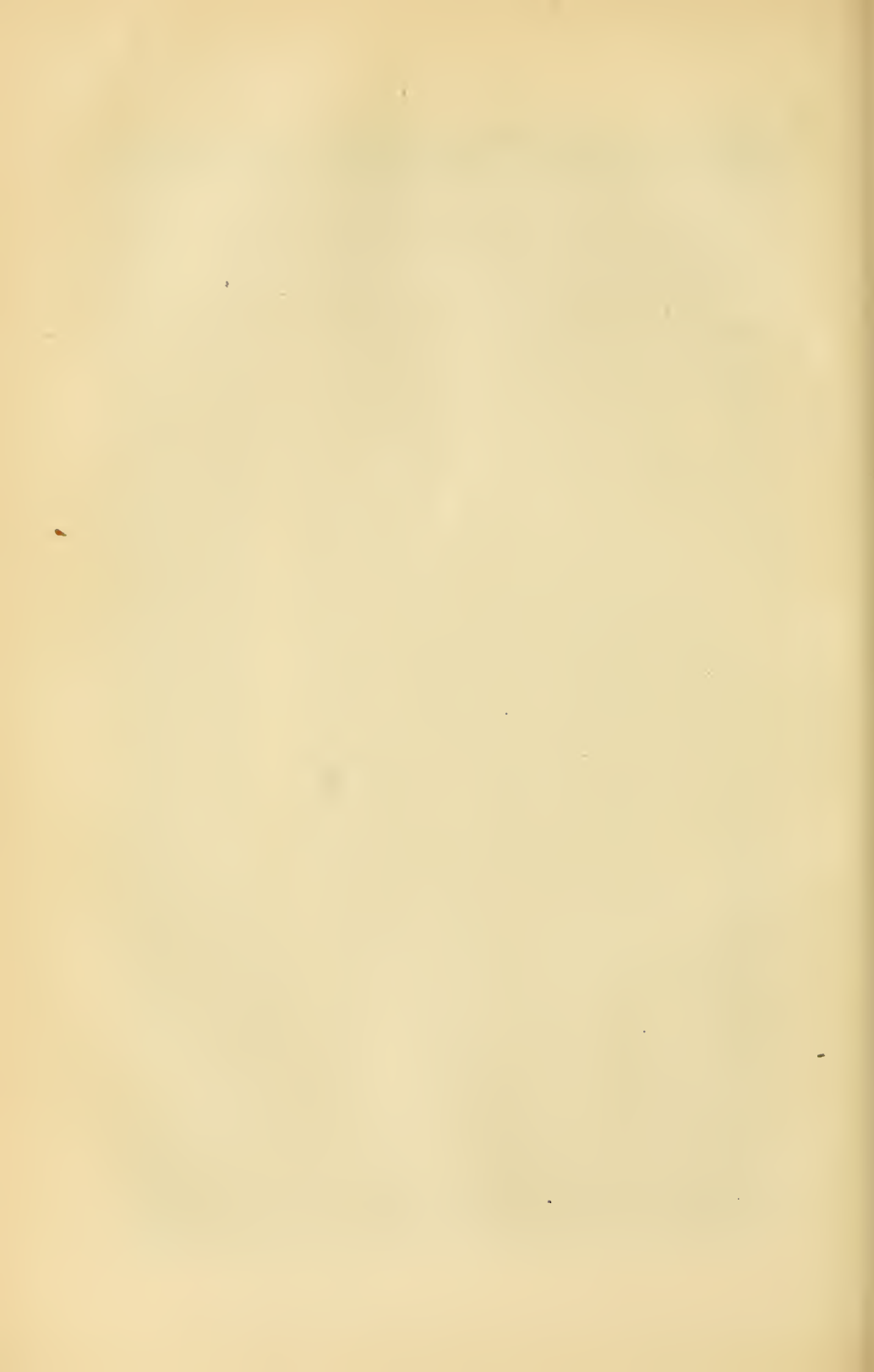
To lose the soul, is not to be annihilated. The very expression, "what is a man profited," &c., implies conscious existence beyond the grave. If a man *could* gain the whole world, he could not enjoy it. He could not even see it, except on a map. He would not be content with it. He would have no certainty of keeping it. It would afford him no consolation in death. Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?—to buy it back, as the price of its redemption. Probably the Saviour alludes to Ps. xlix. 8. The question teaches us that there is no redemption in hell. It will be observed that our Lord does not answer the question He proposes, but leaves it to press on our conscience with its own proper and mighty force.

"Truth is immortal as thy soul; and fable As fleeting as thy joys. Be wise, nor make Heaven's highest blessing, Vengeance; O, be wise! Nor make a curse of immortality. Say, know'st thou what it is, or what thou art? Know'st thou the importance of a soul immortal? Behold the midnight glory, worlds on worlds! Amazing pomp! Redouble this amaze, Ten thousand add, and twice ten thousand more, Then weigh the whole; one soul outweighs them all, And calls the astonishing magnificence Of unintelligent creation poor."

The glory of his Father. Besides the glory which the human nature of Christ habitually wears in heaven, some additional splendor shall be given Him by the Father, when sent with His commission on an occasion so august as the universal judgment. (John v. 27.) According to his works, literally, *working or work* taken as a whole. This, at the last day, will constitute the criterion of judgment, as evincing the state of the heart. *The Son of man coming, &c.* The reference here is to that tremendous catastrophe, the destruction of Jerusalem, which was some forty years distant, or more, at which event the old Jewish economy passed away with a great noise, and extricated from that wreck and ruin, there emerged what it is not too much to call, a new earth and a new heaven, when the things shaken were removed, to the end that Christ's saints might receive a kingdom which could not be moved. To men of full age it was not a mere nugatory prediction that they should live to see this event, and these words of Jesus compel us to believe that, if only for one Apostle, yet for more than one of the disciples then standing there, it was fulfilled.



MOUNT HERMON.



1. How was Christ "tempted" by His enemies? 2. How did He answer them? 3. What caution did He give to His disciples? 4. How did He reprove them? 5. What did Christ ask His disciples? 6. Why did He ask this? 7. What was their reply? 8. Explain verse 17. 9. What did Jesus say about His Church? 10. How are we to understand verse 19? 11. When did Jesus show to His disciples that He must suffer? 12. How did Peter receive this? 13. What did our Lord reply? 14. What does He require of those who "will come after Him?" 15. What is said about the soul? 16. What about the Son of man coming in His glory?

CHAPTER XVII.

1 *The transfiguration of Christ.* 14 *He healeth the tunatick,* 22 *forgetteth his own passion,* 24 *and payeth tribute.*

AND after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John, his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart.—Mark ix. 2: Luke ix. 28.

Jesus had announced to His disciples His sufferings, rejection and death (chap. xvi. 21), and they were greatly startled, surprised and dejected. He now vouchsafes to them a prophetic glimpse into the glory which should follow. *Peter, James and John* formed a company sufficient, so far as number is concerned, to bear testimony to the fact at the proper time. The law required no more than two or three witnesses to constitute a regular and judicial proof. (Deut. xix. 15).

An high mountain. Not Tabor, as is generally supposed, for a fortress, or town, existed on it from very early times, down to B. C. 50 or 53, and, as Josephus says that he strengthened the fortifications of a city there, about A. D. 60, it is morally certain that Tabor must have been inhabited during the intervening period, that is, the days of Christ. The order of the history determines the transfiguration to some mountain not far from *Cesarea Philippi*. Many magnificent events in the Divine dispensations have been transacted on mountains. (See Gen. xxii. 14; Ex. xix.; Deut. xxxiii. 2; 2 Chron. iii. 1; Matt. v. 1; xiv. 23; xxviii. 16.)

2. And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

The transfiguration was not a change of the substance of our Lord, for He remained afterward in the flesh, and had still to die. It was an intense beaming forth of the hidden glory of the only begotten, through the tabernacle in which He had enshrined it while He dwelt among us, so that it penetrated the pores of His very garments, and they became white, and glistening.

Never was scene more full of majesty. Never was description more full of grandeur and simplicity. His *face* was like the sun. What a contrast to that "visage more marred than men, and his form than the sons of men!" (Isa. lii. 14). His *raiment* was like the light—pure, bright. A glory was seen by others, as put on the face of Moses, but the glory of Jesus shone not upon Him from without but out of Him from within. He was in one blaze of glory. (Ps. civ. 2; Heb. iii. 4.) As was the glory of Christ on the Mount, so shall the bodies of the saints be in the resurrection. (Phil. iii. 21; Dan. xii. 3; Matt. xiii. 43; 1 Cor. xv. 43; Col. iii. 4; 1 Peter v. 1; Rev. iii. 4, 5.)

3. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

This reappearance of Moses and Elijah teaches us by a palpable fact, that death is not the end of being. It was, as it were, the cloud rolled away for a little, that we might see the gorgeous splendors that were behind it. The Apostles saw two persons who were once inhabitants of our world, clothed in bodily forms. Before them are Moses, who, fourteen hundred and eighty years before, had passed away, and who had no sooner tasted of death than probably his body was withdrawn from under the dominion of death (Deut. xxxiv. 6; Jude 9), and Elijah, who, though more than nine hundred years before translated (2 Kings ii. 2), so that he did not see death, now shows that the body may be transformed, and dwell in glory, too. Here we learn that the departed are not insensible, as some have said, till the resurrection morn (2 Cor. v. 8; Phil. i. 21–3); also, that saints in heaven are known and distinguished from one another by the form and appearance of their glorified bodies, and, probably, addressed by the same name which they bore on earth. (Luke xvi. 24.)

In this varied group on the Mount, we have a representation of the Church in her diversified dispensations — Moses and Elijah, the representatives of Old Testament saints—Moses, the giver of the Law, Elijah, the chief of the Prophets, and Peter, James and John, the ministers of the New Testament, while in the midst stands Jesus, to whom the Law and the Prophets, and the Apostles, equally bear witness, and from whom the glory of all comes. (See Matt. vii. 12.) Here the unity of the Old and New Covenant is wonderfully attested, and not the unity only, but with this unity the subordination of the Old to the New, that Christ is “the end of the law” (Rom. x. 4.), and the object to which all prophecy pointed (Acts x. 43, xxviii. 23; Rom. iii. 21), that, therefore, the great purpose of these had now been fulfilled, all which was declared in the fact that, after their testimony thus given, Moses and Elias disappear, whilst Christ only remains.

4. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

It will be noticed that the Apostles did not pray to Moses and Elias, but to Christ alone. If ever there was an occasion when saints might be prayed to, this was it, for here the saints were not to be guessed to be hearing, but were seen to be within both hearing and seeing. But the disciples prayed only to Jesus, thus showing that we may not worship and pray to saints, because Christ is all in all.

Good for us to be here. Two things caused Peter's bliss: 1. The communion of Saints. Here were not only John and James, but Moses and Elias. 2. The presence of Jesus. Truly it is a good thing ever to be found in the company of the Saviour. With Him we are safe, and nowhere else. He is the source of all delight and knowledge, the fountain of honor and excellency, the consolation of Israel, all in all. *Three tabernacles, &c.*, three tents, booths or camps. He does not say palaces, although he would have held palaces, whether of cedar, marble, or solid gold, none too good for such residents. But the rugged and woody sides of the mountain afforded no implements for the building of such

structures, and he proposes tabernacles. In making this request, Peter forgets that the full fruition of the heavenly blessedness, of which he is now receiving a taste, is for another world. Had his request been granted, how could our Saviour have suffered and died? Still it showed affection. None will be *with the Lord forever*, but those who find it their happiness for the Lord to be *with them now*.

5. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.

¹2 Peter i. 17. ²chap. iii. 17; Mark i. 11; Luke iii. 22. ³Isa. xliiii. 1. ⁴Deut. xviii. 15, 19. Acts iii. 22, 23.

While he (Peter) yet spake. Let us not fail to notice the difference between the manifestation *here*, and *that* at the giving of the Law. On *Sinai* there was a *cloud*, but it was *dark and thick*, and there were thunders and lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud. (Ex. xix. 16.) On *this* mountain, the cloud was bright, the whole scene was luminous and transporting, and nothing was heard but the mild, paternal voice of the Almighty. *Overshadowed them.* Light, in its utmost intensity, hides as effectually as the darkness would do. A cloud is the constant accompaniment of the Divine Presence. (Ex. xiv. 19; xix. 16; xxxiii. 9; xl. 34; 1 Kings viii. 10; Ps. civ. 3; Isa. xix. 1; Dan. vii. 13.)

A voice out of the cloud. This shows that the disciples were not enveloped in the cloud. The same voice which was heard before on the Jordan, consecrating Christ as King of the kingdom of heaven, and afterward (John xix. 28) as the High Priest of the New Testament. (2 Peter i. 17.) *My beloved Son, &c.* This is an echo of an utterance of Moses. (Deut. xviii. 15; comp. Ps. ii. 7; Isa. xlii. 1; see notes on chap. iii. 17; see 2 Peter i. 17; Ps. ii. 6, xlv. 2; Heb. i. 8, ix. 14; 1 John iii. 5.) Here is the end of all Scripture revelation, to testify of Jesus. The only way in which God the Father deals with sinful man, is by pointing them to His Son. From the great cloud of heavenly witnesses—patriarchs, prophets, Apostles, and believers in every age, it is still the same voice—Christ, God's beloved, and the sinner beloved for Christ's sake, accepted in the Beloved, justified, sanctified, preserved, glorified through Him.

Hear ye him. Christ the *Son* was far greater than Moses and Elias, who were but *servants*, hence they were to hear *Him*. Thus are we placed under Christ's tuition alone, and commanded from Him alone to seek the doctrine of salvation, to depend upon and listen to One, to adhere to One—in a word, as the term imports, to hearken to One only. (Col. ii. 17; Heb. i. 1–4, ii. 1–3, viii. 5, x. 1.) Religion which terminates not in action is delusion. If we have been taught of the Lord, we will hear Christ. His voice will be a sweet voice to us, for it will be “the voice of our beloved.” When He speaks in mercy, we will hear with gladness; with authority, we will hear with submission; with reproof, we will hear with contrition; in wrath, we will hear with fear.

6. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.—² Peter i. 18.

Fell upon their face, through fear, and perhaps as an act of reverential prostration in the presence of the Deity. And were sore afraid. It was an universally prevalent opinion with the ancient Jews that no one could see God and live. (See Ex. xx. 19; Judg. xiii. 22; Isa. vi. 5.)

7. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.—² Dan. viii. 18, ix. 10, 18.

So the same Saviour touched John in the Apocalypse. (Chap. i. 17.) He “laid His right hand upon him, saying unto him, Fear not.” (See Jer. i. 9; Ezek. ii. 2; Isa. vi. 7.)

8. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

When they had received strength and confidence from the touch of Jesus to rise up, Jesus was found alone, and had resumed His ordinary appearance, except that, perhaps, a Divine effulgence lingered on His face, as on that of Moses when he descended from the mount. Jesus alone is to us instead of the law, the sacrifices and the prophets. Our true happiness consists in looking upon Him alone as our law and pattern, in following Him alone as our Moses in the desert of this world, and in desiring His Spirit alone instead of that of Elias. Let us seek to see “Jesus only,” in our sense of sin, our trials, and in our dying hour.

9. And as they came down from the mountain, ^bJesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until ^athe Son of man be risen again from the dead.

^aChap. xvi. 20; Mark viii. 30 and ix. 9.

Charged them. (See on chap. xvi. 20.)

There were probably two reasons for giving this charge. 1. The disciples were not competent to preach the Messiah as *He is* until they had beheld all the scenes of His death and resurrection, and been empowered by the Spirit from on high. 2. The people were not yet sufficiently informed respecting the true nature of the Messiah's reign, to be told of what had taken place. They would probably have made a wrong use of it, regarding it as a signal that the Messiah's glorious earthly reign had commenced, and therefore holding themselves in readiness to engage in civil disturbances. It is always the safest way not to divulge or publish extraordinary favors and graces; they are a treasure which ought to be carefully hid, for fear lest vanity should rob us of it.

Vision, or sight. The word does not intimate that it was not a reality. *Until the Son of man be risen*, &c. From Mark ix. 10, it appears that the disciples did not know exactly how to understand what Jesus said respecting “rising from the dead.” Like the Jews, in general, they were laboring under much ignorance and misapprehension respecting the Messiah; but Jesus was gradually preparing them for what was to take place.

10. And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes, that Elias must first come?

^aMal. iv. 5; chap. xi. 14; Mark ix. 2.

Elijah had now appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, and was already departed. The disciples, in a state of perplexity, therefore inquired how this was to be reconciled with the prevailing interpretation of Malachi's prophecy.

11. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things: 12. But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but ^ahave done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise ^bshall also the Son of man suffer of them. 13. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

^aMal. iv. 6; Luke i. 16, 17; Acts iii. 21. ^bChap. xi. 14; Mark ix. 12, 13. ^cChap. xiv. 3, 10. ^dChap. xvi. 21. ^eChap. xi. 14.

Our Lord recognized the prophecy of Malachi as calling for the coming of Elijah, to *restore all things*, i. e., to bring the things of the kingdom from their confusion to a state of restored order before Messiah came, but He affirmed that this prophecy had already been fulfilled, for Elias had already come, but the Jews did not receive or recognize him; their minds were so

blinded and perverted by prejudice, that they did not discern his true office or mission; on the contrary, they had done unto him whatsoever they had chosen or desired, *i. e.*, they had persecuted and put him to death. (xiv. 10.)

Jesus also added that the treatment of the Forerunner was a clear indication of what they would do to Himself. This statement of our Lord, falling in, as it did, with their remembrance of the Baptist's attire, and other particulars which clearly pointed him out to the eye of faith as the promised Elijah, as well as our Lord's own express assertion on a former occasion (chap. xi. 10, 14), left no doubt on the minds of the disciples to whom He referred. The Spirit of prophecy, by the lips of Malachi, simply designated John by the name of the prophet of whom he was the antitype, just as Christ is called our *passover* by the appropriation to Him of the name which belongs to his type. (See on chap. xi. 10, 14.)

14. ¶ And when they were come to the multitude, there came to Him a *certain* man kneeling down to him, and saying, 15. Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. 16. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

¶ Mark ix. 14; Luke ix. 37.

How unlike was this scene of sin and sorrow to that which the three Apostles had just witnessed on the top of the mountain! There all was light and love, perfect bliss and ineffable glory. Angels beheld the same painful contrast, for, as they gaze upon the glory of God, they also watch over the sorrows of men. A *certain man kneeling down to him*, or, falling at His knees. The ancients consecrated the EAR to *memory*, the FOREHEAD to *genius*, the RIGHT HAND to *faith*, and the KNEES to *mercy*; hence those who entreated favor *fell at and touched the knees* of him whose kindness they supplicated.

Lord, have mercy on my son, &c. The appeal of the distressed parent to Jesus is peculiarly tender and touching. His child was a *lunatic*; in the bloom of youth deprived of reason, and, instead of being a comfort to his parents, was a continual cause of care and distress. He was also dumb and deaf (Mark ix. 17), and possessed by an evil spirit. When this spirit took him in its might, then, in the paroxysms of his disorder, he *suddenly cried out* (Luke

ix. 39), (an expression not inconsistent with Mark's statement that he was dumb, for his dumbness was only in respect of articulate sounds; he could give no utterance to these), and it *tore* him till he foamed and gnashed with his teeth, and *bruised* him, reluctantly leaving him, so that altogether he pined away like one the very springs of whose life were dried up. (See Mark ix. 18; Luke ix. 39.) Besides, the application of the father to the *disciples* had been unsuccessful, and thus his hope was covered with a still darker cloud, by being made to know that the case of his son was one of such a degree of Satanic possession, and of so long standing, as to baffle them.

17. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him to me. 18. And Jesus rebuked the devil, and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

Our Lord's rebuke was designed, not for the father of the lad, but mainly for the surrounding multitude, and the term *generation* seems to point to them as specimens and representatives of the whole Jewish nation: it was intended also for the disciples, in whom so brief an absence from Him had produced weakness of faith, and whom it had shorn of their strength, and left powerless against the kingdom of darkness. (See verse 20.) *How long shall I be with you, and suffer you?* are words not so much of one longing to put off the coil of flesh, as of a master complaining of the slowness and dullness of his scholars. *Bring him hither to me.* As the staff in Gehazi's hand could not arouse the dead child, but the prophet himself must come and take the work in hand, before ever a cure can be wrought, so must it be now. When the young begin to turn to the Saviour, and first cry for His help, this wretched spirit would rather they should die than be delivered from his power, but the eye of Jesus is on all who truly seek Him, and though He may permit Satan to alarm and distress them, He will at length rescue them from his tyranny.

And the child was cured, &c. What encouragement have parents, teachers and ministers to go on praying for young men, even at their worst! Hard as their hearts may seem now, they may yet be softened. Desperate as their wickedness now appears,

they may yet be healed. They may yet repent and be converted, and their last state prove better than their first. Who can tell? Let it be a settled principle in us, when we read our Lord's miracles, never to despair of the conversion of any soul.

19. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? 20. And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you *if ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.* 21. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

*Chap. xxi. 21; Mark xi. 23; Luke xvii. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 9 and xiii. 2.

Why could not we, &c. They were mortified and distressed at their failure, and therefore took the first opportunity to inquire from what it arose. When the ministers of the Gospel find their labors with respect to some places or persons ineffectual, they should come by *private prayer* to Christ, humble themselves before Him, and beg to learn whether some evil *in themselves* has not been the cause of the unfruitfulness of their efforts. *Because of your unbelief.* The scribes had been disputing with the disciples during the absence of their Master. (Mark ix. 14.) It is likely that they disputed in reference to Jesus, and to the power of working miracles, and by casting suspicions and surmises, and suggesting doubts, they had produced a distrustful state of mind in the disciples. One who believes the truth may have his mind shaken for a time by hearkening to objections, especially if skillfully and slyly presented.

If ye have faith, &c. The faith of miracles is here meant. To *remove a mountain* was a form of expression often employed at that time to denote the performance of a thing so great as to be apparently impossible. Our Lord used the word *mountain*, as He did also the *mustard-seed*, figuratively, to show the disciples, who had a full commission, among other things, to cast out devils without exception, what they could have done even with this more than ordinarily malicious and inveterate devil, if they had not distrusted the power they had received. The general teaching of the verse is, that as unbelief is the secret of all weakness, so is faith the secret of all strength, and that the least spiritual power shall be patent for the overthrow of the

mightiest powers which are merely of this world.

This kind, &c. It is here evident that there are orders of evil spirits; that as there is a hierarchy of heaven, so there is an inverted hierarchy of hell. The same is intimated in chap. xii. 45, and Eph. vi. 12. There is probably a climax, the Apostle rising from one degree of spiritual power and malignity to another. *Goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.* Though nothing is impossible to faith, yet such a height of faith as is requisite for such triumphs, is not to be reached in a moment or without effort—either with God, in prayer, or with ourselves, in self-denying exercises. (See 1 Cor. ix. 27.) Faith is kept vigorous by much prayer, and by such abstinence from food as fits the mind for the highest exercises of religion, and leaves it free to hold communion with God. "We must," says an old divine, "set an edge upon our faith by prayer, and upon our prayer by fasting."

22. *And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: 23. And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.

*Chap. xvi. 21, and xx. 17; Mark viii. 31, ix. 30, 31, and x. 33; Luke ix. 22, 44, xviii. 31 and xxiv. 67.

Into the hands of men. He who came to redeem sinful men, was delivered up to men who should be his murderers! *Kill him, &c.* (See on chap. xii. 40; xvi. 21.) This is our Lord's prophetic allusion to His future passion, death and resurrection, which the angels referred to in addressing the women who visited the sepulchre. (Luke xxiv. 6.) It will be observed, that on *this* occasion neither Simon Peter nor any of the rest "began to rebuke him." (Chap. xvi. 22.) It is simply added. *And they were exceeding sorry.* They loved not less than they revered their Lord, and the bare idea that He might possibly be exposed to ignominy, maltreatment and suffering, filled their hearts with sorrow.

24. † And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute-money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your Master pay tribute?

They that received, &c. The receivers or collectors of the *didrachma*. The *didrachma* or double drachma was a silver coin, of the value of two Attic drachmas, as its name imports, or a Jewish half-shekel, equal to about 30 cents of our money.

This tribute or tax was required or expected from every male Israelite above the age of twenty, and was to be paid into the corban, or treasury of God, for the current expenses of the temple service. (See Ex. xxx. 13, 14. 2 Chron. xxiv. 6, 9.)

25. He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? 26. Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.

From this prompt reply of Peter, it is evident that our Lord customarily paid all taxes, tributes, &c., which were common among the people wherever He came. The children of God are subject to all civil laws in the places where they live—and should pay the taxes levied on them by public authority. (Rom. xiii. 7.) *Prevented him, i. e.*, anticipated him. This anticipation implies a miraculous knowledge of Peter's *assent*, inasmuch as our Lord was not present, when the question was asked and the answer given.

What thinkest thou, Simon? As Peter, through his hasty imprudence, had pledged our Lord to the paying of the didrachma, which now He could scarcely recede from, this question was put to him by Christ, to bring him, with the other disciples, to the true recognition of Himself, from which they had in part fallen. "On what principle hast thou been promising this for Me? is not all the analogy of things earthly against it?" *Of whom do the kings, &c.* Our Lord *now* is speaking of the poll-tax, payable to the Romans by every one whose name was in the "Census." This was a *civil* tax. By *children*, in the question, we are to understand, the members of the families of the kings referred to, and by *strangers*, their subjects. *Of strangers*—and these only. *Then are the children free.* The reasoning is this: Earthly kings exempt their own children from paying tribute, but this being levied in the name of God, and for His house and service, I, who am His Son, and superior to the temple, may well be exempted. (See Ex. xxx. 12; Heb. i. 2, iii. 6; Matt. xii. 6.)

27. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up, and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give it unto them for me and thee.

A piece of money—a stater. Observe, 1.

Christ's unwillingness that offense should be given. There are matters in which Christ's people should sink their own opinions, and submit to requirements which they may not thoroughly approve, rather than give offense and "hinder the Gospel of Christ." We ought not to be sternly tenacious, unless some principle of truth and duty is involved. 2. Christ's penury—so poor that He did not possess wherewith to pay the temple tribute. He could have enriched His disciples with all the pearls in the ocean, but He knew riches would be a snare to them, and He had better treasure to give, which was laid up for them in heaven. 3. Christ's omniscience. He pierced the waters of the sea, discerned a particular fish, saw what was in its body, and announced a piece of money there, and the very *name* of the coin. (See Jonah i. 17; 1 Kings xiii. 24, xx. 36; Amos ix. 3.) So does He see what money we are in possession of, how we acquired it, and the way in which we are using it. 4. Christ's power and dominion. He is Lord of all. From the millions of fish in the sea, He brought the fish He knew had swallowed a piece of silver, to Peter's hook. "All things are put under him the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea." 5. Christ's sanction to the use of means. Peter could not replenish the fish with the money, or make it to swim in the direction of his bait; but he could procure the bait, throw in the hook, and in the most likely place, and stand, and watch. So in spiritual things, there is always something which we cannot do, and something which we can do. The Apostle points to these, and writes them, where he says: "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you to will and to do of His good pleasure." 6. Peter's implicit obedience. He did not reason, or murmur, but obeyed. So should we use all the means God has prescribed, relying on His promise, and we shall not be disappointed. 7. The identification of Christ with His people. He said to Peter, "give unto them for me and thee." Jesus regards His true followers as one with Himself. (John xxv. 17.)

1. Who accompanied Jesus to the mountain? 2. What mountain was it? 3. Describe the transfiguration? 4. Who appeared on the mountain? 5. What were they doing? 6. What does their appearing teach? 7. What did Peter say? 8. What is said about "a bright cloud?" 9. What did the voice out of it say? 10. What was the effect of this on the disciples? 11. What did they ask? 12. Who came to Jesus? 13. Why did he come? 14. What was the result? 15. How did Christ foretell His sufferings? 16. What was tribute-money? 17. How did Jesus pay tribute-money? 18. Why did He do it? 19. What does His example teach?

CHAPTER XVIII.

1 *Christ warneth his disciples to be humble and harmless: 7 to avoid offences, and not to despise the little ones: 15 teacheth how we are to deal with our brethren, when they offend us: 21 and how oft to forgive them: 23 which he setteth forth by a parable of the king, that took account of his servants, 32 and punished him, who shewed no mercy to his fellow.*

AT the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?—Mark ix. 33: Luke ix. 46, xxii. 24.

The disciples, after they had disputed by the way, and had been set right by our Lord, were at first silent; but when they had all been called together by the Saviour, some, again, finally proposed the question to Him of their relative greatness. Probably the occasion for this strife, although the germ of rivalry must have been in their hearts before, was found in the singling out of the three intimate disciples to be present at the transfiguration, &c., &c. Alas! the best and holiest of men are too subject to pride and ambition, too disposed to covet worldly dignity and superiority. There is no sin against which we have such need to watch and pray as pride. It is a pestilence that walketh in darkness, and a sickness that destroyeth at noonday. No sin is so deeply rooted in our nature.

2. And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them;

The method of instruction by emblems and symbolical actions has always been prevalent in the East. A little boy that happened to be playing near, furnished an appropriate and expressive symbol of the great lesson which Jesus would now inculcate upon His disciples, as they were gathered around Him. Important as little children are, as flowers planted along the path of life, to relieve its gloom and ruggedness, there is still a higher purpose which they subserve—they are, as it were, truth in a living form, made to move around us for the most important of all tuitions. (Mark x. 15; 1 Peter ii. 2; Ps. cxxxi. 2.)

3. And said, Verily I say unto you, ^bExcept ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.
^bPs. cxxxi. 2; chap. xix. 14; Mark x. 14; Luke xviii. 16; 1 Cor. xiv. 20; 1 Peter ii. 2.

Be converted—turned from this worldly, aspiring disposition. Converts still have remains of corruption, some lust often breaking forth, which they must take special care to resist and subdue. The disciples had left all and followed Jesus, yet they needed to be more and more turned: and thus should we ever be putting off the old man, and putting on the new man more and more. *Become as little children*—abandon your thirst for power and pre-eminence, and learn to think of these things as a little child thinks of them. (See on verse 4; and Luke xviii. 17.) *Ye shall not enter, &c.*—ye shall not be regarded as belonging to the Messiah's kingdom.

4. ^cWhosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.—Chap. xx. 27, and xxiii. 11.

The point of comparison here is formed, not by the receptivity, the striving after perfection, the absence of pretension in the child, but by its humility, which was so sadly lacking in the disciples. By this humility the child's understanding was yet free from vain imagination, its heart from rivalry and ambition, its will from stubbornness. *The same is greatest, &c.*, that is, he will reach the highest seat of happiness and glory. True humility is the ground on which the blessings and rewards of the Divine kingdom will be distributed. (James iv. 6, 10; Isa. lvii. 15.)

5. And ^dwhoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.—Chap. x. 42; Luke ix. 48.

Shall receive, i. e., approve, love, treat with kindness, aid in the time of need. *One such little child*. Not the actual child, but the spiritual child, whom grace has made. *In my name, i. e.*, acting from Christian principle. Not only did Jesus here show

His love for little children, but also and mainly for such as resemble them in a child-like spirit, and those who receive them, resting upon His name, as a principle of action.

6. *But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

*Mark ix. 42; Luke xvii. 1, 2.

The word rendered *offend* signifies *cause to stumble*. It is used both for those who fall and perish, and for those who fall and rise again. *One of these little ones*, &c., meaning, Christians in general, namely, those of ordinary capacity and attainments, honest, humble, and sincere, though not highly-gifted believers. (1 Cor. iii. 1.) Those who are *strong* in faith must be careful not to injure the *weak* in faith, even as the *elder* children in a family must carefully avoid hurting the tender frames of the younger children. Advanced Christians must refrain even from enjoying *lawful* privileges, sooner than endanger their weak brethren. (See Rom. xiv.) If it be a grievous sin to wound a weak believer through *carelessness*, how dreadful a crime it must be to injure him *wilfully*! *It were better*, &c. This was a common punishment in ancient times. It was frequently resorted to in the case of rebels, and other malefactors, in the times of the later emperors of Rome, and was inflicted on many of the first Christians. The signification of the imagery is not only a simple drowning, but at the same time a sinking into the deepest abyss of hell. Nothing but sincere repentance can prevent the infliction of this terrible punishment on those thus guilty.

7. †Wo unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come, but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh!

†Luke xvii. 1; 1 Cor. xi. 19. ‡Chap. xxvi. 24.

WO UNTO THE WORLD, &c. Some understand by this, that a woe is pronounced upon the world, or the inhabitants of the earth, on account of the obstructions it lays in the way of the spread of the kingdom of God, either by its persecutions or corrupting influences. Others take the word *woe* rather as an exclamation of pity, in view of the offenses which the world receives from false members of the Church, and its natural and strong inclination to stumble over such offenses. (See 2 Sam.

xii. 14; Rom. ii. 24; 1 Cor. x. 32.) *Offenses*, stumbling-blocks. *It must needs be*, &c. Of course the Saviour speaks not of an absolute, but of a relative necessity, proceeding from the sinful state of the world. *Wo to that man*, &c., that is, curse or condemnation on him; he is performing the devil's work, and must reap the devil's reward. The two facts of *Divine prescience* and *human responsibility*, which are here stated, all philosophy is bound to accept as verities, whatever difficulty may attend every effort that is made logically to reconcile them. As it consists with Divine goodness to create free agents, so, consequently, to permit offenses, and the justice of God in punishing them cannot reasonably be questioned, because He is no farther concerned than in the creation of the powers He bestows; the agents themselves only are chargeable with the abuse of them, the *necessity* under which offences lie being only voluntary and moral. There is no necessary connection between liberty and sin: the one, indeed, is the gift of God, the other, the free act of man.

8. ‡Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. §. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.—‡Chap. v. 29, 30; Mark ix. 43, 45.

Our Lord here lays down the principle that the best way to avoid the sin and condemnation of being stumbling-blocks to others, is to remove every cause of offense in one's self. The *eye* is the chief avenue by which sin enters, the *hand* is the symbol of action, whether in the way of speech, or manual operation, and the *foot* may be regarded as symbolizing the walk of life—a man's ways. (See on chap. v. 29, 30.) The only difference between the words there and here is, that there they refer to impure inclinations; here, to an ambitious disposition, an irascible or quarrelsome temper, and the like: and the injunction is, to perform spiritual amputation, to strike at the root of such dispositions and cut off the occasions of them. *Halt*—lame. *Maimed*—mutilated, as by a hand cut off. This does not mean that the glorified bodies of those in heaven will be mutilated or deficient in any of their members, but that it is better to go to heaven *without any*

such enjoyments, however dear, as are a snare, than to have them here, and perish at last. (Luke xvi. 25; Rom. viii. 13; 1 Cor. ix. 26.) *Everlasting fire. . . . Hell fire.* It is worse than vain, it is a wicked and miserable deceit, to seek to elude the plain teaching of Scripture here, and in so many other places (see Isa. lxvi. 24; Matt. iii. 12, xxv. 41, 46; Rev. xiv. 11, xx. 10), concerning the eternity of future punishment. Men who deny this doctrine, only repeat the devil's old argument, that we "shall not surely die." (Gen. iii. 4.) The word translated *everlasting*, is used in the great majority of instances in the New Testament, of God, of the unseen and future world, of the perpetuity of Christ's kingdom (2 Peter i. 11), of the happiness of the saints in heaven, and of eternal life. Why, then, attempt to limit its import in reference to the perdition of the ungodly? Universalists instead of preaching down hell, would do much better if they would preach up Christ and heaven.

10. Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

1 Ps. xxxiv. 7; Zech. xiii. 7; Heb. i. 14. *Esth. i. 14; Luke i. 19.

Our Lord, resuming the train of instruction, which had been partially interrupted by verses 7-9, proceeds to show more at large the temper of mind which should be cherished toward His disciples, and mentions some reasons why they should be treated with much affection. *Take heed—beware. Despise not—*treat not with disrespect and scorn, as though they were mean, silly, and contemptible. (Rom. xiv. 1, 3, 10; 1 Cor. viii. 9.) *One of these little ones.* Those whom my grace has made to be as "little children." (Ver. 6.) For . . . *their angels.* (See on iv. 6.) This is the first consideration enforcing a benevolent regard for Christians. *Their—*the angels are theirs—ministering spirits to them, and always intent to execute the orders of the Heavenly King. *Do always behold, &c.* According to Oriental custom, monarchs are sequestered from the public view, and none are admitted to see them, but such as are in especial favor. (Ex. xxxiii. 20; Num. vi. 25, 26; 1 Kings x. 8; 2 Kings xxv. 19; Esth. i. 14; Prov. xxii. 19; Dan. i. 5; Luke xxi. 36.) These

angels, when not sent from heaven to other parts of the universe to do God's will and pleasure, continually gaze upon His countenance, being, like Himself, tenderly concerned for the little ones intrusted to their care. (Ps. cxlii. 5, 6.)

From this passage, and several others, some have inferred that every individual Christian has a guardian angel. In the Old Testament we only read of guardian angels of empires. (Dan. x. 13, 20.) But at a later period the Jews believed also in the existence of guardian angels for individuals. This was also true under the New Testament. (Acts xii. 15.) If this doctrine is not here admitted by Christ, it is at least not disturbed. It has prevailed more or less in every age of the Church. The ministry of angels, which is founded in the mediation of Christ, is a truth most useful to be kept in mind, both by the Church and by the world, in order both to assure the hearts of God's people in the hour of tribulation, and to awe the world into deference and respect for "them who shall be heirs of salvation."

11. For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.—Luke ix. 36, and xix. 10; John iii. 17, and xii. 47.

Here is another reason for cherishing a very kind regard for the disciples, even for the humblest of them—the inestimable price paid for their salvation. Man is *lost* to himself, for he is neither wise nor happy; to others, to whom he is not useful; to God, whom he does not glorify; to earth, which he does not enjoy; to heaven, which he is not in the way to attain; lost in his body, which is passing through infirmity, affliction and pain, to death and corruption; in his soul, which is going through ignorance and folly, sin and guilt, depravity and misery, to endless perdition. Yet He who is the *Son of God*, His Word, who created all things and upholds them by His power, who is God, Jehovah (Heb. i. 8), was made the *Son of man*, left His state of glory and assumed our nature to suffer and die in our stead. (See John i. 14, iii. 16; Rom. viii. 3; Gal. iv. 4; Phil. ii. 6, 7; Heb. ii. 14, x. 5-9; 1 John iv. 9, 10.)

12. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? 13. And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that *sheep*, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.—Luke xv. 4.

The fact that Jesus, having rescued and restored His disciples from their former sinful and dangerous condition, feels a very peculiar interest in them, is here assigned, by way of argument and illustration, as the third reason why the most lowly member of His family is to be regarded with love and respect. Some construct, and we think justly, the words *into the mountains*, with the preceding clause in the sense, *doth he not leave the ninety and nine in (or upon) the mountains*. The mountains were grassy and well adapted for the pasturing of sheep. This parable is given more fully, though in a different context, in Luke xv. 4-6, on which see notes.

Doth he not leave the ninety and nine, &c. Dr. Chalmers understood this parable to involve this idea: There are thousands of worlds beside our own. They are inhabited. Our world, so far as we know, is the only fallen one. Jesus left the ninety and nine orbs that needed no salvation, because guilty of no sin, and came after this wandering world, that needs to be recovered.

Seeketh that which is gone astray. As the specific effort of the shepherd had respect not to the flock that remained on the pasture, but to the one sheep that had gone astray, the specific effort of the Son of God, in His incarnation, ministry, death and resurrection, has respect, not to the worthy, but the unworthy. *Rejoiceth more of that sheep, &c.* It is natural that there should be more joy for a small portion, which has been endangered, than for the continued secure possession of a much larger portion. So the mother rejoices at her sick child's recovery more than at the uninterrupted health of all the others; and the father rejoices more at the return of his sailor boy from the perils of the sea, than at the undisturbed security of all his other children who had continued under his roof. In such cases, the disproportionate joy arises from the unexpectedness of the result, from the temporary uncertainty concerning it; but as nothing of this kind could find place with God, who knows the end from the beginning, and in whom earnest love for one of His ransomed people need not throw into the background, even for the moment, love and care for the others, of course the

analogy is not to be pressed so far in relation to Him. Still, we are taught to believe that God rejoices to see the prodigal return. (Luke xv. 20, &c.) "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in them that hope in His mercy."

14. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

It is significant that it is said here, "*your Father*," not as in verse 10, "*my Father*." This phraseology implies the injunction that the disciples, as the children of God, should be like their Heavenly Father in tenderly caring for the little ones. The weaker a man is, the greater care we ought to have of his salvation, as God teaches us by His own example. We are to use all diligence in seeking to recover to the way of righteousness those that have formerly appeared to walk therein. (See Eph. iv. 32; Heb. xii. 12, 13.)

15. ¶ Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

¶ Lev. xix. 17; Luke xvii. 3. *James v. 20; 1 Peter iii. 1.

The cautions respecting the high regard which we ought to cherish toward the disciples of Christ, were followed by directions how to regulate our conduct, if a Christian brother should do us wrong. *Go and tell him his fault.* Do not wait till he come to thee, but go at once to him in the zeal of love and meekness of spirit, and try to convince him in this spirit of the wrong he has done. He may have injured you unintentionally. (Gen xxi. 26.) His conduct may admit of explanation. (Josh. xxii. 24.) At any rate, this friendly, faithful, straightforward way of dealing is the most likely to secure the desired result. (Lev. xix. 17; Ps. cxii. 5; Prov. xxv. 15; Gal. vi. 1.)

Between thee and him alone—so that there will be no motive of pride to induce him to make out a good case before a witness. Do not break forth upon him in the presence of the unbelieving, but take him aside. Do not blazon his offense abroad. It can do no good. It does injury. It is what the enemies of religion wish. To tell a man his faults by himself, requires courage, and makes on him the impression of sympathy and love; but to speak of them in his absence, argues want of love, and cowardice.

If he shall hear thee, i. e., hear so as to yield to thy representations, and return to his duty, as becometh a follower of Christ. *Thou hast gained thy brother.* "By which it is made plain," says an ancient writer, "that enmities are a loss to both sides: for Christ saith not 'Thy brother hath saved himself,' but 'Thou hast gained thy brother,' which shows that both of you had suffered loss by your disagreement." (Prov. xi. 30, xv. 1, 2, 4; 1 Cor. vii. 16, ix. 19-22; 1 Peter iii. 1; James v. 19, 20.)

16. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.
9Dent. xvii. 6, and xix. 15; John viii. 17; 2 Cor. xiii. 1; Heb. x. 28.

Not hear thee. If he declines listening to your expostulations and reproof, whether from unwillingness to admit that the alleged offense is an offense at all, or a determination not to give it up because he loves it. *Then take with thee one or two more.* If the private interview fail, take one or two of the brethren to witness how just your complaint is, and how brotherly your spirit in dealing with him. *That in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word, &c.* Rather "the whole matter may be established." A rule similar in its import was binding on the Jews. (Dent. xix. 15.) If the difficulty was harmoniously adjusted, no publicity was to be given to the affair. (See John viii. 17; 2 Cor. xiii. 1; Heb. x. 28; 1 Tim. v. 19.)

17. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.
9Rom. xvi. 17; 1 Cor. v. 9; 2 Thes. iii. 6, 14; 2 John 10.

Neglect to hear them. From this it is evident that the witnesses present were to assist in bringing the offender to a sense of duty. The word rendered *shall neglect* here, is a much stronger expression than that employed in verse 16, having the additional idea of willful obstinacy. *Tell it unto the church,* bring him before the church or congregation to which both belong. (Acts vi. 1-3; 1 Cor. vi. 1-4; Acts xiii. 1-3.) Who can tell but the heart which has been unmoved by private remonstrances, may be moved by the fear of public exposure?

But if he neglect to hear the church, i. e., if he disregards the admonitions, counsels and discipline of the church. The term is stronger than "not hearing," implying

something of contumacy. *Let him be unto thee, &c.* Regard him no longer as a brother Christian, but as one "without"—as the Jews did Gentiles and publicans. Do not hate him (chap. v. 44-8), but treat him as you do other men not connected with the church, until he repents, and renders himself, by God's grace, worthy of being received again into Christian fellowship. (Comp. Rom. xvi. 17; 1 Cor. v. 11, 13; 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7; 2 Thes. iii. 6, 14; 2 Tim. ii. 21; Titus iii. 10; 2 John 10.) This passage shows that every congregation has the power of excluding disobedient and refractory members from participation in its ordinances. Church discipline is according to the mind of Christ, and when wisely exercised, is calculated to promote a church's well being.

18. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.
9Chap. xvi. 19; John xx. 23; 1 Cor. v. 4.

The constituted court of Christ's Church has authority to pronounce upon all such cases, and their decisions, on Scriptural grounds, shall have sanction from above. This authority He has given to the Church in order to secure her purity and peace, and if she proceeds in the performance of these duties in the temper and process prescribed by Him as the great Head of the Church, she but executes His laws, and she will be sustained by God Himself. While this promise was primarily addressed to the Apostles, who, in the administration of discipline, could not err, because they acted under the immediate guidance of the Spirit, it cannot be doubted, that it, as well as the formula of discipline in verses 15-17, was given to the Church through all time. As these words, which only a short time before were spoken to Peter (xvi. 16), are here addressed to all the Twelve, it is evident that they meant nothing peculiar to Peter, far less to his pretended successors at Rome.

19. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.—9Chap. v. 24. 91 John iii. 22 and v. 14.

Our Lord thus assured the Apostles, who, in their important relation to the Church, would need special direction from heaven, that it was not necessary that the whole company should always be together in order to consult and pray; if only two

should unite in seeking a knowledge of the Divine will, their prayer would be heard, and whatsoever they should ask for, as connected with their official capacity, they should receive it. We are to regard this also as a general promise encouraging social prayer. *Two*, or more of *you*, or of any of my disciples, for instance husband and wife, *shall agree*, literally be *symphonious*, referring primarily to musical harmony. There must be prayer in living and loving union—by kindred spirits, members of one family, servants of one Lord, constrained by the same love, fighting under one banner, cheered by assurances of the same victory. The harmony of two hearts in prayer indicates that the same Spirit is in both. This union in prayer is the innermost and highest unity of the people of God. *The on earth* corresponds to the *my Father which is in heaven*. *Touching any thing*, &c. There must be, not an agreement merely to pray in concert, but to *pray for some definite thing*.—And in praying to our Heavenly Father, whose heart is full of tenderness, we must remember that He has all knowledge, and that His promise does not have respect to any improper fancies of men, but to petitions conformed to what He sees is right and suitable. That the promise has no reference to any selfish prayer, which two or more may unite in offering, is self-evident. (Mark x. 35. *It shall be done for them*. If the prayer is presented in faith, and the thing asked for is conducive to our good and to the glory of God, we may be sure of a favorable answer. The fewness of the petitioners shall be no bar to the proper answer from God. Not for nothing (as appears from the following verse) does Jesus say, *of my Father, not your Father*. (See John ix. 31; Matt. vii. 11; Luke xviii. 1; James iv. 3.)

20. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Where, let it be where it will—in the sanctuary, or in the private dwelling, or in the barn, or in the field. (1 Cor. i. 2.) *Two or three*, if there be no more. It was not without design that our Lord specifies such a few. This would rectify the mistake of the Jews, who contended that there must be always ten persons present, at least, to give efficacy to social prayer.

It would also encourage His followers, when, in meeting together, their number should be small, either from choice or necessity. *Gathered together*. Not only does the fact of agreement seem essential to the fulfillment of the full measure of the promise (verse 19), but the fact of being gathered together is made a condition no less essential. In addition to there being unity of aim and desire, this unity must be *visible*. *In my name*. It is essential that the worship be in Christ's name. We cannot worship in His name unless we do it by His authority, for His sake, and in dependence on His mediation, dependence on Him for strength to serve Him, and for the acceptance of our persons and services, through the infinite value of His obedience, sacrifice and intercession.

There am I in the midst of them. The expression is much more emphatic and decisive than if it had a future form, *I shall be with them*. For it amounts to this: It is always a present truth—I *am* with them. In no age of the world, in no country, shall this be untrue. This cannot be understood of Christ's corporeal presence, for He said, "I am no more in the world." It is also to be distinguished from His essential presence, for by this He is everywhere, and fills heaven and earth. It means a peculiar and gracious presence. He does not say what he will *do* there, but only that he *is* there. He is in the midst of all who are gathered together in His name, however small their number may be, to be the living conductor of the prayer of the believing suppliants upward and the answer downward, to enliven their devotions, hear their complaints, relieve their wants, give them grace and glory, and withhold no good thing from them. He is there to pardon the guilty, enrich the poor, comfort the mourners, be the father of the fatherless, and the judge of the widow in His holy habitation.

21. Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? 'till seven times? 22. Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: ^abut, Until seventy times seven.

^aLuke xvii. 4. ^aChap. vi. 14; Mark xi. 25; Col. iii. 13.

Peter wanted to have a number specified, beyond which he need not forgive. Self-love continually fears, lest it should go too far and give too much. A *sin*, or offense,

properly such, is that which is given wantonly, maliciously and without any provocation. In suggesting *seven*, Peter seems to have had in his mind some Pharisæical formula: probably he thought the allowance was liberal, and expected to be approved for his magnanimity. The doctrine is, that it is not lawful to set any limit to the principle and the practice of forgiving injuries. This rule, however, must of course be interpreted with sober-minded qualification. The duty of such a succession of pardons is founded upon the supposition of the offender's sincere repentance (Luke xvii. 3), and the absence of any danger from his machinations. There must be faithfulness to the evil-doer himself; he must be seasonably and prudently rebuked for his fault. (Luke xvii. 3.) All that our Lord means is, that we are to study and exercise a general spirit of mercy and forgiveness toward our brethren.

23. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

Therefore, to the end that you may understand the better what I say. *The kingdom of heaven* refers here to God's dealings with men under the Gospel dispensation. *King*, the symbol here of God, who is King of the universe. (Rev. xix. 16.) This is the first of the parables in which God appears in the character of a King. *Which would take account of, i. e.* settle accounts with. *Servants*. These servants were not slaves, the property of their master, for afterward it is assumed that he may sell them, not as an ordinary right, but as the special penalty incurred by an insolvent debtor. The term designates *collectors of the revenue or governors of provinces*. A king, in ancient times and Oriental regions, entered into pecuniary transactions with his servants, or attendants, on a great scale. Sometimes one was appointed by him the governor of a wealthy province, and another, as farmer of the taxes of a district, both paying a certain annual sum for their positions, as is still customary in Turkey and in the East. We are the servants with whom God takes account. Yet this is not the *final* reckoning referred to in Matt. xxv. 19; 2 Cor. v. 10; but rather such as that

of Luke xvi. 2, and that of the barren fig-tree, when the owner comes and makes a certain investigation, but does not yet close the season of grace—the day of salvation.

24. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.

Reckon. (See on verse 23.) *One*. The greatest debtor was not selected, but the very first that came to the king's hand, was found to be a great defaulter—to owe a very large sum. Everybody ought to reckon himself that *one*, for we have all manifold short-comings. (Comp. v. 35, xx. 12, 13.) *Brought unto him*. It was no willing act on the part of this servant. He sought it not. This settlement only troubled his soul. He had no desire to face his creditor. What a perfect contrast to the prodigal, who in genuine repentance says, "I will arise and go to my father." Instead of going with our sin to God, our great creditor, to have it expunged by His mercy, we keep at a distance from Him, and the effect of this is, that we are treasuring up additional debt and wrath against the day of wrath. (Rom. ii. 5. See on verse 23.)

Ten thousand talents. A vast but indefinite sum is here meant, with the design of showing the weight of obligation when lenity had been exercised toward such a debtor. A myriad was the highest number in the Greek notation. The talent referred to was probably of silver, for in all numbers occurring in ancient authors, *gold* is never to be supposed, unless mentioned. If so, the debt amounted to between *ten and fifteen millions of dollars*—such a debt, indeed, as could only have been contracted by one who, representing his sovereign in some wealthy province of an Eastern empire, had squandered in boundless extravagance revenues that should have swelled the public treasury. This enormous sum, representing, as it does, sins of omission and commission, internal and external sins, in thoughts, desires, words and actions (Ps. xix. 13), leaves us no hope of being able to pay our debt to the Divine law, and lays on each man a load of guilt enough to sink not one, but ten thousand souls into perdition.

25. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

Had not to pay. He was *bound* to pay, but had not the means to do so. So it is true of the sinner. It is not that he is just short of the whole sum by which he might clear his account with God—but he has absolutely nothing which can in the least pass current in such a settlement as God requires in the affairs of his soul. And thus, by this spiritual bankruptcy, he has fallen into the hands of the living God, and exposed himself to the whole penalty due to his misdeeds. *Commanded him to be sold*, &c. This custom of selling debtors, how cruel soever we justly account it, was, in early ages, established by the laws of many countries in Europe, as well as in Asia, republican, as well as monarchical. It was also in accordance with Jewish ideas and manners. (See Lev. xxv. 39; 2 Kings iv. 1; Amos viii. 6.) The debtor, however, had a *right* to kind and brotherly treatment during all his servitude, and whether the debt was paid out or not, freedom came with the seventh year, so that his bondage was a sort of apprenticeship. This part of the parable may indicate the heavy penalty of sin—namely, to be “sold into the hands of the enemy.” (See Judges ii. 14, iii. 8; iv. 2, x. 7; also Isaiah i. 1; Ps. xlv. 12.)

The selling of the wife and children is a completing feature of the parable, but may incidentally teach us that the consequences of our sins are not confined to us, but often drag those into ruin—*e. g.* poverty, disgrace, &c.—that are nearest and dearest to us. *And all that he had.* Thus stripped of his possessions, the servant had truly nothing left to pay the balance of the great debt. *And payment to be made.* That the proceeds from the sale are not sufficient, does not alter the command. God reveals Himself unto men first as a holy and righteous God in His law and sentence of condemnation, and this must be felt by them.

25. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

Fell down, &c., “prostrated himself at his feet.” *Have patience with me*, &c. No complaint is made against the sentence as if it were unjust in principle, or excessive in degree; the culprit only asks, in the extreme fear and anguish of the moment,

that the judge will not act hastily toward him, and thus the righteousness of the verdict is tacitly acknowledged. His promise to pay means nothing more than his desire to escape. This is not the language of genuine conversion; *its* cry and conviction is, “I am not worthy;” “poor, miserable, blind and naked.” The words of this servant prove nothing on the part of him whom he represents, but blind ignorance, unbelief and presumption as to what sin is, the guilt of the sinner, and the holiness and justice of God. No future obedience, even if it were perfect, which it will prove far from being, can make up for past disobedience. Yet, through Christ, God accepts our surrender of all and forgives. (See verse 34.)

27. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

Payment being hopeless, the master is, first, moved with compassion; next, liberates his debtor from prison, and then cancels the debt freely. The severity of God only endures till the sinner is brought to recognize his guilt. It is, indeed, only, like Joseph’s harshness, love in disguise. He is a gracious God, and has a fatherly heart. (Isa. i. 18; Ezek. xxxiii. 10, 11; Rom. v. 20, 21.) He wounds that he may heal, kills, that he may make alive. He does not forgive on account of our merits, but in infinite mercy for His Son’s sake, in whom there is such a worth as to exceed our sins.

28. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

The same servant. The very last man we should have expected to be guilty of such conduct. *Went out.* Mark this expression! If the fellow-servant had come to him before the reckoning, or while yet he was in his Master’s presence, he would not have dared to act the tyrant, but “out of sight, out of mind.” A danger of sinning attends the very joy of restored liberty. (John v. 14; 2 Kings xx. 13.) When is it that we forget our obligation to God, and our responsibilities to Him? When, like Cain, we go out from God’s presence. *Found one of his fellow-servants*, one of his fellow-officers under the king. How easy to find a debtor if we seek one! Mark

the difference here. The first case is that of master and servant; in this case both stand, though probably not in the same station, in the same relation of servants to a common lord.

Which owed him an hundred pence. The word rendered *pence* expresses a coin equal to about fifteen cents of our money. The amount is comparatively small, as is fit between servant and servant; the smallness of the debt brings the cruelty of the creditor out in high relief. He owed his lord some ten or fifteen millions of dollars, yet could not forgive about fifteen dollars.

Took him by the throat. He throttled him—half choking him by seizing his throat. He could not have treated the poor man worse had he been, not his fellow-servant, but his slave; not a debtor, but a robber. It is the conduct of a harsh, heartless bully, and shows that the mercy of the king toward him had not reached his frozen heart, or brought forth one gentle, loving, forbearing thought there.

Pay me what thou owest. That the man had a *right* to demand this payment, there is no reason to doubt, yet the exaction of right may not always be right in the sight of God. He wanted everything for nothing himself, but he wanted to let nobody have anything for nothing from him. When we look to God as simply an exactor of duties, we go forth in the same spirit, and are ourselves the greatest exactors of duties from others; but when, on the other hand, we learn to look upon God, not in the light of an exactor of aught, but as a giver of all, we become holier and freer ourselves.

29. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

The same attitude and the same words which drew compassion from his master are here employed toward himself by his fellow-servant. This itself ought to have reminded him of his duty to forgive as he had been forgiven.

30. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

The more he was entreated, the more severe and harsh he becomes. *Would not*—opposed to *moved with compassion*. (Verse 27.) He would not even “have patience.” Here is the climax of depravity, to be beg-

gars with God and tyrants to our brethren. *Went.* Dragging his prisoner along till he could hand him over to the jailor. This shows that the violence exhibited at first was not owing to a transient excitement. *Cast.* By which he invaded the right of his lord. *Into prison*—unto the debtor's ward. He knows nothing of remission, stands upon his right, and will act according to rigid justice. Ignorance or forgetfulness of his own guilt makes him harsh. (See Gal. vi. 1; Titus iii. 3.) *Till he should pay the debt.* How could he pay it when confined in prison? It seems difficult to avoid the conclusion that our Lord meant to teach that for the unforgiven man there is no possibility of ever exhausting the penalty of the law. (See on verse 34, and verse 36.)

31. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

Saw what was done, the great injustice and impudence of such an act, on the part of one so recently laid under the heaviest obligations to their common master. *Sorry.* Not anger, but sorrow, is man's proper mood toward sin, for all men are sinners. Wrath against sin is the proper attribute of God. (See verse 34.) *Came and told, &c.* God's saints are forever laying the sins of men before Him in confessional prayer. But God's own omniscience is forever taking cognizance of man's sins.

32. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: 33. Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?

After that he had called him. The question, whether after a man's sins have been all freely forgiven by God, he may yet fall from grace, does not here require discussion. This wicked servant is no representative of a pardoned sinner, the scope of the parable being not to teach the whole plan of salvation, but merely to set forth, in its strongest light, the absolute necessity of a forgiving disposition. *Wicked servant.* The language is most severe. No man is so wicked as he that sins against light, excepting the man that sins against mercy. *I forgave thee all that debt* (as soon as, and), *because thou desiredst me*, out of free grace, without any desert and worthiness. The unmerciful supplies God with weapons against himself. *Shouldst*

not thou also, &c. The argument *a fortiori* is here employed. If I forgave you that great debt, *much more* should you have forgiven your fellow-servant the trifle he owed you. God first exercises compassion and afterward desires and expects it of us. No answer of the unmerciful servant is recorded. (See Matt. xxii. 12.)

34. And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

Wroth—angry. Here is represented God's holy and punitive indignation. *Tormentors*, inflictors of chastisements. Criminals were often condemned to scourging. There are tormentors in the world of woe—fellow-sinners, and evil angels—instruments of the just, yet terrible judgments of God. (See Luke xvi. 28; Matt. xxv. 41.) *Till he should pay, &c.* Until with nothing he could pay fifteen millions of dollars—that is, for evermore. His condition was remediless. “Till” does not indicate the time when punishment will cease, but the time up to which it will continue. Since man can never pay the slightest portion of the debt he owes to God, the making the payment of all the

condition of his deliverance from punishment, is the strongest possible way of expressing the eternal duration of his punishment.

35. ^aSo likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

^bProv. xxi. 13; chap. vi. 12; Mark xi. 26; James ii. 13.

So likewise—in this spirit, or on this principle. *My heavenly Father*, Jesus does not say, *your Father*, for whosoever is so unmerciful, is not worthy to be reckoned a child of God. (Eph. iv. 32.) *Do also unto you, &c.* If we do not *from the heart*, not in appearance merely, but inwardly, sincerely, fully, forgive those who do us wrong, God will not forgive us our sins against Him, but will condemn us to the punishment they deserve. (Comp. vi. 12.) As certainly as there is no kingdom of God without forgiveness being *received* by us, so certainly is there no kingdom of God without forgiveness being *exercised* by us. (Chapter v. 7.) A man without compassion, has all against him, God and the world, and meets as many adversaries in judgment as he had associates in life. (Eph. iv. 32.)

1. What did the disciples say to Jesus? 2. How did Christ reply? 3. Who is represented as “greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” 4. What is said concerning any one “who shall offend one of these little ones?” 5. What is said of “offenses?” 6. Explain verses 8 and 9. 7. What is the reason for “not despising one of these little ones?” 8. What did the Son of man come to save? 9. Repeat the parable of the “lost sheep.” 10. What does it teach? 11. How are we to act toward a trespassing brother? 12. Explain verses 19 and 20. 13. What is taught in the parable of “a certain king?”

CHAPTER XIX.

² Christ healeth the sick; ³ answereth the Pharisees concerning divorcement; ¹⁰ sheweth when marriage is necessary; ¹³ receiveth little children; ¹⁶ instructeth the young men how to obtain eternal life; ²⁰ and how to be perfect; ²³ telleth his disciples how hard it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God; ²⁷ and promiseth reward to those that forsake any thing to follow him.

AND it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan; ² and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them there.

^aMark x. 1; John x. 40. ^bChap. xii. 15.

These sayings, probably the collective sayings of Christ in Galilee, now complete. *Departed, &c.* This was the Redeemer's farewell to Galilee, his last journey from

that region to Jerusalem. It was with reference to the fact that this region had been the main scene of His ministry, that the celebrated Julian, the apostate, who was providentially slain in the midst of his efforts to destroy Christianity, exclaimed with his expiring breath, “Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!” *Coasts of Judea, &c.*,—not merely came to Perea, but traveled through it. (See Mark x. 1.) *Followed him*, to hear His wonderful words, and see Him confirming them by His works.

3. ¶ The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

Tempting him—according to their usual habit, endeavoring to ensnare Him. The mooted question about divorce which they proposed, was a dangerous one, generally, in the country of the Jews, but especially in Perea, in the dominions of Herod Antipas, who had put away his first wife and married one divorced from his brother Philip. They knew that a decision of the question by Jesus either way would expose Him to censure, and, on one side, might bring upon Him the fate of John the Baptist, for a similar declaration. *Is it lawful, &c.* Is it according to the law for a man to divorce his wife for anything whatever that may displease him. The question related to the right interpretation of Deut. xxiv. 1.

4. And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female. 5. And said, *For* this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh?

^cGen. i. 27, v. 2; Mal. ii. 15. ^dGen. ii. 24; Mark x. 5-9; Eph. v. 31. ^e1 Cor. vi. 16, vii. 2.

He answered, irrespective of any governing power, and fearless of any snare. *Have ye not read.* (See Mark x. 3-12, where, in the discussion of this subject, there is a somewhat different arrangement.) The authenticity and the Divine authority of the Pentateuch are here directly and distinctly recognized. *At the beginning.* The argument in this and the verse following is, that God, at the beginning of the world, created man and woman, not arbitrarily, or independent of, but *for* each other, as suitable and adapted to each other, in order that they should live together in perfect union, and that hence married persons are to be regarded, not as two, but one, and therefore, by the Divine law, no divorce can be permitted. (See Gen. i. 27.) *Made them* (man as a race) *male* (not a male) *and female* (not a female.) That the marriage tie is to be restricted to one, and no more, on either side, is corroborated by the following considerations: 1. The fact that the two sexes are perpetually preserved in an approximate equality in point of number. 2. The immense evils, personal, domestic and civil, that have ever arisen where this great law has been violated. 3. The unequivocal teaching of the Bible on the subject (1 Cor. vii. 2.)

Though polygamy was practised in Patriarchal and Jewish times, it was never sanctioned by God.

And said. The words of Adam (Gen. ii. 24), are here words of God. It is all the same, for Adam uttered these words prophetically as a paradisaical, divine, fundamental ordinance. *For this cause.* Because God intended that the two sexes should live together in pairs. In wedlock there is a natural and a moral bond. *Shall a man leave*, literally, *wholly forsake, father and mother.* The relation of parent and child may seem close, but there is one closer still to which it must yield. *Shall cleave*—adhere firmly. The Greek word is from a noun, signifying *glue*, and the metaphor most forcibly intimates that nothing but death can separate them. *Shall be one flesh.* They are two halves of one whole, forming *one person*, in affection and interest, and so to continue as long as both are in the flesh. The Futures indicate the necessary realization of the original relation and condition of the sexes in marriage. The *essential* bond of marriage consists in the unity in the flesh, not in that of the soul, by which latter, indeed, the marriage state should ever be hallowed and sweetened, but without which it still exists in all its binding power, for this life. (Matt. xxii. 30; Luke xx. 35; 1 Tim. iii. 2.)

6. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

^aMal. ii. 14; Rom. vii. 2; 1 Cor. vii. 10; Eph. v. 28; Heb. xiii. 4.

Wherefore. This is the inevitable inference from the original constitution of the marriage relation. *No more twain*, no longer two, as they were before. *What; that which, not those which*, for they are now *one flesh*. *Joined together*, made one. *Let not man put asunder.* Jesus thus rejects the principle of divorce unqualifiedly as a human sundering of what God has indissolubly united. It cannot be done in any case but that mentioned in v. 9, without crime, except by death. (1 Cor. v. 10, 11.) How opposed to this Divine command are many of the legislative enactments by which divorces are granted so freely in our day. The Christian Church, by adopting these words into all its formularies of solemnizing marriage, ought not

to recognize the validity of any divorce, except for the one stated by our Lord.

7. They say unto him, *Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?* 8. He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. 9. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife except *it be for fornication*, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

^aDeut. xxiv. 1: chap. v. 31; Mark x. 4. ^bChap. v. 32; Mark x. 11; Luke xvi. 18; Rom. vii. 3; 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

Why did Moses, &c. The Pharisees objected that Moses had given the Jews permission to put away their wives by giving the wife a bill of divorcement. (Deut. xxiv. 1.) Thus the authority of Moses seemed to be arrayed against that of Jesus. *Moses because of the hardness, &c.* Jesus acknowledged that a relaxation of the strictness of the marriage bond was permitted by the law of Moses, but only as tolerating, not as approving, and only to prevent greater evils. It was found to be necessary and expedient from the "hardness of the hearts" of the Jews, which would have brooked no restraint of the kind here referred to. They were not *commanded* to divorce their wives in the circumstances specified, but were only *suffered* to do so, on account of their intractable and stubborn disposition. And they were required to give the wife a bill of divorcement, an arrangement calculated to prevent undue haste in the transaction, and designed continually to bring back the husband who was wishing for a divorce, to the bar of his conscience, and to compel him to make it clear to his own mind, whether it was not a want of affection arising from his own hardness of heart, which produced this wish, rather than any defect existing in his wife. Moreover, though it is true, that as far as the Mosaic statute or the civil law was concerned, husbands had a right thus to separate from their wives, yet it is equally clear that the ground of legal separation would not absolve a man from his amenability to his conscience and his God.

But from the beginning, &c. In the original state of things in Paradise. The first instance of polygamy is recorded in Gen. iv. 19, and it deserves special notice that it occurs in the line of Cain, not in that of Seth. This is repeated by our Lord (see v. 4), in order to impress upon

his audience the temporary and purely civil character of this Mosaic relaxation. In every discussion or interpretation, recourse should be had to the origin of a Divine institution. (See Acts xv. 7.) The Governor of the Universe suffers many things which he does not sanction. He allows things to be in the infancy of the race, which he expressly reprobates and prohibits in its maturer growth and development, and always in principle. However inexplicable this may be to us now, we shall be able to understand and explain it hereafter.

I say unto you. The great Lawgiver gives to the written word its complement, perfection and meaning. The statement is plain. Adultery is the only sufficient reason of divorce. (See Rom. vii. 3; 1 Cor. vii. 39.) Want of "spiritual affinity," intemperance, neglect to provide for the family, desertion, are not sufficient causes for divorce. Separation from "bed and board" is doubtless justifiable in cases of great and long protracted intemperance, and of neglect to provide. Whatever the law of any State may permit, the Churches of Christ must require their members to conform to the law of marriage as defined by Christ; and ministers of the Gospel should not allow themselves to be *participants in the crime* by uniting in marriage persons the one or the other of whom, according to our Lord's interpretation of the original law, is already in the marriage relation. It is clear from the tenor of the whole passage, that the marriage relation ought to be highly revered and honored. It ought never to be contracted unadvisedly, lightly or wantonly, but soberly, discreetly, and with due consideration. Its proper observance is attended by every quiet virtue. The orderly family is the foundation of the orderly society. Those who have entered into this relation, since they form as it were one body, should also have one mind and heart, and live together as heirs of the grace of eternal life.

10. ¶ His disciples say unto him, *If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.* 11. But he said unto them, *All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.* 12. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom

of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

¹Prov. xxi. 19. ²1 Cor. vii. 2, 7, 9, 17. ³1 Cor. vii. 32, 34, ix. 5, 15.

Of the man, i. e., of the husband. Our word *husband* comes from the Anglo-Saxon *hus* and *band*: the *bond* of the *house*, anciently spelt *house-bond*. *It is not good, &c.* Most of the Jews at this time regarded a person's supposed inconvenience as sufficient to justify a divorce. The disciples, therefore, who had grown up in the midst of such practices, speaking hastily, and under the influence of their habitual impressions, said, that in this view of marriage—as the husband was joined indissolubly to his wife, and she might prove to be a woman unworthy, and ill-adapted to render him happy, unless the power of divorce from such a woman were possessed, it was, in their estimation, preferable not to marry at all. Before we enter into an engagement, which nothing but *death* can *dissolve*, we had need to act cautiously, carefully consulting the *will* and *word*, of God. Where an unbridled *passion*, or a *base love of money*, leads the way, marriage is sure to be miserable.

This saying, i. e., “it is not good to marry.” We are not to understand our Lord as acquiescing in this rash general proposition of His disciples, else could not the Apostle have said, as he did, respecting this very matter, “I have no commandment of the Lord” (1 Cor. vii. 25), when giving us his private opinion, that because of the then “present distress,” it was not good to marry, neither would he have spoken of “forbidding to marry” (1 Tim. iv. 3), as among the most prominent marks of the great apostacy. *All men cannot receive, &c., i. e.,* as the human species is to be continued, and in reference to the great mass of men, the marriage state grows out of the very principles and propensities implanted in their nature by the Creator, all men cannot assent to *this saying*. *Save they, &c.* Any exception to the universality of the matrimonial necessity and duty, is with a rare few—*those to whom it is given* (of God), *i. e.,* those who are possessed of such a physical constitution or temperament, such self-control and Divine qualifications, as to overcome this desire for the marriage state. If persons have reason to regard

themselves as among these cases of exception, and are, in a judicious manner, disposed to act on the saying of the disciples, they are at liberty to do so. Who are these? the disciples would naturally ask, and this our Lord proceeds to tell them in three particulars.

Eunuchs. The term means, literally, a *bed-keeper*, chamberlain. There was such a class in the East, subjected to a cruel degradation, and employed to guard the females in the harems. *So born*, naturally incapacitated for the marriage state, or indisposed to it. *Made eunuchs of men*, mutilated in infancy, through the avarice or policy of men. It may also refer to all such as, against their own inclination, are prevented from marrying by the caprice of men, or through unjust regulations imposed upon society. *Made themselves eunuchs, &c.,* that is, who have denied themselves the liberty of marriage, not for the purpose of *meriting* the kingdom of heaven, but in order thereby to devote themselves more entirely to the kingdom of God (1 Cor. vii. 7, 32–35, ix. 12); or, being married, are ever ready to sacrifice their conjugal enjoyments for the sake of their spiritual calling—having wives as though they had none. (1 Cor. vii. 29.) *Origen* fell into sad error on this point, carrying out the literal purport of this clause. And some forbid marriage to the clergy, which is denounced by the Apostle as “a doctrine of devils.” (1 Tim. iv. 1, 3.) Yet, in almost every age of the Church, especially when pioneer missionary work is to be performed, it seems desirable that some of Christ's ministers shall, for a time at least, remain unmarried.

He that is able to receive it, &c. “He who feels this to be his proper vocation, let him embrace it.” All the Apostles did not receive it, that is, did not live unmarried. (1 Cor. ix. 5.) Thus, all is left free in this matter. There is no excessive sanctity in celibacy, and no compulsion to marry; but every one, priest and people, must act according to their own personal discretion, constitution, feelings, nature; either come under the law by which marriage is regulated, or have nothing to do with it at all. “From whence it follows,” says *Burkitt*, “that men and women are not by monas-

tical vows to be obliged to live a single life, which some cannot perform without sin."

13. 'Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put *his* hands on them, and pray: and the disciples ^{were} rebuked them.

¹Mark x. 13; Luke xviii. 15. ²Chap. xvi. 22; Luke ix. 49, 50.

Little children. They were doubtless brought by their parents, who, not content with having received a blessing for themselves, entreat this now for their little ones also. *Put his hands on them, &c.* It was customary among the Jews when one prayed for another who was present, to lay his hands upon the person's head. (Gen. xviii. 14; Matt. ix. 18.) This imposition of hands was practiced especially in paternal blessing. (Gen. xlviii. 14-20.) *Rebuked them, i. e.,* the parents. (Mark x. 13.) In administering this rebuke the disciples, beside desiring further elucidation concerning marriage and divorce, may have been mainly influenced by zeal for their Master, and concern for His repose: yet on this occasion, as on others, it was against the mind of Christ. (Chap. xv. 23; Luke xviii. 39, 40.)

It is well for us that Christ has more love and tenderness than the best of His disciples have. It is our duty, having first dedicated ourselves, to consecrate our children to the Lord in reliance upon His promise and power. The promise is to us, and "our seed." The souls of young children are evidently precious in God's sight. They are capable of receiving grace. Their parents are their trustees, empowered by nature to transact for their benefit, and therefore Christ accepts their dedication of them as their act and deed.

14. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for ^{of} such is the kingdom of heaven.—¹Chap. xviii. 3.

An infant was to the eye of Christ an object of stupendous importance, a subject of immeasurable potentialities, a life for endless development and wondrous destinies. He saw the oak in the acorn, the waving harvests in the little seed. *Suffer, &c.* It was a devotedness highly gratifying to Him, and the disciples interfered very improperly. Our Lord does not say, suffer *these* children, but suffer all little children to come unto me. What precious words are these from the lips of Jesus! How many dying children have lisped them in their last moments! *Forbid them*

not. Here those are rebuked who think that children have nothing to do with Christ, and are to be held back, because unable to understand.

For of such, &c. Here is the *reason* why children should be brought. That these words were not meant to teach that children are born sinless and innocent is abundantly clear from other parts of Scripture. (John iii. 6.) They teach, 1. That the Church of God on earth is largely composed of children. The words "of such" do not mean "such as resemble these," but such very children. Persons of a child-like disposition are referred to in the next verse. 2. That the Church of God is to be perpetuated and prospered mainly by those who, in their childhood, are dedicated to His service, and receive a religious training. 3. That the kingdom of glory is, and will be, largely composed of little children. The salvation of all who die in infancy may be confidently expected. Though sin has abounded, grace has much more abounded. (Rom. v. 20.) Jesus will not shut those out from His presence in glory, whom He would not allow to be sent from His presence on earth.

"I know," says the *Rev. William Jay*, "there are some who believe in the damnation of infants. They have no higher notion of a God of love, the Father of mercies, the God of all grace, than to suppose that He will punish eternally creatures whom the Scripture itself calls innocent as to personal and actual transgression, and whose condition depended entirely upon Himself. Admitting this barbarous notion, could such a Being ever be trusted in, or loved? But the God we worship is not Moloch, neither is the punishment we contend for in a future state, separate from the effects of conscious guilt, regret, self-accusation, of all which those who die in infancy are incapable. We listen not to unfeeling and system-hardened divines, but to that Saviour "who gathers the lambs with His arms and carries them in His bosom," and who, having invited our souls to rest, cries, "suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

15. And he laid *his* hands on them, and departed thence.

Laid his hands. (See on verse 13.) *Departed thence, i. e.* from that part of Perea where this incident took place, for He abode still in the region beyond Jordan.

16. ¶ "And behold, one came and said unto him, 'Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life.'—Mark x. 17; Luke xviii. 18. ¶ Luke x. 25.

The narrative which here begins is recorded by three Evangelists. From this fact, as well as because the conversation related was between our Lord and an individual, it is evident that it demands and deserves special attention. *One came.* This young man (verse 20) was a man of wealth (verse 22), a ruler (Luke xviii. 18), probably the president of a neighboring synagogue, and a person of refinement and excellence of character, as is seen from the circumstances here related of him. It was not common at that period for any of his order to seek the Saviour of the world. Jesus was, indeed, followed by many; but they were usually the poor, the destitute and the afflicted. The thoughts of eternal life are very rare in a young man of affluence and eminence. Happy is he to whom God vouchsafes to give them. This young man did not, like Nicodemus, come to Jesus under the shadow of the night, but on the high road, in the presence of a crowd.

Good Master, a title usually employed by the Jews to their most eminent rabbis. This seems to be the only instance in His history in which Jesus was addressed as "Good Master." *What good thing, &c.* He asks about *doing*. What he seeks is not grace, but reward. Yet, still an obscure feeling is ever saying to him that the treasure of his good works is not yet great enough. He wishes to add something to his righteousness, and wishes Jesus to tell him what it is. *That I may have, &c.* He comes not from curiosity, or to have a sickness healed, or to plead about a child, but about his own soul. He sincerely and anxiously wishes to know the way to everlasting happiness. How far does this wealthy, influential young man excel many of his peers in rank and position, who have lost all faith in the supernatural, and who make it their highest boast to deny everything that is spiritual and divine? How promising does his case appear. How ready

are we to pronounce him a hopeful inquirer! This favorable beginning only makes the sequel more sad.

17. And he said unto him, *Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God; but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.*
¶ 1. Sam. ii. 2; Ps. liii. 1; James. i. 17.

Jesus questions the motive of the young man for calling Him "Good Master;" so in His discourse in the plain (See Luke vi. 46); He does not say, *I am not good, but why callest thou me good?* God is good; there is no goodness without Godhead. The ruler partially perceived virtue in Jesus, or he would not have applied to Him. But he did not fully recognize it, or he would not have regarded Him merely as a human *teacher*, neither would he have withdrawn; much less did he recognize His Godhead. Wherefore, Jesus does not accept from him the title of goodness, without that of Godhead (comp. Luke vi. 46), and thereby vindicates the honor of the Father with whom He is one. (See John v. 19.) The young man deals with good in its relative meaning, and in this sense he says: "Good," that is, "Excellent" Master. Jesus teaches him to apprehend good in its absoluteness, and to that end he must understand the being good, which he ascribes to Christ, as being founded in God. Thus the answer is to be explained: If thou wouldst call me good, thou must apprehend my unity with God, and my Divine nature. In this question, our Lord also in part replies to the inquiry of the young man, who, as the subsequent sketches show, had an idea that such goodness as we can attain, was a sufficient title to heaven. There is no being good but God. No human being is so perfect and observant of the Divine law, as to deserve the appellation *good*. Hence, to no good thing which you can do, is eternal life promised as a reward.

But if thou wilt enter into life, &c. According to the original, "if thou *willest, or art disposed, to enter into life.*" If you desire to work righteousness in order to procure a title to eternal life, you must perfectly keep all the commandments of God. The Saviour shaped His reply in such a manner as ultimately to expose to the young man's own view his deficiencies, and his need of something for salvation different

from what he had heretofore supposed. Thus, the law is our school-master, to bring us unto Christ. At the same time the Lord teaches us that faith and grace do not make void, but establish the law.

13. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, "Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, 13. 'Honour thy father and thy mother; and, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
 *Ex. xx. 13; Deut. v. 17; Rom. xiii. 17. *Chap. xv. 4; Eph. vi. 2; Col. iii. 20. *Lev. xix. 18; chap. xxii. 39; Rom. xiii. 9; Gal. v. 14; James ii. 8.

Which? If there was any command, which, through ignorance or inadvertence the ruler had neglected, he would like to know what one it was. *Thou shalt do no murder*, &c. The Jews were not accustomed, in ordinary discourse, or in the commonly published books, to recite the precepts of the decalogue in the *very words* in which they were expressed, but in *other words*, or in another order. The Saviour specifies only a few of the commandments, which were to represent the rest. He refers to the commandments of the second table, 1. Because we can more easily attain to a correct knowledge of our conduct toward our fellow-men, whom we see, than toward God, whom we do not see, and, 2. Because when the ruler had once seen his lack of love to his neighbor, the conclusion as to his lack of love to God, could not be difficult. He puts the prohibitions of unlovingness first (verse 18); then follows the particular command of positive love, *Honour thy father and thy mother*, and the general one, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. In this last, the spirit and essence of the laws of the second table are summed up. (Rom. xiii. 10.)

20. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

What darkness and self-ignorance did his answer reveal! Doubtless he had observed the commandments in their letter, but he did not see that each precept sent its jurisdiction into the depths of the heart, and charged a thought, a desire, an appetite, with infraction of a holy and a righteous law. (Ps. li. 6; Matt. v. 21-28.) The query, *What lack I yet?*—"in what am I yet behind, or wanting," showing, as it did, a readiness to undertake more than he had yet done, indicated at least that his heart misgave him, and that he felt that he still lacked something.

21. Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me.
 *Chap. vi. 20; Luke xii. 33, xvi. 9; Acts ii. 45, iv. 34, 35; 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19.

Said unto him. The Saviour does not confirm the truth of his declaration, but only tells him what he, in case it is really so with him, has yet to do. *Perfect*, that is, complete in every respect, if thou wilt be without deficiency. The young man wished a high standard of righteousness, and now it is presented to him. Not absolute, but comparative perfection is here spoken of. God only is absolutely perfect. The Jewish nation thought it perfection to sell all and give to the poor. *Go and sell*, &c. This command was given to the ruler to cure his love of the world, which could not, in him, be cured otherwise, and to bring him to self-knowledge and whole-heartedness by having a great problem of practical obedience to solve. The task which the Saviour assigned him was in perfect accordance with his declaration concerning himself. What a touchstone for his sincerity! What a trial of the power of the law, to convict of disobedience all who profess to keep it! Though all Christians are not required to do what was enjoined on the rich ruler, yet the Gospel requires such a consecration of all property to God, that when the duty is made known, to give some, or much, or all to God, the offerings can and will be made.

Treasure in heaven, in place of thy treasure on earth. (Lam. iii. 24-27.) *Follow me*. Here was the Gospel hidden in this brief command. Jesus preached faith to this inquirer. To follow Christ, was to acknowledge Him as the Messiah of God, possess His spirit, trust in His righteousness, and imitate His example.

22. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

Men undergo great agony of mind while they are in suspense between the love of the world and the love of their souls. When the first absolutely predominates, then they enjoy a factitious rest through a false peace; when the latter has the upper hand, then they possess true tranquility of mind, through that peace of God that passeth knowledge.

For he had great possessions. What was his wealth—which he had found could not

give him comfort—in comparison with peace of conscience, and eternal life? Yet he chose to retain his earthly treasure, which he could only hold for a few years, and to refuse the offer of imperishable treasure in heaven, thus showing us what harm one master-sin may do to a soul. We never read a word to show that he was subsequently converted. The saying of Jesus (verse 23) would seem to indicate that he was not. Thus the day that dawned so brightly closed in gloom.

23. ¶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Chap. xiii. 22: Mark x. 24; 1 Cor. i. 26; 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.

The Saviour, employing the occasion which had presented itself for instruction, proceeds to speak very freely on the dangers connected with worldly possessions. A *rich man*, not only one who has so many hundreds or thousands more than some of his neighbors, but any one who has more than is necessary for the decent and comfortable support of himself and his family. *Hardly enter*. There is, in itself, no more sin in being rich than there is virtue in being poor. It is not the possession of a thing that may constitute a disqualification for heaven, but it is the excessive idolatry of the thing. The man who has a small income may have his heart as much taken up with it as a man who has an income of many thousands a year. Experience tells us that, except in some few, rare and blessed instances, it cannot be but that the man who possesses abundance, will find the difficulty of a simple faith immeasurably increased. *Enter into the kingdom of heaven*—be induced to become Christians, and be prepared for the Church on earth and the state of the blest in heaven. A rich gentleman once said to a day-laborer, "Do you know to whom these estates belong on the borders of the lake?" "No," replied the laborer. "They belong to *me*," said the rich man. "And the wood and the cattle—do you know whose they are?" "No." "They are mine also," continued the rich man. "Yes, all, all that you can see is mine." The peasant stood still a moment, then pointed to heaven, and in a solemn tone asked, "Is *that* also thine?" How apt the rich are to forget to look upward, and to

ask, "Is heaven mine?" (See on next verse.)

24. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.—Jer. xiii. 23.

The camel being the largest animal they were acquainted with in Judea, its name became proverbial for denoting anything remarkably large, and a *camel's passing through a needle's eye* came by consequence, as appears from some rabbinical writings, to express a thing extremely difficult, or apparently impossible.

Our Lord here represents the salvation of a rich man as being next to an impossibility. Riches powerfully tend to increase pride, covetousness, self-indulgence—they furnish many temptations and incitements to luxury, intemperance and sensuality. They purchase flatterers, exclude faithful reprovers, prejudice the mind against the humbling truths and self-denying precepts of the Gospel, and they increase the number and force of those obstacles which must be broken through, and the supposed value of those objects which must be renounced, if a *man* would be a disciple of Christ. Those who possess them, therefore, have peculiar need to take heed to their ways, to keep their hearts with all diligence, and especially to implore with unceasing earnestness and fervor that help from above, which can alone enable them to overcome the world and to vanquish all the powerful enemies they have to contend with. (1 Tim. vi. 17–19.) How few rich men are made uneasy and apprehensive by these plain words of Christ, that their riches might hinder them from going to heaven! The more praiseworthy are those wealthy Christians who devote their riches to the furtherance of the cause of Christ. We should pray daily for rich men's souls. Well may the Litany of the Church of England contain the words, "In all time of our wealth, good Lord, deliver us."

25. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved.

The disciples expressed wonder or surprise, if not doubt, as to the salvation of any. They see that even the poorest may have something of the earthly-mindedness which caused the ruler to go away sorrowful. As they were poor themselves, and like all men in their station, their idea of

what constituted wealth would be moderate, their question indicates that they understood the Saviour to speak not exclusively of the overgrown possessors of untold thousands, but of the great majority of mankind, else their inquiry would have been particularly pointless and unmeaning.

How searching the standard of the possibility of salvation which our Lord here presents. "I doubt the conversion of the man," says one, "whose *purse* is not converted." The religion that costs the owner nothing is probably worth about its cost. The great mass of professors of religion, who live to make their children rich, are in immense danger of ruining their own souls and destroying their own children. Though poverty will not save the soul, the dangers of riches should much reconcile the poor to their condition.

26. But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them. With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

¹Gen. xviii. 14; Job xlii. 2; Jer. xxxii. 17; Zech. viii. 6; Luke i. 37, xviii. 27.

There was much tenderness and sweetness in this reply of our Lord. It will be observed that he does not retract what he had said, nor even soften it in the least degree, but rather strengthens it. The energy of Divine grace is able to make a man despise the world, with all it contains, when no efforts of man, no arguments, eloquence or persuasions can do it. He who saved Abraham, Moses, Job and David, in spite of their riches, can save others also. *Grace* and not *place* is the hinge on which our salvation turns. Yet those who are surrounded with the luxuries of life, should feel that their spiritual welfare requires the most earnest, persevering and intense application of all their powers.

27. ¶ Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?

¹Mark x. 28; Luke xviii. 28. ²Deut. xxxiii. 9; chap. iv. 20; Luke v. 11.

Peter speaks for himself and the rest of the Apostles. He had seen the rich young man go away grieved, and had heard the Lord's declaration concerning the danger of riches, and now his mind reverts with gratitude to the period when he, and those associated with him, had been called, and obeyed the call. *Forsaken all*. The disciples had, indeed, but little to leave, yet it was their *all*, and the same faith would have led them to make larger sacrifices,

if they had been called to it, as they afterward were. *And followed thee*. To forsake all, without following Christ, is the virtue of a philosopher. To follow Christ in profession, without forsaking all, is, alas! too common in those who are members of the Church. But to *follow Christ and forsake all*, is what He requires. There is no season in life upon which the believer looks back with so much joy as that in which he first determined to engage in his Redeemer's service. A man may leave all without ever having possessed anything. It is by the heart that we cleave to earthly possessions, it is by renouncing them in our heart that we disengage ourselves from them.

What shall we have therefore? How shall it fare with us? When Jesus had called them to follow Him, He told them what they were to do; not what they should have. (Chap. iv. 19.) It is evident that Peter's craving of reward was proper, and did not exclude love. At the same time our Lord by his concluding remark, in verse 30, and the following parable, strikes at the root of the Jewish error of seeking reward on the ground of merit.

Bishop Butler, of England, who wrote the great work, entitled, "Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion," lived unmarried, and spent his immense revenue in charity and alms. Yet, in his latter days, awful thoughts of his sinfulness overwhelmed his soul. Feeling how little his charities weighed against the impurities of the heart, he trembled before God. But he flung himself, by faith, upon that precious promise of Jesus, "Whosoever cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out," and was richly consoled with the hope, not of being saved by works of righteousness, but by grace alone.

28. And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye shall also sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

¹Chap. xx. 21; Luke xxii. 28-30; 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3; Rev. ii. 26.

In the regeneration, &c. The reference here is to the end of the world, when God will create "new heavens and a new earth." (2 Peter iii. 12, 13; comp. Isa. lxv. 17, lxvi. 22; Acts iii. 21; Rom. viii. 22; Rev. xxi. 1, 27.) This earth shall have its regeneration just as truly as the human

heart. Man is a little world; and the world is but a great man. The one is the type, the foreshadow, the microcosm of the other. And a day comes when this earth shall have sin expelled from every crevice, the fever that torments it from every part. The returning presence of the Lord of Glory will give it that lasting regeneration that shall place it again in the orbit out of which it has wandered eccentrically, re-unite it to the great continent of heaven, from which it has been broken off, and make it no longer an out-cast colony, but part and parcel of the wide realm of glory and beauty, basking in the sunshine, and guided by the sceptre and sway of Him, who is King of kings and Lord of lords. At the same time the bodies of God's people shall be renovated and restored. They "shall be raised incorruptible," and "shall be changed." (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.) The same change which will be produced in the dead by the resurrection, will be accomplished in the bodies of the living—as in the case of Enoch and Elias, who carried their bodies along with them to heaven. (See Rom. viii. 22, 23.)

When the Son of man, &c. The throne which is the result as well as the manifestation of His glory. (See Heb. i. 3.) *Ye also, &c.* It is here expressed in figurative terms, that the Apostles should attend the final Judge, concurring in the judgment He would pronounce on the rebellious Jews and all others who rejected the Gospel preached by them, and those who should come after them, that in the kingdom of heaven they should have a distinguished pre-eminence of glory and reward, and that a place of honor should be assigned them near the person of our Lord Himself. The manner of expressing this idea was drawn from the circumstance of there having been twelve Apostles, and of Israel having been divided into twelve tribes. (Rev. iii. 21.)

²⁹ *And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.*

³⁰ Chron. xxv. 9; Mark x. 29, 30; Luke xviii. 29, 30.

Every one. The promise of reward for devotion to Christ's cause is here made general. Sacrifices like these were doubtless often necessary when the Gospel was

first preached. The offense of the cross is not yet ceased. Christians often have to encounter laughter, ridicule, mockery and family persecution. *Shall receive an hundred fold.* This number is manifestly symbolical, as the expression of an immeasurable advantage. The rewards in this world and the next are definitely distinguished. *Wife.* The forsaking of the wife does not imply a dissolution of the matrimonial relation, as is plain from what our Lord had said but shortly before on this subject. Here, incidentally, one man and one woman, as husband and wife, is shown to be the law of the Christian economy.

Many Christians have lost their possessions and have been separated from their families, because they chose to obey God rather than men, and though they may not, in every case, have been rewarded in the *very things* they renounced, yet have they received that peace, joy and happiness which have recompensed them an hundred fold for all the sacrifices they made for Christ and His Gospel, and a degree of comfort, tranquility and encouragement, far beyond anything that all the wealth and splendor of this world can bestow.

Inherit everlasting life. To the earthly advantages of godliness, life everlasting is to be superadded. They shall "inherit" it, not deserve it by merit. (1 Tim. iv. 8.) Jesus will surely make up for the sacrifices to which believers submit for His *name's sake*, that is, for the sake of Him and His cause.

³⁰ *But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.*

^c Chap. xx. 16, xxi. 32; Mark x. 31; Luke xiii. 30.

Our Lord may be considered to have used this saying, which was a sort of proverbial mode of expression, three times, here (as parallel to Mark x. 31), in the ensuing chapter verse 16, and in Luke xiii. 30. On either occasion it seems to have a distinct meaning, thus reminding us that the words of Jesus are like those precious stones which possess the singular property of presenting a different color according to the different positions in which they are displayed. The saying, as employed here, may be understood as meaning either that many who, in the order of time, were last (*brought in last*) in the kingdom, shall

be first in the reward, and those who claim to be first shall be last, *i. e.*, that many of the Jews, to whom the blessings of Christ's kingdom were first offered, would be the last to partake of them, and that many of the Gentiles, to whom they were to be offered after the Jews, would be the first to enjoy them; or, that some who are now held in high esteem on earth, will not have a proportionate dignity in heaven, while others, who receive but little honor, if any, here, will be blessed there with distin-

guished honor. Many who occupy a high place among men, possess wealth, and all earthly comforts and blessings, yet live "without God," and many who are poor, but pious, will have their condition reversed in the eternal world. (Luke xvi. 25.) "Three things," said an old and eminent divine, "will surprise me in heaven: 1. To find many there whom I did not expect; 2. To find many *not* there whom I *did* expect; and 3. To find myself there." (See on xx. 16.)

1. How did the Pharisees tempt Christ? 2. State His reply. 3. What did the disciples do when little children were brought to Jesus? 4. What did He say? 5. What did Christ do to the children? 6. Who came to Jesus? What was his errand? 7. How did our Lord treat his case? 8. Could the young man stand the test applied to him? 9. What is said about a "rich man?" 10. How did our Lord answer the question "who then can be saved?" 11. What was Peter's reply? 12. Explain verse 23. 13. Also verse 29. 14. How are we to understand "many that are first?" &c.

CHAPTER XX.

¹ *Christ, by the similitude of the labourers in the vineyard, sheweth that God is debtor unto no man: 17 foretelleth his passion: 20 by answering the mother of Zebedee's children teacheth his disciples to be lowly; 30 and giveth two blind men their sight.*

FOR the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

Our Lord had just spoken of rewards—both a reward in this life, and of another in a life to come. He now proceeds to illustrate this truth—to show that the promised rewards are not of *debt*, but of *grace*. (Comp. Rom. iv. 4, 5.)

The kingdom of heaven, the outward and visible Church. *Like unto*, &c. As a householder transacts with his servants, so will the Lord transact with those who belong to His Church, and enter into terms with Him. *Which went out*, &c. This feature of the parable affords the picture of a scene, which the return of every morning exhibits at the gate of an Eastern city. * *To hire labourers*. Different kinds of work are required in vineyards at different seasons. The whole body of workmen in God's vineyard are here represented. God seeks His laborers, not they Him. (John xv. 16.) *To hire* indicates a free compact,

the offering of the covenant of grace *to*, and its acceptance *by* men. *His vineyard*. A frequent symbol in Scriptures to represent the Church of God. (Isa. v. 1, 2; Ps. lxxx. 8. See also John xv. 1.) The Church is the Lord's, yet we are to *labor* in it. God has so ordered things, that the means and the blessings go together.

2. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

A penny a day. The Roman denarius, a silver coin, varying from 15 to 17 cents. Though the penny may seem a small remuneration, yet it was not so, for in good and plentiful seasons, sixteen, and sometimes twenty measures of wheat could be purchased for this coin. The wages of the laborer represent the reward which Christ confers upon His servants, but this must be taken with certain explanations and limitations, especially these two, 1. That the reward is partly a thing now begun, and partly something that is completed in heaven. 2. That the value of the reward depends essentially on the disposition of heart with which the workman receives it. These laborers, first hired, may represent the Jews under the first

dispensation, all those in the Christian Church who individually are converted in early youth, and continue in Christ's service throughout a long life, or those who, from special talent, or zeal, or opportunity, do and suffer most for the Lord and His cause.

3. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place, 4. And said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

Third hour. This, in the Jewish method of reckoning time, corresponded to our nine in the morning. *Standing idle, &c.* Does not this teach us that all is idleness, however laborious it may be, which is not in some shape or way, directly or indirectly, associated with our own preparation for eternity, or with the progress of the kingdom of God upon earth? *Go ye also, &c.* All in the market-place were invited into the vineyard. The invitations of the Gospel are addressed to all; all are welcome to embrace them, and if any do not accept them, they will never forget it is their own fault, and their own fault alone.

Whatsoever is right, &c. He refers them, without any definite promise of blessing, to his justice and equity, and they, simply confiding in this, making no inquiry after reward, go away into the vineyard.

5. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

At noon and at three o'clock in the afternoon. (See on verse 4.) God, at "sundry times" as well as in "divers manners," speaks to people and calls them to work for Him. Some are called in tender childhood, others in the season of youth, others only in ripened manhood, or even not till declining age. Timothy was called in the beginning of his days, and labored for forty or fifty years in the Lord's vineyard. The thief on the cross was called "at the eleventh hour," and plucked like a brand out of the fire; one day a hard, impenitent sinner, and the next day in Paradise.

6. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? 7. They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.

Eleventh hour. Only one hour before dismissing the laborers at night. *Others standing.* (See on verses 1, 4.) *Why stand ye here, &c.* This is God's word to any who

are neglecting His service; busy, perhaps, and active in worldly things, yet idle about their souls. Ever since our infancy God has called us, by every sermon we have heard, by every warning and mercy we have received, by good advice and good examples, by good thoughts put into our minds, even the secret influence of His Holy Spirit, so that if we are idle (as too many are, to the sixth, the ninth, the eleventh hour), we cannot say we are idle because no man called us; we have not this excuse. If we be idle in what concerns our souls, it is because we do not choose to work. The laborers who entered the vineyard at the close of the day were not called till then. They had no offer till the eleventh hour, and accepted the very first they got. Their case, therefore, affords us no encouragement to put off what concerns our salvation, for a year, or a day, or even an hour. (2 Cor. vi. 2.) Few are ever saved on their death-beds. One thief on the cross was saved, that none should despair, but only one, that none should presume.

8. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

Here begins the second division of the parable, the distribution of the reward and justification of the manner of doing it. *Even*—the time for closing the labors of the day. *Steward*, or overseer of his goods. (See Deut. xxiv. 15; Lev. xix. 13; Job vii. 2; Mal. iii. 5; James v. 4.) The wages are paid in the Master's presence. Christ is the overseer set over all God's house. (Heb. iii. 6; John v. 27; Matt. xi. 27.) The whole economy of salvation has been put into His hands. *Beginning from the last* (and paying them in order) *unto the first.* This order of payment was necessary to give opportunity for the complaint which was about to be made. Had the paying followed the order of the hiring, they would have been off to their homes with their wages, nor have had their envy roused by the generosity which made all alike.

9. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

The steward, acting according to his master's instructions, called first the men who had entered the vineyard at five, and

quitted it at six, and gave each a penny for his work. He did not speak of their merits, but simply gave each his wages. Surprised by the munificence of their employer, these men retired toward their homes with silent gratitude.

10. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more, and they likewise received every man a penny. 11. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house. 12. Saying, These last have wrought *but* one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

They supposed, &c. The steward, evidently acting on precise orders, gave each of these men also a penny, and no more. Had he given them less, there would have been injustice; had he given them more, there would have been generosity; but giving what was promised, was simple and exact justice. *These last have wrought, &c.* We are not, of course, from the murmuring of these laborers, to imagine that anything like envy and jealousy and discontent find their way into heaven. This representation is only a necessary part of the story. *Chrysostom* well says, "It is not right to search curiously, and word by word, into all things in a parable, but when we have learned the object for which it was composed, to reap this, and not to busy ourselves about anything further."

13. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst thou not agree with me for a penny? 14. Take *that* thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. 15. *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?* *Is thine eye evil, because I am good?*

^aRom. ix. 21. ^bDeut. xv. 9; Prov. xxiii. 6; chap. vi. 23.

Friend, I do thee no wrong, &c. They rest their complaint on grounds of justice. The householder accepts battle on the ground of their own choosing: and how signal their defeat! *Friend, or fellow, he says, I do thee no wrong.* If I choose to be generous to others, what is that to thee? It should excite thy admiration, why does it kindle thy envy? Injustice! *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?* Who can deny or question this? *Take, therefore, that thine is, and go thy way.* We are to understand the "gift" implied in the words, *I will give unto this last, even as unto thee*, as being eternal life; or, in other words, God Himself. (John xvii. 3.) Hence the parable does not conflict with the many plain texts of Scripture which teach that all who are saved will not have the same degree of glory. Though the title of all

believers no doubt is the same—the righteousness of Christ—yet all will not have the same place in heaven. (1 Cor. iii. 8.) If the vision of God constitutes the blessedness of the future world, then they whose spiritual eye is most enlightened, will drink in most of His glory.

16. *So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.*

^cChap. xix. 30. ^dChap. xxii. 14.

This is not spoken by the householder, but by Christ, and hence does not form a part of the parable, the design of which, as explanatory of this saying, is once again pointed out, with a manifest reference to chap. xix. 30. The idea of rejection does not seem to be contemplated here at all. All the laborers were called into the vineyard, all were admitted, all worked, all were rewarded. Still, although they were all equal in the absolute amount of wages received, the *last*, or those who began labor during the progress of the day, were made higher than the *first*, or those who commenced early in the morning, by a distinct addition to the pecuniary recompense, that is, a contented, loving, thankful heart. It is not the time of our service that God looks at so much, as the intensity of our devotedness during the time, short or long, that is given us. Some persons embrace the Gospel in early years, but though they gently and quietly pass through life blameless, and are ripening for glory, they are not characterized to the extent to which they should be, by making sacrifices for the Gospel. Others hear the Gospel call later in life, yet in its last years make more efforts and sacrifices for Christ than those who were called before them.

For many are called, but few chosen. We cannot understand this as meaning that many hear the Gospel call, and but few are chosen by God and admitted through regeneration into His family, for if we did, it would not be possible to assign to it any proper connection with the lesson of the parable, of which, as the terms of the sentence show, it is the very conclusion and kernel. The term "called" seems to designate, not all to whom the Gospel is addressed, but those only who are effectually called—who obey the call. It involves being a Christian. (See Rom. i. 1, 7, viii. 28; 1 Cor. i. 1, 24; Rev. xvii. 14.)

Hence, there is not a distinction here between saved and lost, but between two classes of the saved. The word *chosen* is sometimes applied in Scripture to that which is best of its kind, more than ordinarily good; and such we take to be its meaning here. Those whom it describes are the few Christians who, among a great number of true and genuine disciples, are pre-eminently unselfish, unworldly, earnest, and Christ-like, honoring their Lord, and making the world wonder. "Very many are summoned, and very many obey and come into the vineyard, and are true Christians, but very few are choice, chief and distinguished Christians, who, chronologically last, shall be from their sacrifices and sufferings greatest and first."

17. ^aAnd Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, 18. ^bBehold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death. 19. ^cAnd shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him; and the third day he shall rise again. ^dMark x. 32; Luke xviii. 31; John xii. 12. ^eChap. xvi. 21. ^fChap. xxvii. 2; Mark xv. 1, 16, &c.; Luke xxiii. 1; John xviii. 28, &c.; Acts iii. 13.

Jesus, the third time, foretells His death and resurrection. *Took the twelve, &c.* This was done because He did not choose to declare before His enemies the deeds which they would commit against Him, and thus not only embolden them, but *seem* to procure the fulfillment of the prediction concerning His suffering. *Behold, &c.* (See on xvi. 21, xviii. 22, 23.) The Saviour went willingly to the appointed spot of His sufferings. (Isa. l. 5; John x. 18.) Observe with what calmness and patience He spoke of His coming painful trials. We know not the time of our trials, and hence it is so much the more necessary for us to think seriously of them, and prepare ourselves for them. *Shall rise again.* Jesus mentions His resurrection: 1. To encourage Himself in His sufferings; 2. To comfort His disciples who would be overwhelmed with sorrow, and terrified by His death; 3. To direct us, under all the sufferings of this present time; to keep the eye of our faith fixed upon the glory to be revealed.

20. ^aThen came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. ^bMark x. 35. ^cChap. iv. 21.

The mother of Zebedee's children, &c. Her name was Salome. She was one of those truly pious and devoted women, who

attended, through weal and wo, upon the footsteps of our Lord. Of *Zebedee*, her husband, we know nothing beyond his interposing no refusal when his sons were called to leave him (chap. iv. 21), and his disappearance from the Gospel history leads to the inference that his death set Salome free to join her children in ministering to the Lord. *With her sons.* James and John. (Chap. iv. 21; Mark x. 35; See on x. 2.) This shows that they participated in the petition; and indeed, though they preferred it through the medium of their mother, yet it should seem, from the indignation of the other Apostles against the two brothers, that *they* were the principal movers of the affair. *Worshipping him*—falling down before Him, and acknowledging Him as Messiah the King. *Desiring a certain thing*—thus cautiously approaching the subject.

21. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. ^aChap. xix. 28.

What wilt thou? (See on verse 20.) We are often told, on other occasions, that "Jesus knew their thoughts," and doubtless He did so here; yet He would have those thoughts expressed before He noticed the petition. He still says on the throne of His glory, "What wilt thou?" Let the thought ascend in aspiration, let the desire find utterance in prayer. (Ps. l. 15.) *Sit . . . right hand . . . left, &c.* According to Eastern custom, sitting next to the throne denotes the next degree of dignity, and consequently the first situations on the right and left denote the highest dignities. (See 1 Kings ii. 19; Ps. xlv. 9, cx. 1.)

The request that James and John might occupy the highest posts of honor in the kingdom Christ was about to establish on earth (see chap. xvi. 28, xvii. 1-8; 2 Peter i. 16), may have arisen from the fact that they had been distinguished on some former occasions (Mark v. 37; Matt. xvii. 1), as well as from a want of right apprehension of our Lord's language in xix. 28. Though this request must unequivocally and decidedly be condemned as being ambitious, it nevertheless showed remarkable faith in our Lord's final triumph; for as He had just before (verse 18, 19) announced

His approaching suffering and death, it was something to believe, as this mother did, that notwithstanding all these afflictions, He would yet show Himself a King.

Let us be on our guard against the secret workings of ambition. Instead of wishing to be commended above our fellow-Christians, more noticed, admired, honored, we ought to esteem others better than ourselves. Philip, King of Macedon, as he was wrestling at the Olympic games, fell down in the sand, and, when he rose again, observing the print of his body in the sand, cried out: "O, how little a parcel of earth will hold us when we are dead, who are ambitiously seeking after the whole world whilst we are living!"

22. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, we are able.

¹Chap. xxvi. 39, 42; Mark xiv. 36; Luke xxii. 42; John xviii. 11. ²Luke xii. 50.

With what gentleness did our Lord answer the two brethren! He knew they had forsaken all to follow Him. He knew that they would prefer shame and suffering with Him, to any honor or joy apart from Him, therefore He treated them with tenderness. *Ye know not what ye ask.* The petition was in reality for a large measure of suffering. Men sigh for wealth, or some distinction in life, or some other earthly favor, and when their desire is granted, they find that their success has brought with it some care or sorrow, some snare or temptation, which they would otherwise have been free from. (Jer. xlv. 5.) Far better is it to leave all our temporal concerns in God's hands, neither asking nor wishing for anything but what seemeth best to Him in His wisdom and goodness. We may ask in ignorance for what would not really be for our good. *Are ye able to drink, &c.* The Hebrews usually compared whatever is dealt out to men by the Almighty (whether good or evil), to a cup of wine. Hence *cup* came in general use to signify a portion assigned (Ps. xvi. 5, xxiii. 5), whether of pleasure or sorrow. But the expression was more frequently used of evil than good. (See John xviii. 11; Matt. xxvi. 39, 42; comp. Ps. lx. 3; lxxv. 8; Isa. li. 17, 22; Jer. xxv. 15; Lam. iv. 21.)

Baptized with, &c. To be overwhelmed

with the sufferings which are to come upon me. The imagery is varied, but the idea is the same as that of the preceding clause. The object of this question seems to have been, to try how far those two men were *capable* of the dignity to which they aspired; and this on the principle that he who is able to suffer most for Christ's sake, will be nearest to Him in His kingdom. (Phil. iii. 10; 2 Tim. ii. 12.) *We are able.* Here they own their mother's petition for them as their own. In making this reply, they little knew to what they pledged themselves, and their views were, doubtless, in many respects, mistaken; yet we may take their answer as an instance of a sincere, noble and generous faith, which, for the sake of unseen blessings, is willing to venture all that is present. Not knowing exactly whither they might be led, they were yet resolved to go forth at God's word, to drink of His cup, to be baptized with His baptism, and trust Him for the result. (See Acts xii. 1, 2, iv. 3, v. 40; Rev. i. 9.)

23. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but, to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.

¹Acts xii. 2; Rom. viii. 17; 2 Cor. i. 7; Rev. i. 9. ²Chap. xxv. 34.

Drink of my cup, &c.—undergo sufferings patterned after mine. *Be baptized, &c.* The baptism our Lord speaks of evidently refers to His sufferings. In calling His sufferings a *baptism*, he may refer either to the *origin*, the *nature*, or the *degree* of His sufferings. 1. Their origin. The baptisms under the law, to which no doubt there is a reference, were Divine appointments, and our Lord's sufferings were "determined," "fore-ordained." (Acts iv. 26-28; 1 Peter i. 20.) 2. Their nature. Baptism marked the person and thing baptized as sacred, devoted to God, and the sufferings of Christ marked him out as the "elect, righteous servant of God." (Isa. xlii. 1; John i. 29.) 3. Their severity. Some, though not all, the legal baptisms, were immersions, submersions. When we consider the nature, number, variety, severity, early commencement, close succession, strange complication and long continuance of our Lord's sufferings, we may well say, He was plunged into an abyss of sufferings. (Ps. xlix. 2.)

But, to sit on my right hand, &c.—to possess the high seats of glory and bliss in heaven. *Is not mine to give, &c.* It is denoted, by the words “It shall be given to them” being in italics, that there are no such Greek words in the original. They were inserted by the translators in order to make the sense clear, yet, perhaps, if they were omitted the sense would be more clear. Certainly the omission of them would make the passage in full accordance with the whole tenor of Scripture, which, as the verse stands in our translation, it certainly contradicts. (See John v. 12.) The passage should be rendered thus:—“To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but (except) to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.” To any other, Christ, who is one with the Father, could not, and would not give it: but that it is His to give, is distinctly declared by our Lord. (John v. 22; Matt. xv. 34.) *For whom it is prepared, literally, has been made ready of my Father.* And who are these to whom the highest places in heaven will be given? The meekest, the most useful, those who are most like Christ.

24. ^aAnd when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.
^bMark x. 41; Luke xxii. 24, 25.

The other disciples were indignant at the request of the two brothers, as it was an ambitious aspiring after honors, to the neglect and disadvantage of their companions and equals. The ambition of one creates envy in others who partake of the same feeling.

25. But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

Jesus called them. The ambitious request of the two brethren, and the indignant feeling of the ten toward them, led Jesus to call His disciples around Him, to admonish them of their error, and inspire them with better feelings. *The princes of the Gentiles, &c.* The rulers of the nations. (See on v. 19 and vi. 32.) *Exercise dominion.* Both the original words here used imply arbitrary, domineering authority, authority for authority's sake. Jesus does not here condemn the exercise of a just governmental authority, in which the ruler, acting for the public good, is, in fact, the public servant. *They that are great, &c.*

As the term rendered *great* primarily refers to persons great or powerful in themselves, perhaps the expression *princes* may allude to the legitimate rulers, and the term *great* to illegitimate usurpers and conquerors. With this difference, this clause is parallel in sense with the former.

26. But sit shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;
 27. And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.
^a1 Peter v. 3. ^bChap. xxiii. 11; Mark ix. 35 and x. 43.
^cChap. xviii. 4.

It shall not be so among you. Your greatness shall not be like that of them who dwell in earthly courts. Our Lord here condemns, not a true ecclesiastical government, but all ecclesiastical ambition, and all aspiration after selfish power. *Great among you*—distinguished, truly great. *Minister.* The primitive sense of the original word is a *servant* who attends his master, waits on him at table and is always near his person to obey orders, which was accounted a more creditable kind of service. *Chief, literally first* in dignity and power.

Servant. As desiring to be *great* is a more moderate ambition than desiring to be *chief*, so the word *servant* opposed to the latter, denotes a still more lowly condition than the word *minister* opposed to the former. The original word is often put for *slave*. The lesson is, that the disciple who desires to attain the loftiest dignity, must make up his mind to be characterized and distinguished by the greatest usefulness. True greatness consists not in receiving, but in giving, not in sitting still and being ministered to, but in going about and ministering to others.

28. Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.
^aJohn xiii. 4. ^bPhil. ii. 7. ^cLuke xxii. 27; John xiii. 14. ^dIsa. liii. 10, 11; Dan. ix. 24, 26; John xi. 51, 52; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Titus ii. 14; 1 Peter i. 19. ^eChap. xxvi. 28; Rom. v. 15, 19; Heb. ix. 28.

Jesus presents His own example, as to condescension and seeking the good of others, for a pattern to His disciples, and a corrective of the ambitious spirit which they had displayed. *Came not to be ministered unto.* As “the Word in the beginning was with God,” He *was* ministered unto, and as the risen Redeemer in our nature He now is ministered unto, “angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him” (1 Peter iii. 22), but not

for this came He hither. (John i. 1; Phil. ii. 7.)

But to minister. This applies to our Lord's submission or obedience. *To give his life*, the greatest of all sufferings and sacrifices, by a voluntary surrender of it to death. (John x. 17.)

A ransom. The word in the original properly denotes the ransom paid in order to deliver any one from *death*, or its equivalent, *captivity*, or from *punishment* in general. Here it evidently has an expiating sense, as it stands in explanatory opposition with the preceding words *to give his life*, denoting its character or purpose. Christ, as foreshadowed by the sacrifices, &c., under the law, and as predicted by the prophets, gave Himself up to suffering and death for the redemption of men. (Isa. liii. 6, 10; Dan. ix. 24-6; Matt. xxvi. 28; John x. 11, xi. 51; 2 Rom. iii. 24-6; 2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. iii. 13; Eph. i. 7; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Heb. ix. 14, 28; Titus ii. 14; Rev. v. 9.) An atonement—an atonement by death, an atonement by substitution—is here briefly but powerfully expressed. This is the mightiest truth in the Bible. Let us take care that we grasp it firmly, and never let it go. Jesus did not die merely as a martyr, or as a splendid example of self-sacrifice or self-denial. Those who can see no more than *that* in His death, fall infinitely short of the truth. He died as a sacrifice for man's sin. What we could not pay, He undertook to pay for us. (Heb. ix. 14; 1 Peter iii. 18.)

For many, i. e., a multitude—all. "The term is here general, not denoting many of a fixed, definite number, as opposed to the whole of that number, but *many*, in the sense of a great multitude contrasted with the *single life* of Christ, which was of value sufficiently high to be accepted of God as a ransom for all the rest, who had fallen into legal condemnation. See Rom. v. 15, 19, where this same kind of antithesis is found between the *one* who sinned, and the *many* (*i. e.*, all his posterity) who are involved in the consequences of His sin." (Chap. xxvi. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Heb. ix. 28.)

29. *And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.—Mark x. 46; Luke xviii. 35.

Departed from Jericho. According to

Matthew, Jesus healed *two* blind men on *departing* from Jericho; according to Mark, *one* blind man on *departing* (x. 46); according to Luke, *one* blind man on *entering* the city. (xviii. 35.) These apparent discrepancies related to *time* and to *number*. We may suppose, as the old Harmonists did, two miracles, each at distinct times, and on a different individual; the one as our Lord was approaching to Jericho, the other as He was leaving it again; the former related by Luke, the latter by Mark, and both by Matthew; each, as distinctly related, related in its proper place, and the two, as related conjointly, not absolutely related out of theirs. *If we knew all the facts*, we should see no difficulty; but that we have been left so far in the dark, shows that the thing is of no moment anyway. One thing is plain, there could have been no collusion among the authors of these Gospels, else would they have taken care to remove these "spots on the sun." The writers of these common accounts were too well aware of their mutual agreement and consistency to be afraid of the effects of an apparent collision; they neither apprehended it themselves nor supposed it would be objected to by others. As the credibility of *historians* is not diminished, but rather increased, by such trifling discrepancies as occur in the Gospels, so will not that of the Evangelists be at all affected.

Jericho, a city of Benjamin (Josh. xvi. 7, xviii. 21), about eighteen miles east-north-east of Jerusalem. *A great multitude*—gathered probably from Jericho and the surrounding region.

30. And behold, two blind men sitting by the way-side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David.

And behold. That our Lord should meet these blind men when and where He did, while it was one of those marvelous coincidences which, seemingly accidental, are yet deep laid in the councils of His wisdom, and of His love, is, at the same time, a natural circumstance, to be explained by the fact that it was common at that time for beggars to sit by the side of the public roads.

Blind men, whether so from birth, or by disease or accident, does not appear. This, however, was their melancholy condition,

and a more pitiable one perhaps cannot be found. One who was himself deprived of sight, has thus feelingly alluded to this affliction :—

"O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon
Irrecoverably dark: total eclipse,
Without the hope of day!
The sun to me is dark,
And silent as the moon
When she deserts the night."—*Milton*.

Sitting by the way-side. For the purpose of begging. Blindness is worthy of compassion even when found in circumstances of affluence and ease—but how much more so when it is attended with indigence and want! The helpless are not to starve, nor are we indiscriminately to reject every application we meet with on the road, yet, provided less be not given in charity, and no extreme case neglected, the refusal of relief to vagrant beggars is rather a proof of discretion than an indication of defect in beneficence.

When they heard that Jesus passed by. The sound of numerous feet, and the clamor of many voices, drew the attention of the blind men, and they were led to inquire what great person was on the road, attended by this great throng of people. The Teacher and Miracle-worker of Perea, is not unknown by fame to these poor men. (Luke xviii. 36, 37.) *Have mercy on us, &c.* No sooner was our Lord's name mentioned, than the blind beggars, deeply impressed with a sense of their affliction, and not knowing whether they should ever again have so good an opportunity, earnestly appealed to Him.

Cried out. In the midst of judgments God remembers mercy. Though these men, for wise reasons, were deprived of eyes, the use of their speech was left. There was, on their part, a double confession of faith; first, that Jesus could heal them, and, secondly, as the long expected Messiah. They asked for mercy, conscious that they deserved nothing.

31. And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.

Rebuked—rather charged them that they should hold their peace. They did not wish Jesus to be interrupted. *Cried the more.* Their case was urgent, the occasion was precious, and they called more fervently, using the same form of appeal as at first.

32. And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?

Once the sun of nature stood still at the desire of Joshua, who was eager to complete his victory; and, lo, now "the Sun of Righteousness" stands still, with "healing under His wings," at the desire of these blind men. *Called them.* Thus He administered reproof, by ordering those to help the poor men (Luke xviii. 40), who had endeavored to check them. *What wilt ye, &c.* Thus our Lord expressed His readiness to aid, and sought to call into yet livelier exercise the faith and expectation of the petitioners.

33. They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.

Now they single out the channel in which they desire the solicited mercy to run. "Our eyes are thirsty for the light. To us the wonderful realities of creation have long been a dark and dismal blank. Thine is the power that can reveal them like a new creation to our view."

34. So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

Had compassion—pitied. *Touched their eyes*—to show that the miracle was no coincidence or accident, but the immediate effect of Divine power. *Immediately.* The cure was instantaneously effected. How great and welcome the change! What joy, ecstasy and gratitude would they discover! How would they look and gaze—all things are become new. *They followed him.* This was, 1. An evidence of the reality and perfection of the cure; for in other cases where human skill has removed blindness by touching, the restored orbs cannot be immediately used—light is admitted into them by degrees—the man cannot measure distances, nor judge with accuracy, and he is not fit to be left to himself. And, 2. It was an improvement of the greatness of the mercy. "We can never," say they, "discharge our obligations to such a gracious and almighty friend. But let us devote ourselves to His service—let us continually ask, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

From this interesting narrative learn, 1. These blind men are most affecting emblems of the spiritual condition in which we all are by nature. 2. We are in a hopeful condition in regard to the removal

of this spiritual blindness, as were these poor men. 3. For this we should earnestly and perseveringly pray, resisting every effort to stifle our cry for mercy. 5. When Jesus has blessed us with His grace,

let us show forth His praise. 6. Strong faith may sometimes be found where it might least have been expected. 7. There is wisdom in using every opportunity for getting good for our souls.

1. What parable does this chapter commence with? 2. How many of the Evangelists record it? 3. Who is the "householder"? 4. How many kinds of laborers are specified? 5. Who "murmured"? 6. What reply was made to them? 7. Did Christ again predict His sufferings? 8. How? 9. What did the mother of Zebedee's children ask for? 10. What answer did she receive? 11. Explain verse 26. 12. How did the blind men address Jesus? 13. Who rebuked them? 14. What effect had the rebuke upon them? 15. What did Jesus say to them? 16. What did he do to them? 17. What does the narrative of this miracle teach?

CHAPTER XXI.

1. Christ rideth into Jerusalem upon an ass, 12. driveth the buyers and sellers out of the temple, 17. curseth the fig tree, 23. putteth to silence the priests and elders, 28. and rebuketh them by the multitude of the two sons, 33. and the husbandmen, who slew such as were sent unto them.

AND when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, 2. Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. 3. And if any man say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. 4. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, 5. Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. 6. And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, 7. And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. 8. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way. 9. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest. 10. And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? 11. And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

^aMark xi. 1; Luke xix. 29. ^bZech. xiv. 4. ^cPs. xxiv. 1; chap. xxix. 14, 16. ^dIsa. lxii. 11; Zech. ix. 9; John xii. 15. ^eMark xl. 4. ^f2 Kings ix. 13. ^gLev. xxiii. 40; John xii. 13. ^hPs. cxviii. 25. ⁱPs. cxviii. 26; chap. xxiii. 29. ^jMark xi. 15; Luke xix. 45; John ii. 13, 15. ^kChap. ii. 23; Luke vii. 16; John vi. 14, vii. 40, ix. 17.

Drew nigh, &c. There is a close verbal resemblance between the Evangelists in this remarkable portion of our Lord's history, yet with enough diversity of expression to establish their respective claims to independent authorship. The thread of the narrative requires that we should read in Luke xix. 2-28, and John xii. 1, 9-11, before this triumphal entry into Jerusalem. (See xx. 17, 18.) *Bethphage*, a village between Bethany and Jerusalem, near the summit of the Mount of Olives. No trace of it now exists. *Two disciples*, probably

Peter and John. *An ass tied, &c.* Asses and mules were in common use in Palestine; they were not so mean as they are regarded among us, but, when rightly trained, they were active and beautiful in appearance. Even Solomon rode on a mule in state. (See 1 Kings i. 38; Gen. xxii. 3; Ex. iv. 20; Judg. x. 4.) Horses were seldom to be met with. *Loose them, &c.* This act seemed violent on the part of the disciples, but was not so, inasmuch as the Lord knew beforehand the consent of the owner would be given, and communicated that assurance to the disciples. Here is an instance of Christ's perfect knowledge. He says: 1. Ye shall find an ass tied, &c. 2. On which no man ever sat. (Mark xi. 2.) 3. As ye enter into the village. (Luke xix. 30.) 4. The owner shall at first seem unwilling to have the animal loosed. 5. When he hears the Lord has need of it, he will let it go. Alone or in company, by night or by day, in private or in public, Jesus is acquainted with all our ways. This is a thought that ought to exercise a restraining and sanctifying effect on our souls.

If any man, &c. Without doubt, the owner of the beast was one of the many concealed friends of Christ. Not "*our* Lord," or "*your* Lord," but "*the* Lord"—the proprietor of all things. There is not, we think, one instance in which this word, with the article, and without either noun or pronoun, is used in speaking of any

other person than Jesus, except when used of the glorious God absolutely. In His humility, Christ is ever giving proofs of His Divinity. He has a right to everything, and He can so control men's hearts as to make them willing to obey Him. There is no doubt that Jesus chose this kind of entry with special reference to the prediction of the prophet, five hundred and fifty-five years before, and thus as a symbolical representation of the unwarlike, peaceful character of the true Messiah and His kingdom. *Tell ye the daughter, &c.*, is found in Isaiah lxii. 11. Zion or Sion was one of the hills on which the city of Jerusalem was built, and it was employed as a name equivalent to Jerusalem. By a mode of speech common among the Hebrew writers, *daughter of Zion* means Sion itself; and as *Zion* is put for *Jerusalem*, the expression *daughter of Zion* means *city of Jerusalem*. (See Zech. ix. 9.) *As Jesus commanded*. We must not hesitate to obey when God commands. *The ass and the colt*. The owner allowed them to be taken, assured that they were for the Master's use, and would be safely and speedily restored. Both beasts were brought to exhibit the appearance of a regal relay. The disciples spread their mantles, instead of a saddle, upon both the beasts, uncertain which Jesus intended to ride. This was a token of honor. *Set him*, more literally, *assisted Jesus to mount thereon*. Hitherto our Lord had discouraged all demonstrations in His favor. But now His earthly mission was drawing to a close, and it was not fitting that the Lamb of God should come to be slain privately and silently. Besides, there was, so to speak, a necessity that Jesus just then should manifest in the most open manner, His claim to be the King, anointed from on high.

Very great multitude. Some gathered for the passover, others attracted by the recent miracle of raising Lazarus at Bethany, swelled the train from Jericho. *Spread, &c.*, in conformity with a very ancient and still existing custom on state occasions in the East, of honoring royal and illustrious persons, by covering the ground over which they are to pass. *Cut down branches, &c.* The people were wont to cut branches of palm at the feast of

tabernacles. From remote antiquity these branches were an emblem of victory and joy. *Multitudes cried, &c.* The enthusiasm which broke forth when the point was reached from which the city could be seen spreading itself like a grand panorama, increased in intensity while the way began to descend. The disciples, who deemed that the long desired hour had at length come, proceeded, joined by the multitude, to raise the cries, taken from the Psalms, which were regarded by all the Jews as appropriate to the Messiah, and proper to hail His appearance:

"Hosanna!
Blessed is the King of Israel,
That cometh in the name of the Lord.
Blessed be the Kingdom of our father David,
That cometh in the name of the Lord."

Hosanna, i. e., save now. Hosanna in the highest. This was the very loftiest style in which He could be saluted—the promised Deliverer. *That cometh*—one of the titles of the Messiah. (Matt. xi. 3.) *Into Jerusalem*. The city, crowded at this time, with strangers in addition to the inhabitants, was *moved*—stirred by this triumphing clamor—and men asked one another, *Who is this?* and when they heard, "*It is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth,*" no further explanation was needed. So convinced were the people of His Divine mission, that His obscure and humble origin was no longer a stumbling-block in the way of their acknowledgment of His claims, or deterred them from declaring that He was from Nazareth, that most despised of all Galilean towns.

12. 1And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves.

1Mark xi. 11; Luke xix. 45; John ii. 15. 2Deut. xiv. 25.

Our Lord was both King and Priest, and as in the former transaction He had fulfilled the memorable prophecy of Zechariah, so now He fulfills the promise in Malachi iii. 1-3. *Went, &c.*, not to the court, or the palace, for His kingdom is spiritual, and not of this world. Jesus found His Father's house in a state which too truly shadowed forth the general condition of the whole Jewish church—everything out of order, and out of course. *Cast out, &c.* A similar transaction occurred at the beginning of Christ's ministry, about three years before. (John ii. 3-15.)

In the southern part of the spacious outer court of the temple, was a large place called the *court of the Gentiles*, for the sale of animals and birds for sacrifices, and whatever else might be required for offerings and sacrifices, such as salt, wine, &c. (See 1 Kings viii. 41.) *The tables, &c.* The counters of those who exchanged, at a certain premium, foreign coin into Jewish, in which the annual tax to the temple had to be paid. *Sold doves.* (See Lev. v. 7, xiv. 22, also xii. 8; Luke ii. 24.) The toleration of evil is the procurement of it. The house of God should not be devoted to secular purposes. (Ps. xciii. 5.) Christ's zeal for the holiness of the Church and the sanctification of souls is here indicated.

13. And said unto them, It is written, "My house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves."

*Isa. lvi. 7. *Jer. vii. 11; Mark xi. 17; Luke xix. 46.

Christ, in first casting out the buyers and sellers from the temple, called it His "Father's house," now, *my house*, claiming equality and unity with the Father. *It is written.* (See Isa. lvi. 7, also Jer. vii. 11.) Even in purifying the temple from profane uses, our Lord supported His conduct by a text of Scripture. All reformation in churches should be built upon God's Word. The temple was a type of that spiritual temple to which all nations, under Messiah's reign, were to resort as a *house of prayer*, and, therefore, it was not to be polluted by secular affairs. *Den of thieves*—a terrible antithesis to the house of God. In Judea, robbers and bandits found shelter in caves and recesses of rocks. All who make unfair gains and tell falsehoods when they buy or sell, are counted thieves by God. Avarice, covered with the veil of religion, is one of those things on which Christ looks with the greatest indignation in His Church. Our bodies are accounted the temple of the Lord. (2 Cor. vi. 16.) We should pray to Him now to cast out from our hearts whatever displeases Him.

14. And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. 15. And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased. 16. And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?—Ps. viii. 2.

Jesus cast out some, but He received others.

He turned the desecrated temple again from a den of robbers into a house of mercy. The *blind* and the *lame* did well to come to Him *then*, for those hands whose touch was health, would soon be stretched upon the cross. (See Isa. xxxv. 5, 6; Acts ix. 2, xix. 9, 23, &c.; Psalms cxix. 18, xxv. 4, cxliii. 8.) *The children*, some of them, perhaps, leaders of the blind, or even supporters of the lame, having caught up the sound of the acclamations (verse 9), they were regardless of the favor of the Pharisees. Their simplicity of heart gave them a courage which many weak believers had not. *Hosanna, &c.* Recognizing Him as the promised Messiah. Over His own people Jesus weeps, but with these little ones He rejoices. How fitting that child-like voices should shout the praises of Him who allowed not children to be forbidden to come to Him! No doubt many children were wicked in those days as well as in our own, but we never hear of any who spoke against Christ. *Perfected praise.* In referring His enemies to Psalms viii., our Lord referred them to one of the most glorious declarations in prophecy, of His own entire dominion over all created beings in heaven and earth. (See 1 Cor. xv. 27; Eph. i. 22; Heb. ii. 6-8.)

17. ¶ And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there. 18. ¶ Now in the morning, as he returned into the city, he hungered. 19. ¶ And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away! 20. ¶ And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away! 21. Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea: it shall be done. 22. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

*Mark xi. 1; John xi. 18. *Mark xi. 12. *Mark xi. 13. *Mark xi. 20. *Chap. xvii. 20; Luke xvii. 6. *James i. 6; 1 Cor. xiii. 2. *Chap. vii. 7; Mark xi. 24; Luke xi. 9; James v. 16; 1 John iii. 22 and v. 14.

And went out. Jesus withdrew into retirement, as He did not wish to remain in the city while the minds of the populace were so excited in His favor, lest He should be thought to affect the regal government. *Lodged there*, probably at the house of Lazarus and his sisters. With what interest must this favored family, whose hospitality He so often shared, have marked His movements, and listened to His every word, as He sojourned among them!

Happy the home to which Christ comes,
Where oft He is a guest:
Whose every inmate He approves,
That home is ever blest.

In the morning. This was Tuesday the week of His passion. *He hungered*, either because He did not wish to inconvenience the kind family of Lazarus at that early hour, or because it was considered unbecoming to take the morning meal before the hour of morning sacrifice, which was nine o'clock. Our Lord's hunger reminds us that He had a body like our own, and was subject to all our infirmities, except sin. *A fig tree.* The tree seems to have been of the sycamore species, which, it is well known, was found in Palestine in great abundance by the way-side, and the peculiar property of which is, that it is always green, and yields fruit several times in the year, without regard to any particular seasons. Besides, it is a fact not less well known, that the fruit of all kinds of fig trees always appears sooner than the leaves, and although the period for gathering the fruit was not at this time yet arrived, yet it is not uncommon to meet with some vigorous trees which show figs thoroughly ripe six weeks before the arrival of the general season, and the beautiful and luxuriant foliage of this particular tree which our Saviour approached, seemed to indicate that it was in a healthy and flourishing condition. According to the ordinary course of nature, some fruit-bocccôres, if not winter-figs, ought to have been growing on it, for the early appearance of the leaves was a proof that the preceding winter was short and mild, and the winter-fig likely to remain on the tree.

Leaves only—like a hypocrite with a fair show of profession. To the question, "How is Christ, who is omniscient, represented as expecting to find figs on this fruitless tree?" it may be replied, 1. Speaking as a man, and acting throughout as the perfect man, He might have expected fruit. 2. Christ knew the tree had no fruit, but He intended to use it as a symbol by which to impress a great moral lesson on those that were with Him, and accordingly approached it that its state might be known to all. When God is said to have come down from heaven to see if there were any that did

good, this does not mean that God was ignorant of the state of the earth. *Let no fruit grow*, &c. Every previous miracle of Christ had been expressive of unmingled beneficence; there was now needed some Divine manifestation of justice and judgment, also, to show that what is God's strange work is not unknown or impossible to Him—the work of righteous retribution. But a little while before, our Lord had bewailed the foreseen desolation of Israel, as having been unfaithful to her covenant promises, and about to frustrate her covenant hopes. Now He teaches the same fact by symbolic action. *Forever*, in this place, means "until the age," that is, the age when the Jew shall be grafted in, &c. (See Rom. xi. 17.) *Withered away*—began to become dry and dead. All fruitless professions of Christianity are in awful danger of becoming like this withered fig tree. The fruit of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22, 23), is the only sure proof that we are savingly united to Christ. The astonishment of the disciples at seeing how soon the fig tree had *withered away*, afforded our Lord an occasion to instruct them in the nature and power of faith.

If ye have faith and doubt not, i. e., do not hesitate through unbelief. The union of the positive and negative form of assertion is often employed for the sake of emphasis. *Ye shall not only do this*, &c. It is evident that not physical, but moral obstacles to the progress of His kingdom were in the Redeemer's view, and that what He designed to teach was the great lesson, *that no obstacle should be able to stand before a confiding faith in God.* (2 Cor. xii. 10; see on chap. xvii. 20; Luke xvii. 6.)

And all things, &c. This promise is to be limited in the nature of the case, to such things as are proper for us to receive, and suitable for God to bestow. *In prayer.* It is by prayer that such victories are attained. Faith is the soul, prayer is the body; both must be combined in the service of God. *Believing.* This trust must necessarily be regulated by God's own promise. *Ye shall receive.* For God will not grant the power of faith for a gift; He will not grant either in kind or in equivalent.

23. ¶ And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?

Mark xi. 27; Luke xx. 1. Ex. ii. 14; Acts iv. 7, and vii. 27.

Chief Priests, &c. These enemies of Jesus were always on hand to find some occasion to accuse Him before the Roman governor, or to awaken the prejudices of the Jews. Their first question here related to the *nature* of the authority by which He acted, whether it was as a prophet, a priest, or a king, no other person having a right to make any reformation in Church or State. Their second question related to the *source* of this authority—what evidence was there that it was Divine? *These things*, entering the city with such a train of attendants, reforming the economy of the temple, and receiving from the people the title of the Messiah. If Jesus had replied, “by the authority of God,” they would have accused Him of blasphemy, and if He had said, “by my own,” of rebellion.

24. And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. 25. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? 26. But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people: for all hold John as a prophet. 27. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

Chap. xiv. 15; Mark vi. 20; Luke xx. 6.

Answered. What wonderful wisdom does this answer of Jesus show! He knew that their purpose was malicious, and hence adopted the method which He did. *The baptism of John, i. e.* the religion of which the baptism was a profession. (See Acts i. 22, x. 37, xviii. 25.) *From heaven, or of men*—a Divine or a human institution. Our Lord’s question, it will be perceived, was in reality an answer to the question of His inquirers. His meaning, evidently, was that John the Baptist had especially testified that He was the Messiah. They knew this. They could not deny it. Now, if they really believed that John was a prophet, they would see by “what authority He did what He did;” it was as the Messiah, whom John had proclaimed Him to be. *They reasoned, &c.* They retired an instant, and made the matter an object of common deliberation. *Say, from heaven.* They saw and felt the dilemma in which they were placed. They knew that in ac-

knowledging John’s mission to be from God, which they believed it to be, their sagacious opponent would confound them with the inquiry, *Why did ye not then believe him? i. e.* why did ye not believe the testimony which he, as my forerunner, bore to me as the Messiah? (John i. 29–34, iii. 28–36.

But of men. Here was the other horn of the dilemma. If they denied John’s Divine mission, they feared the violence of the people. Every way Christ’s reply was calculated to silence His enemies. It subjected them to the charge of gross inconsistency on the one hand, or to personal peril on the other. *For all hold John, &c.* The rulers, from political motives, had deserted John, but with all the ranks of the common people, even to the publicans and harlots, there was a deep feeling that John was a messenger from God. Even Herod, who slew Him, trembled at His name as of a holy and God-sent man. These chief priests and scribes feared the people, as Herod did before them. They had often taught the people the efficacy of such violence, when argument and reason failed them, and now they were afraid that their teaching would react upon themselves, and bring down punishment, if they pronounced John an impostor.

We cannot tell. They did not like to confess. They feigned an ignorance which they did not possess, for the two possible causes lay open to their discernment, but, in their depravity, they could not bring themselves to give honor to the generally admitted truth. Their thoughts and outward conduct were in discord and opposition to each other, which is the essence of hypocrisy. *Neither tell I you, &c.* It was useless for our Lord to proffer any further proof of His Messiahship to men who, if they would not believe John’s testimony in His favor, would not, of course, believe that which He should offer for Himself. He, therefore, simply exposed their obstinacy to themselves, leaving them to reflect upon it. Both were now silent, He, because on good grounds He would not speak, they, because through their own fault they could not speak. The people present could easily decide which had been victorious.

Observe, 1. Every true-hearted Christian who tries to do good in the world, must expect that the self-righteous and worldly-minded will dislike his ways. 2. It is a great sin for any one to be willing to acknowledge and proclaim the truth only so far as will subserve his selfish designs. 3. He who forbears speaking against the truth only through fear of men, has betrayed and dishonored it already in his heart. 4. Pharisaic pride, according to its different interests, either pretends to know everything, or affects to know nothing. 5. Many will say anything rather than acknowledge themselves to be in the wrong. 6. Lying is one of the commonest sins in the world. Gehazi, Ananias and Sapphira have more followers and imitators than Peter and Paul.

28. † But what think ye? *A certain man had two sons, and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard.*

What think ye? Give me your opinion of what I am about to say. Our Lord now becomes the assailing party, and by this question brings the following delineation before the judgment-seat of the conscience of His hearers. (1 Cor. iii. 19.) *A certain man, i. e., God. Two sons.* The righteousness of the demand is grounded in the relation which a father holds to his children. The *first son* is the publican or the sinner. The *second* is the Pharisee or self-righteous man. Both are examples of two classes which still exist. *Came to the first, and said, &c.* The command here given was the general summons made by the natural law in the conscience, by the revealed law which Moses gave, for man to bring forth fruit unto God, and by the preaching of John. *Son.* An endearing address. God is the Father of all mankind, and though sin has rendered us unworthy of His care, it has not destroyed our relation to Him, and with paternal affection He calls us as careless sinners to amendment. *Go work, &c.* The command is not only affectionate, but practical. Not only must we enter the kingdom by faith, but that faith must be operative.

Work. 1. This includes a diligent attention to our own personal salvation. 2. An active exertion for the spiritual interests of others. *My vineyard.* Among the cultivators of Palestine in those days there was

an admixture of large and small farms. In chap. xx. 1, in order to provide for the structure of the parable, an agriculturist is introduced who cultivates on a large scale.

In *this* case, the man has a portion of ground sufficient to provide for the wants of his family, but his farm cannot afford employment and remuneration to a gang of laborers; the work must all be done by the owner himself and his children. *To-day.* This is the language of the Gospel; the command is urgent, and the obedience must be prompt, because the work is important, the scene is extensive, the time is short, life is uncertain, our responsibility is great, the Judge is even at the door, and present facilities may soon be withdrawn; the lamp of life may shortly be extinguished, or the candlestick of the Gospel removed out of its place. Time is one thing, opportunity is another; the cage of time may remain, while the bird of opportunity has flown.

29. He answered and said, I will not, but afterward he repented, and went.

I will not. This answer was evil, and only evil, and flowed from its native spring in an evil heart. No excuse was made, no delay was asked for; there was a positive, rude and daring refusal. This son represents the openly and daringly ungodly of every rank, in every age. Some men, alas! take credit for the distinct avowal of their ungodliness, and cherish the fatal error, that because they frankly confess they are not good, this will serve as a substitute for goodness, and because they are not hypocrites, they will be welcomed into heaven with all their vices on their back. *But afterwards, &c.* He came to himself; reflection returned, and he was grievously sorry for his disobedience; perhaps his father's silent grief went to his heart at length and melted it. *And went.* No sooner was he reclaimed than he was employed. Obedience was the consequence, and the evidence of the reality of his sorrow, and the sincerity of his acknowledgment.

Note, 1. The view of true repentance here presented, the heart enlightened as to its relationship with God, the full justice and propriety of God's commandments admitted, and shame for the disobedience with which these have been

met. 2. The necessity of repentance in order to salvation. The *first* son repents. The *second* son is not excluded from the privilege of working, as far as this parable goes. The door is not finally shut against him. But if he is at length found side by side with the *first* son, it must be in the spirit of repentance also. (See verse 32.)

Whilst this parable is far from pleading for wickedness, or intimating that immorality is preferable to morality, the page of history shows that the most unlikely materials are often subdued by Divine agency to holy purposes, and sinners called from courses the most ungodly. An attempt to couch the eyes of those who say "we see," an offer of pardon to the innocent, a communication of alms to the wealthy, would only exasperate and disgust; but this would not be the case with the blind, the guilty, and the poor.

30. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, *I go, sir:* and went not.

Likewise, with undoubtedly the same spirit. God's demand is the same to all, and the obligation to obey is also the same. *And he answered, &c.* The second son had an answer ready, sound in substance and smooth in form. It was a model answer from a son to his parent: "I go, sir," said the youth without hesitation or complaint. He promised *well*, but did not perform. The scribes and Pharisees, as professing to be zealous for the law, set themselves in the way as though they would fulfill the commands. This, their profession, was like the second son's promised obedience. But they said and did not. (Matt. xv. 8; xxiii. 2.) What a multitude of such are in the world! Children trained up in Christian families often promise well. So do young men, who, are ingenuous, teachable, despising the bondage of corruption, hating even the garment spotted with the flesh. So do those who, under the preaching of the Word, are alarmed, melted, almost persuaded to be Christians, and those who, being reclaimed from various vices, become regular in their lives and attentive to moral and relative duties, and those who, on sick-beds, promise to become Christians if restored to health. But, alas! in how many such cases do the

tears of their connections, the sighs of their ministers, and the triumph of the enemy attest, that if the promise was flattering, the declension was equally grievous, and the end equally fatal.

31. Whether of them twain did the will of *his* father? They say unto him, The *first*. Jesus saith unto them, *Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.*

^aLuke vii. 29, 50.

Whether of them twain, &c. The answer to this sharp question is all too easy. The light is stronger than is comfortable for those owl-eyed Pharisees, who were prowling about like night-birds on the scent of their prey. They cannot profess inability to solve this question, as they had done that other. (Verse 27.) *The first*. The nature of true piety is therefore obedience to the revealed will of God, and this obedience can be compensated by nothing else.

The publicans and harlots, &c. Those who were excommunicated from the Jewish church. The last word specializes the usual expression, *sinners*. They are represented by the first son. In all their former conduct they had said *no*. Now they yield to the voice of truth when they hear it, and enter into the kingdom, embracing the salvation brought to them in the Gospel. (See Matt. ix. 9; Luke vii. 29, 50, 37-48, xv. 1, xix. 2, xviii. 9-14.) *Go into the kingdom of God before you*. This does not mean the way is made more easy, the gate more wide, to the licentious and profane than to the hypocrite—it intimates merely that in point of fact the profane were then and there hastening in through the gate, while the self-righteous were standing aloof. The words "*go before you*," or take the lead of you, indicate that the door of hope was not yet shut upon them, that they were not yet irreversibly excluded from that kingdom—the others indeed had preceded them, but they might still follow, if they would.

32. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

^aChap. iii. 1, &c. ^bLuke iii. 12, 13.

We must understand *the way of righteousness* in reference to the words of Christ, in John xiv. 6: "I am the way." John came as the forerunner of the Messiah, pointing to Him, the way of righteousness.

Publicans—unjust. *Harlots*—unchaste. (See on verse 31.) *When ye had seen it, i. e.,* the wondrous reformation which John's preaching had wrought in these wicked persons. *Repented not afterward, &c., i. e.,* were yet obdurate, and did not repent so as to believe him. How ungrateful, and how mad is the conduct of those who are saying with the first son in this parable, "I will not!" God is our Father, and His service is the most reasonable, honorable, pleasant and profitable. Let those remember who are saying with the second son, "I go, sir," that the vows of God are upon them; that nothing is so dangerous to the soul as false dealing with God; that no character is so rarely converted as a false professor, and that no state is so tremendous as the end of an apostate.

33. ^aHear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and ^bwent into a far country.

^cPs. lxxx. 9; Cant. viii. 11; Isa. v. 1; Jer. ii. 21; Mark xii. 1; Luke xx. 9. ^dChap. xxv. 14, 15.

Another parable. As if our Lord, addressing the Pharisees, would say, "I have not done with you yet, I have still another word of warning and rebukē." *Householder.* The head of a family. *Planted a vineyard.* This represents God's attention to Israel, His covenant people, upon whom the eminent privileges mentioned in Rom. ix. 4, were conferred as a sacred trust to be cultivated and improved. (See Deut. xxii. 32; Isa. v. 1-7; Ps. lxxx.) *Hedged it round about.* In addition to a stone wall, or as a substitute for it, the Eastern vineyards have often a hedge of thorns around them. *Digged, &c.* The ancient practice of treading out grapes with the feet still lingers among the mountains of Lebanon. The place for treading out the grapes is sometimes dug in the ground, lined with a coating of either stone or brick. To such an excavation, probably, there is reference in the text, though some think the allusion is to a trough in the earth for receiving the liquor from a foot-press placed over it.

Built a tower. This turret or watch-tower answered the two-fold purpose of a place of abode for the keeper of the vineyard, and a post of observation to protect it from thieves and animals, especially dogs and foxes. (See Cant. i. 6, ii. 15.) The

Church must have its towers and watchmen against the assaults of the profane, or the incursions of hypocrites. *Let it out.* Leased or rented it, with rent to be paid from the produce; *to husbandmen,* the Jewish people, especially their rulers and priests, who were the chief instigators in all these things which were bringing wrath upon the nation unto the uttermost.

Went into a far country. This means either that after the open manifestation of Himself which God made to Israel at the giving of the law from Sinai, and in the miracles which accompanied their deliverance from Egypt, and their introduction to Canaan, He did not in so open and extraordinary a manner manifest Himself to the people again (Deut. xxxiv. 10-12), or it indicates the feeling of the vine-dressers, who think that God has no regard to their conduct. (Ezek. viii. 12, ix. 9; Ps. x. 4, 5; Luke xii. 45.) The time of God's forbearance is intimated, during which men act according to their own will. (Matt. xxv. 14; Mark xiii. 14.)

34. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, ^athat they might receive the fruits of it.—Cant. viii. 11, 12.

Time of the fruit drew near. An intimation of the period in which the proper prophetic activity began in Israel, which, as is known, was a considerable time after the founding the theocratic state, so that the fruits had had abundant time to come to maturity. *Sent his servants, &c.* By the servants are meant extraordinary ambassadors who were sent from time to time in the owner's name, to demand the stipulated tribute—prophets, such as Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, men not of the number, or in the confidence of the ordinary rulers, but specially commissioned by the Supreme, to approach them with reproof and instruction. *That they might receive the fruits of it.* According to ancient custom, the rent of a farm was paid by a part of the produce. He had reason to expect fruit, because all the arrangements and agreements were to this effect. So with the Jews, whom God had taken into solemn covenant, and otherwise highly favored.

35. ^aAnd the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. 36. Again he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.

^b2 Chron. xxiv. 21 and xxxvi. 16; Neh. ix. 26. chap. v. 12 and xxiii. 34, 37; Acts vii. 52; 1 Thes. ii. 15; 11eb. xi. 36, 37.

Beat one. The word "beat" signifies literally, in the Greek, to flay or skin, which, in this case, is supposed to be done by beating. The established authorities of the nation, exercising their office for their own pleasure or profit, rejected the counsel, and assaulted the person of the messenger, dismissing him without any fruit. *Killed another.* Rid themselves of the true witnesses of God by a variety of persecutions. *Stoned another.* This was, among the Jews, a common way of punishment. (Deut. xiii. 9, xvii. 7; Josh. vii. 23.) Especially was this the case in times of popular tumult, and of sudden indignation among the people. (Acts vii. 58, xiv. 19.) Isaiah was sawn asunder, Jeremiah and Zechariah were stoned, and Amos was murdered with a club. (See Jer. xxxvii. 15, xxxviii. 6; Jer. xxvi. 20-23; 2 Cor. xxiv. 21; comp. also chap. xxiii. 37.)

Other servants more than the first. The repeated messages sent by the prophets, generation after generation, indicate not only the continued patience, long-suffering, and wonderful compassion of God—a compassion not quenched by repulsion—but also the growing wantonness and wickedness of the people, by whom His servants, although sometimes effecting temporary reforms, were almost uniformly rejected and maltreated. (See Jer. xlv. 4; Neh. ix. 26.) There is not a moment in which God does not shower down His gifts upon men, and require the fruit of them. *Various instruments* are used to bring sinners to God. There are prophets, apostles, pastors, teachers; some with their gift after this manner, and some after that. The greatest share of the persecution of Christ's true disciples, has, in all ages, fallen upon the ministers of His religion.

37. But last of all, he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

He sent unto them his Son. The same authority that sent God's messengers of old to your fathers, has, in these last days, sent to you his Son. The Lord Jesus here speaks of Himself, and thus severs Himself, by the sharpest line of demarcation, from all merely human messengers. (Heb. iii. 3-6.) He is God's "beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased"—the "only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and

truth." God will send even *Him*, as the last trial of Divine mercy with His covenant people, *as such*. *They will reverence my Son.* This expression is natural and appropriate in the lips of a human proprietor, but obviously, when applied to God, it means only that such reverence was claimed, was due, and might justly be expected.

38. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.'

¹Ps. ii. 8; Heb. i. 2. ²Ps. ii. 2; chap. xxvi. 3 and xxvii. 1; John xi. 53; Acts iv. 27.

This is the heir—the owner of the property. They confess his being *the heir*, among themselves, but they utter no such confession to Him. *Come, let us kill him.* The owner being absent, they imagine that if the son was dead they could find none to interfere with them in holding the vineyard without paying the rent. *Let us seize on his inheritance.* These rulers were determined to retain the power over Israel. They were afraid of the growing popularity of Jesus, as likely to dispossess them of their place and authority. (See John xi. 47, 48.) Their meaning here was: "If we let this man alone, all men will believe on *Him*. Then the Romans will come and take away *our* place and nation. Thus *our* position will be irretrievably ruined. *He* will get the heritage, if we do not take instant measures to prevent it. It is expedient for us that one man die for the people. Let us therefore put him to death. This is our only hope for continued authority and power."

39. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.

¹Chap. xxvi. 50, &c.; Mark xiv. 46, &c.; Luke xxii. 54, &c.; John xviii. 12, &c.; Acts ii. 23.

Out of the vineyard. A striking prophecy of the crucifixion outside of the city. (Heb. xiii. 12, 13; John xix. 17.) By that, as in the Pentateuch by the exclusion from the camp, was signified the cutting off from the people of God, and from all share in their blessings. (See 1 Kings xxi. 13.) The words expressing the violence of the husbandmen are numerous and graphic: *seize, caught, cast, kill, slew*. They might nearly all occur in the narrative of Christ's own apprehension and crucifixion.

40. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

Christ makes an appeal to His hearers,

as if willing that they shall judge of the righteousness of the punishment so richly deserved by the vine-dressers. *Unto those husbandmen.* It is observable how the successive generations, who for so many centuries had been filling up the measure of the iniquity of Israel, are considered, throughout the entire parable, but as one body of husbandmen. God will deal with nations as, indeed, *being*, as having a living unity in themselves, as, in fact, *bodies*. They are something more than mere aggregations of individuals.

41. "They say unto him, *He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.*"

See Luke xx. 16. Luke xxi. 44; Heb. ii. 3. Acts xiii. 46, xv. 7, xviii. 6 and xxviii. 28; Rom. ix. 10, 11.

They say unto him. He compels them to utter their own condemnation. The judgment pronounced is two-fold. 1. *Miserably destroy, &c.*, an emphatic alliteration not easily conveyed in English. "He will badly destroy those bad men," *i.e.* the Jewish state and nation. 2. *Let out his vineyard to others, &c.* He was about to take their privileges from them and give them to the Gentiles, who should cultivate the ground on which they were placed, and render Him the fruits.

42. Jesus saith unto them, "Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?"

Ps. cxviii. 22; Isa. xxviii. 16; Mark xii. 10; Luke xx. 17; Acts iv. 11; Eph. ii. 20; 1 Peter ii. 6, 7.

Did ye never read, &c. Their attention is here called to a passage which predicts the very doom which they had unwittingly pronounced upon themselves. *The stone, &c.* This refers to Christ, and His rejection by those who called themselves leaders and builders in the Jewish church. He was cast off by them as a stone which the architect or workman, thinking too unshapely to work into the structure, throws aside as unfit and of no value. *The same is become, &c.* The very man, Christ Jesus, whom the official but false builders refused, dishonored and slew, God raised up and made King upon His holy hill of Zion. It is a dreadful discovery for those husbandmen to make, that the Son, whom they murdered, lives, and has become their Lord. *The head-stone of the corner* is the large stone placed in the corner of a stone edifice, for the

purpose of binding the two walls firmly together. Jesus Christ is the strong and firm corner-stone of the new building of the Christian Church, in which those who were hitherto divided, Jews and Gentiles, have been united into one glorious body. (1 Cor. iii. 11; Eph. ii. 13, 20; 1 Peter ii. 5.) See Peter's confession of this stone. (Matt. xvi. 16.) *This is the Lord's doing, &c.* The adoption of this stone by the Great Builder as the chief corner-stone in the glorious edifice He was erecting, was so marvellous, that it could be referred only to the inscrutable wisdom and purpose of God. The point which was marvellous was its rejection by the Jewish builders, when possessed, as it was, of all the essential properties which rendered it suitable for the use of the building.

43. Therefore I say unto you, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."—Chap. viii. 12.

The privileges and blessings promised to the fathers—of which you deem yourselves heirs—seeing you prove yourselves unworthy, shall be given to the people whom ye despise, who, though now cast out among the Gentiles, "shall be my people, and I will be their God." (Isa. lxxv. 15; see before on verse 28–32.) *Taken from you.* The Jewish nation shall be left to be trodden down by the Moslem, the Arab and the Bedouin, and the Gentiles shall get possession of the blessings until that day when the Jews shall be grafted in. *A nation.* Though collected out of many nations, they will as Christians constitute *one nation*—the "holy nation" mentioned in 1 Peter ii. 9. (See Isa. li. 4, lxvi. 5–14; Rev. xix. 11.) *Bring forth the fruits thereof.* Here an allusion is made to paying the owner of the vineyard in *kind*. The returns which God expects for His grace are *the fruits of grace*; nothing can ever be acceptable in His sight, that does not spring from *Himself*. He also expects these fruits "in their seasons." (Verse 41; Ps. i. 3; see on verse 41.)

44. And whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

Isa. viii. 14, 15; Zech. xii. 3; Luke xx. 18; Rom. ix. 33; 1 Peter ii. 8. Isa. lx. 12; Dan. ii. 44.

Whosoever shall fall. Note the rapid yet harmonious changes of our Lord's illustration of the stone. The same stone is first a *rejected stone*; then, second, a *head-corner*

stone; then, third, a *stumbling-stone*, and lastly, a stone *falling from above*. Jesus becomes more and more stern, as in His prophetic office He approaches the subject of His own kingly judgment. *Shall be broken grind him to powder*. Two kinds of punishment are here referred to, not two different degrees of the same punishment. In the one, the person offending is active (he stumbles and is broken), in the other, passive (he is fallen upon and crushed). In the first case, whatever evil is experienced is self-inflicted by the person who endures it; in the second, that which is experienced rushes upon the sufferer with irresistible force, from the offended and now avenging Saviour. The one is a punishment only of this life, where alone sinners have the opportunity of stumbling on the rock of salvation, and consists in all the loss of peace, consolation and blessing, together with all the judicial blindness, bitterness of spirit, hardness of heart, and manifold disquietudes of mind, which inevitably blight and desolate the moral condition of those who resist the claims of Messiah. The other punishment belongs to eternity, and consists in the fearful and everlasting retribution which Christ will inflict upon all his adversaries when He takes to Himself His power and great glory—consigning them to final perdition in utter darkness.

Some suppose the expression “grind him to powder,” is chosen with reference to the mysterious stone in Dan. ii. 34, 35, which grinds to powder the image of the monarchies. It recalls an ancient Greek proverb: “The mill-stones of heaven grind the corn slowly, but they grind it to very powder.” It clearly denotes the fearful punishment of the finally impenitent and unbelieving. (See Isa. viii. 14; 1 Peter ii. 8; Luke ii. 34; Matt. xi. 6.)

Many are the ways in which Christ may become a *stumbling-stone*. The Pharisees denied His Messiahship. Some, in our own day, admitting that He was a *good man*, disbelieve His miracles and His supernatural conception. Some, accepting these, deny His Deity, the vicariousness of His sufferings. Others, believing all this, are yet unwilling to lead the life of self-denial which He requires in order to be His disciples.

Others, oppressed by a conscious load of sin, imagine that the spotless purity of His character is an obstacle to their pardon, and it would be, were it not for that righteousness which arises from His atoning death.

45. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. 46. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.—Verse 11; Luke vii. 15; John vii. 40.

A guilty conscience needs no accuser. These enemies of our Lord, instead of yielding to conviction, were exasperated at Jesus as they saw the application to themselves of the truth He had just uttered. But, great as was their desire to apprehend Him, they so feared the people that they dared not resort to violence. A man is in a very desperate condition when wholesome admonition and the denunciation of misery only provoke him to greater wrath and iniquity. Fear of men restrains only the hand, the heart is abandoned to sin so long as it is not controlled by the fear of God.

Because they took him for a prophet. As the conscience of the common people was in favor of John the Baptist, so now was it so far on the side of Christ as to receive Him, not indeed as the *Son*, but as a *messenger* to the vineyard. They regarded him as a Divinely appointed Teacher. (See Luke vii. 16; John vi. 14, vii. 40; Deut. xviii. 18.)

Note, 1. Civil and religious liberty, the Bible and the Sabbath, the Church and its ministry, have been provided and preserved for us by our Father's care. How thankful should we be for such inestimable blessings! 2. Men not only refuse to obey God, but are angry with those who *reprove* their disobedience. 3. Unconverted men become more and more hardened in sin, as they resist calls to duty. 4. Abuse of God's ministers, because of their character or faithfulness, is a gross insult to Him who sent them. 5. God has done all to secure the salvation of men which, consistently with the highest wisdom and goodness, it was possible for Him to do. 6. God overrules the wrath of man so as to make it contribute to His glory. 7. Nations sometimes make a bad use of their privileges. It may well be feared that we are not, as a nation, living up to

our light, or walking worthily of our many mercies. Must we not confess with shame that millions amongst us seem utterly without God in the world? Undoubtedly the fruit that the Lord receives from His vineyard in our land, compared with what it ought to be, is disgracefully small. 8.

The nation that will not render to God the fruits of His vineyard, may have their privileges in judgment taken away. 9. When Divine truth shows us that we are wrong, we should not be too proud and too fond of the world to confess our past mistakes, and to take up the cross and follow Christ.

1. Where did Jesus send two of his disciples? 2. For what did He send them? 3. What does this narrative teach? 4. What did the "multitude" do? 5. What effect did the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem produce? 6. What did He do in the temple? 7. What is said of the chief priests and scribes? 8. Where did Christ go to lodge? 9. Give the history of the fig-tree He saw? 10. What precious promise is made to the prayer of faith? 11. How did Jesus answer the chief priests and elders in the temple? 12. What did the "certain man" say to his "first son?" 13. What did the son reply? 14. What is said of the "second" son? 15. What are the great lessons of this parable? 16. What does the parable of the "householder" teach? 17. Explain verse 44. 18. Repeat the practical reflections at the end of the chapter.

CHAPTER XXII.

1 *The parable of the marriage of the king's son.* 9 *The vocation of the Gentiles.* 12 *The punishment of him that wanted the wedding garment.* 15 *Tribute ought to be paid to Cæsar.* 23 *Christ confuteth the Sadducees for the resurrection.* 34 *answereth the lawyer, which is the first and great commandment.* 41 *and poseth the Pharisees about the Messias.*

The parable, with which this chapter opens stands connected, both historically and logically, with the two which immediately precede it. Yet the lessons which they teach, though in some respects parallel, are to a great extent distinct. In the last parable our Lord was indeed the son, the only and beloved son, of the householder, but in *this* one His race is royal, and He appears as the king's son. (Ps. lxxii. 1.) *There*, God appears demanding something from men; *here*, He appears more as giving something to them. *There*, He is displeased that His demands are not complied with; *here*, that His goodness is not accepted. *There* He requires; *here* He imparts.

This parable, and the one given by Luke, of the Great Supper, are not to be regarded as one and the same. In *that*, it is simply a *man* who makes the supper and bids many. In *this*, it is a *king* making a marriage for his son. The former displays the ingratitude of the recusants; the latter, their rebellion, daringly sealed by the blood they shed of the subjects of their king. (See on Luke xiv. 16.)

AND Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, 2. The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, 3. And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come, ^aLuke xiv. 16, Rev. xix. 7, 9.

Kingdom of heaven is like, &c., i. e., just as it was at and with the wedding-feast which a king made for his son, so is it also found to take place in regard to the blessed fellowship of men with Christ, to which they are invited. (Zeph. i. 7, 8; Prov. ix. 1.) *A certain king, &c.* The two important features here are the royal state of the Father, and the specific designation of the supper as the nuptial feast of his Son. "The King who made the marriage-feast," says *Luther*, "is our Heavenly Father, the Bridegroom is His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Bride is the Christian Church, we and all the world, so far as it believes." (See Isa. lxi. 10, lxii. 5; Hosea ii. 19; Matt. ix. 15; John iii. 29; Eph. v. 32; 2 Cor. xi. 2.) How are our ideas exalted of the inexhaustible riches of Divine grace, when the nuptial entertainment is described as being given by a great and powerful monarch at the marriage of his son, the heir to the name and honors of his house! The *marriage-feast* points manifestly to redemption completed in the incarnation, ministry, death and resurrection of Christ.

And sent forth, &c. In the East, persons giving an entertainment are in the habit of despatching *two different* invitations;

one when they resolve on having the banquet, mentioning the day and hour of the expected meeting, and the other sent a little before the assembling of the guests, to announce that all the preparations for the feast are completed. (Esth. v. 8, vi. 14.) This second invitation is sometimes, with persons of the highest rank, followed by a third. These "servants" did not announce the feast as a new thing, then for the first time made known; they spoke of it as that which was promised before, and actually offered. Men were bidden to the great festival of love by patriarchs, prophets and priests. *And they would not come.* Notice, it is not said, they *could* not come, but, they *would* not come. It was neither to their taste, disposition, nor liking. The reason why any one rejects the Gospel is not that he cannot believe, but that he will not believe. The inability is in the heart, not in his own physical power.

4. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.
Prov. ix. 2; John vi. 50, 58.

Other servants. This refers to the renewed invitation to the Jews which was made subsequent to the crucifixion, and the Pentecostal effusion of the Holy Spirit, when Stephen, Barnabas, Paul, Peter, John, and a great company of preachers, with new power from on high, and capable of a more persuasive eloquence, proclaimed the grand message of the everlasting Gospel. *Tell them, &c.* (See on verse 3.) So tell them that they cannot mistake. From the frequently repeated invitation, we may farther discern God's deep earnestness and fatherly love, who is so bent on helping sinners, and also the high importance of a participation in the Gospel feast.

Behold, I have prepared my dinner, &c. The simple manners of the East established the custom of mentioning the principal articles of which an entertainment is to consist. Oxen and fatlings were, in olden times, the noblest entertainment. (Gen. xviii. 7, 8; 1 Kings i. 9.) *My dinner.* In this feast all salvation is the free grace and gift of God, which He, without any co-operation on our part, has prepared through Christ, so that man's business is only to come, receive and enjoy what God's fatherly love presents—pardon of

sin, peace with God, righteousness, life, and blessing for evermore. (Eph. i. 3.) *Come unto the marriage.* You have not something to do, or to pay, or to offer, but *all things are ready*, sacrifice is offered, the price is paid, the gates are open, and all you have to do is to believe God's sincerity in inviting you and joy in giving welcome; accept the invitation, eat, drink, and be happy. All this is true of us as sinners, in accepting the Gospel.

5. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: 6. And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.
Gen. xxv. 34; Rom. ii. 4; Heb. ii. 3.

Made light of it. They were not simply indifferent, but met the importunate kindness of the king with contemptuous mockery. What a sad statement is here of the reception given by sinners to the Gospel! Men make light of God's love, of Christ's sufferings, of their own peril, if they disregard and treat with contempt alike the promises and threats of the Bible. *Went their ways, &c.* The first is the landed proprietor; the second, the merchant; the first would *enjoy* what he already possesses; the second would *acquire* what as yet is his only in anticipation. (See on Luke xiv. 18, 19.) These two represent the two great divisions of the men of this world. The dangers of *having* and *getting*, though cognate, are yet not at all the same. As these two guests, being troubled by the gravity of their step, were glad to seek refuge from reflection by plunging into the ordinary avocations of life, so the excessive devotion to business, which occupies some men and leaves not a shred either of their hearts or lives for Christ, may be, in many cases, not a primary affection, but the secondary result of another and deeper passion.

And the remnant, &c. A portion of the guests carried their opposition beyond supercilious neglect into blood-thirsty enmity. How this description in the parable was realized to the very letter, the Acts of the Apostles give large testimony. Stephen and James were only the first of a large "army of martyrs" who sealed with their blood the testimony they bore to Christ. Evermore the indifference of the world breaks out into enmity against God. The vicissitudes of time scatter

their estates and leave them desolate, or the words of the Gospel reach their consciences and disquiet them, and the apathy they previously felt kindles into intense hatred, and that hatred burns into persecution of the men who are simply doing their duty to their Lord, and trying to do them good.

7. But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he sent forth *this* armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

^aDan. ix, 26; Luke xix, 27.

From the punitive righteousness of God, marked by the words, *he was wroth*, we see once more how sincere is the gracious call of God. We learn here, also, that the reception of the call is a free act, and that man is not forced to it by God. *His armies*. These may refer to the Roman armies, which, not many years after this, under Vespasian and Titus, besieged Jerusalem, destroyed the city and slaughtered an immense number of the inhabitants, and which, like other nations of old (Isa. x. 5; Jer. xxv. 9), were Jehovah's messengers of wrath against that devoted city. The despisers of God's word shall be visited with terrible punishment. *Their city*. There lies an awful threat in this appellation given to Jerusalem. It is *their* city, not any longer the city of the great King, who owns it no more for His own.

8. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

^cChap. x. 11, 13; Acts xiii. 46; Rev. iii. 4.

The wedding is ready—it still continues so, notwithstanding that many have slighted the call to it. *Not worthy*. Their unworthiness consisted in their rejection of the invitation. They were in such a state of mind that they could not receive the grace offered them. Here Divine grace is justified, and all guilt thrown back upon the guests (Acts xiii. 46, 47), so that not even the servants inviting them are partakers in it. The worthiness of those who found a place at the festival, consisted only in their acceptance of the invitation.

9. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

The king took his servants into his counsel. They had suffered in his cause, and he will not conceal from them what he is about to do. *Highways*, that is, the nooks and lanes, the hedges, ditches and bye roads, where beggars and outcasts of society

are. When those who had a prescriptive right to appear at court had, by their perversity, excluded themselves, the king, in his sovereignty, extended the invitation generally to the common people. *As many as ye shall find*, &c. Obviously this means the calling of the Gentiles—the changing of the outward aspect of the kingdom of God among men, just as it is said in chapter xxi. 43. The national pride of Israel is here primarily aimed at. (Compare Matt. viii. 10–12, of which this parable is only the ample unfolding.)

10. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

^dChap. xiii. 33, 47.

Both bad and good. The servants made no distinction; they swept the streets to fill the royal halls. The invitation to the marriage-supper of the Lamb is the same to all *kinds* as well as conditions of men; those who are outwardly moral and those who are not; those, like Nathaniel, or Cornelius, or the ruler of Capernaum, may be, in one sense called the "*good*," and those, like the woman who was a sinner, may be in the same sense called the "*bad*." Apart from Christ, and prior to regeneration, the distinction between bad and good is only an earthly thing: in God's sight and in prospect of the judgment, there is none good, no not one. It is not the man's goodness that recommends him to God's favor: the worst is welcome through the blood of Christ, and the best is rejected if he approach by any other way.

The wedding was furnished with guests. (Isa. liii. 12; John xi. 52, xii. 24.) Here the parable becomes logically complete. Up to this point it repeats and extends the warnings previously given regarding the spiritual privileges which the Jews enjoyed and abused, the judgments which had been and still would be poured out upon the nation, and the successful proclamation of the Gospel to the Gentiles, when the natural seed of Abraham should have, in rebellious unbelief, rejected the offers of their Lord. It is now for those who have accepted the invitation to the Gospel-feast, with an earnest warning also for them. There are, indeed, *here*, two parables, and in their union and relation they resemble the two seed-stones which are

sometimes found within one fruit, attached to each other, and wrapped in the same envelope, but possessing each its own separate organization, and its own independent germ of life.

11. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: 12. And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? and he was speechless.

²²Cor. v. 3; Eph. iv. 24; Col. iii. 10, 12; Rev. iii. 4, xvi. 15, xix. 8.

To see the guests. This shall be done at the last judgment. Every one shall then be made manifest before the world according to his internal condition. *Had not on, &c.* The wedding garment was something conspicuous and distinctive; it was a significant badge of a man's loyalty, and the want of it indicated disloyalty. In the parable it is taken for granted that wedding garments were provided for the guests, which made the conduct of the man without one altogether inexcusable. *Friend*—"companion." It is a kind word. *How camest, &c.* Astonishment is expressed at this. At the judgment, there will not be the stern, terrible blaze of revealed majesty, as it were, bearing the unrighteous man down to destruction, but it shall be the still, small voice of awakened conscience. *Wedding garment.* This includes both faith and love as one. Rather, it is what comprises both faith and love, what implies and demands them both, but which is higher than both—the righteousness of Christ "unto all, and upon all them that believe," and "who walk in love." (See Rom. xiii. 14; Col. iii. 10; Eph. iv. 22, vi. 13-16; 1 Thess. v. 8.) *Speechless.* The man had nothing to say. His silence shows that the only reason why he had not on a wedding garment was, simply, because he thought his own dress, in all probability mean and sordid, good enough for the royal presence. The sinner who is destitute of Christ's righteousness at last, will be rendered speechless by the unutterable inward horror that he has sinned away his own mercies.

13. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

¹³Chap. viii. 12.

The servants. he ministering attendants here, who are different, both in name and office, from the servants who invited and brought in the guests, can be no other

than the angels. (Matt. xiii. 41, 49; Luke xix. 24.) *Bind him hand and foot*—the sign of the helplessness to which, in a moment, every proud striver against God is reduced. The *hands*, by the aid of which resistance, the *feet*, by whose help escape might have been meditated, are alike deprived of all power and motion. (Acts xxi. 11.) *Take him away*—from the banquet-hall. Here is implied the sinner's exclusion from the Church now glorious and triumphant in heaven.

Cast him into outer darkness—the out-door darkness. The guilty guest in the parable is thrown from the splendor of the banquet into the horrors of the midnight street. The penalty is not merely privative—not only the loss of good, but, also, the presence of evil. (See on chap. viii. 12.) *There shall be weeping, &c.* What a dreadful expression! How unavailing will be their tears of anguish, and how impotent the gnashing or grating of teeth, when the persons here represented become outcasts of God's kingdom! (See on chap. viii. 12.) We cannot tell in detail what the condition of the finally outcast will be, and what will be the constituents of their suffering. All that our Lord has told us is, that the condition of the lost is in outer darkness, with all its horrors. He has covered it from our sight. In referring to the dismal retribution of the wicked, He often warns us that they shall be cast away, but He never tells us the particulars of their torments. For teachings about this terror, let us listen to His Word; for safety from it, let us hide in His bosom.

14. For many are called, but few are chosen.

The scope of the parable gives this proverbial saying here, this sense: Many are invited to the blessings and privileges of the Gospel-feast, but comparatively few are real participants of the grace of God; while the singling out of only *one* without the wedding garment, is meant, to make *each man* look well to himself and his own hope. On the other hand, our Lord gives the sad intimation that, "many are called, but few chosen," to show that in the Gentile day of grace, as well as the Jewish, it is after all but a small remnant who really accept of God's invitation of mercy at all.

(Chap. vii. 13, 14. See on chap. xix. 30, xx. 16.)

15. ¶ Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. 16. And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. 17. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? 18. But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? 19. Shew me the tribute-money. And they brought unto him a penny. 20. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? 21. They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God, the things that are God's. 22. When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

Mark xii. 13; Luke xx. 20. Chap. xvii. 25; Rom. xiii. 7.

Took counsel—held a consultation. *Entangle*, &c. They aimed to involve Him in trouble on that very delicate but true distinction, that subsists between the jurisdiction of Cæsar and the jurisdiction of God; or, rather, they attempted to bring Him into difficulty, either with the crowd who applauded Him, or with the Herodians, and through them with the Idumean, who occupied the throne at that time as the representative of Cæsar. If Jesus had said, It is lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, the Jews would have all risen up against Him. If He had said, No, Herod would have accused Him of treason. *Their disciples*—probably young and zealous scholars in that hardening school. *With the Herodians*. These were a political party who had espoused the cause of the Romans, and were staunch supporters of their authority. In Luke (xx. 20), these willing tools are called “spies,” which should feign themselves just (or righteous) men, “that they might take hold of His words,” &c. The Herodians heartily hated the Pharisees, because the Pharisees quarreled with the government of the civil power; and the Pharisees as heartily hated the Herodians, because they regarded the government of Rome as superior to the ecclesiastical power. Yet, when they wanted to destroy Jesus, they merged their internal feuds into one current of hostility to the Son of God. *Master*; or teacher. This was an empty compliment.

We know: they speak the truth, though this was done with a most false intention. *True*. Truthful, upright. *Way of God*, i. e., the doctrines and precepts which God approves. *In truth*—in accordance with truth. *Neither carest*, &c.—art not afraid

of, nor showest partiality to any man, not even Herod himself. There was something peculiarly artful in this flattering address. “Their words were smother than butter,” yet there was “war in their hearts.” (Ps. lv. 21; Prov. xxvi. 23; Rom. xvi. 18.) Persons of this description will be met with as long as the world stands.

Is it lawful? i. e., may we do this without a breach of our duty to God? They affected great conscientiousness. *Tribute* (xvii. 24.) The annual poll-tax of a denarius upon every person by the Roman emperor. *Tiberius Cæsar* was at this time emperor. *Tempt ye me*—try me by such an ensnaring question. *Hypocrites*. He opposes the depth of His wisdom to the depth of their malice, and manifests it, 1. by *unmasking* them, and showing that He knew the very secrets of their hearts, and, 2. by not attempting to discuss the question at large, but setting it in a way to which none could honestly object.

Tribute-money. (See on verse 17.) A penny—the denarius, a Roman silver coin, the principal money at that time. It does not follow that a single piece of this coin formed the entire amount of the tribute to be paid, but the amount, whatever it was, was paid in this coin. *Whose is this image*, &c. Our Lord, of course, knew whose effigy and inscription it bore, but He made the inquirers answer to their own confusion. The Jewish doctors themselves taught, that to admit the impression and inscription of any prince on their current coin, involved an acknowledgment of their subjection to him.

Render therefore, &c. They had just confessed that Cæsar exercised temporal authority over them. They used the money which Cæsar had coined, thus admitting that they were under his government. This admission was the stronger because, not *Tiberius*, but the official title *Cæsar* was given, showing that not a person, but a principle was involved. Let them, therefore, render unto him his dues. If they consented to receive the gift of peace and order from Cæsar, they must consent to render the payment of the expenses of his government.

The things which are Cæsar's. What are Cæsar's? 1. *Honor*. The civil government

under which a man lives, and by which he is protected, demands his honor and reverence. 2. *Obedience.* The laws which are made for the suppression of evil-doers, and the maintenance of good order, which are calculated to promote the benefit of the whole, and the comfort of the individual, should be religiously obeyed. 3. *Tribute.* The government that charges itself with the support and defense of the whole, should have its necessary expenses repaid by the people in whose behalf they are incurred; hence tax should be paid. Cæsar, however, has no right to infringe the rights of God. Human laws are limited by the Divine law. The Christian must, as far as possible, comply with both. Where the human law conflicts with the Divine, he must obey the latter and suffer the consequences.

It is not an easy matter to determine precisely in all cases what are "the things of Cæsar," and what are "the things of God"—where the claims of Cæsar end, and where the claims of God begin. It would, perhaps, be safe to say that the former include things political, secular and temporal, and the latter include things sacred, moral and spiritual. Sometimes a question of a mixed character arises, involving both political and moral elements, in this case, duty in relation to the question is to be performed by the individual under a sense of double responsibility, regard for the moral aspect always being supreme. Such a question is also to be treated by the Church and by the State according to the view of it which brings it under their control respectively. "Among the peculiar qualities of our holy religion," says *Paley*, "is to be reckoned its complete abstraction from all views of civil policy. Christianity, while it declines every question relating to particular forms of government, is alike friendly to them all, by tending to make men virtuous, and, therefore, easier to be governed; by stating obedience to government in ordinary cases, to be not merely a submission to force, but a duty of conscience; by inducing dispositions favorable to public tranquility, and by recommending prayers for communities and governors of every description, with a solicitude and fervency pro-

portioned to the influence they possess upon human happiness."

And unto God the things that are God's. We are not to recognize antagonism here, but unity. Their civil duties did not release them from religious obligations (1 Peter ii. 17), nor did their duties to God absolve them from duties to the State. (Rom. xiii. 1.) Instead of one class of duties being set at variance with the other, our Lord harmonizes and confirms them both. (1 Peter ii. 13, 14.) He has not divorced them, but united them. We must never do anything contrary to the rights of God in obeying the government, and never violate the rights of government under pretence of doing service to God. Honor, love, obedience, faith, fear, prayer, spiritual worship, were payments which even these Pharisees and Herodians might daily make, and payments with which the Roman government did not interfere. Such payments Jesus directed them to make. We can learn how to render to every one his own, by saying, "Show me the coin." As we see the image and superscription of God on the Sabbath, for example, we can easily decide whether that day is to be used for earthly activity or for participation in the sweet services of the sanctuary. If it be sinful not to render unto men the things which belong to men, how much *more* sinful is it not to render unto God the things that belong to God! Yet, it is in this point, alas! that we are most negligent. *And went their way.* Our Lord's reply commanded the admiration of His very tempters. Well might they be astonished. It was an extrication of Himself from the toils they had spread so artfully for Him that escape seemed to them impossible. By His answer, *Cæsar* is satisfied, for he got *his own* to the uttermost farthing. *God* is glorified, His honor, is in every respect, secured. The *Pharisees* cannot complain (Luke xx. 26), for Christ's decision is but their own confession put in shape. The *people* are edified: one of the most difficult questions that could possibly come before them is answered in such a way as to relieve their consciences, and direct their conduct. (Luke xx. 26.)

23. § 'The same day came to him the "Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection, and asked him, 24. Saying, Master, "Moses said, if a man die, having no

children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. 25. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother. 26. Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. 27. And last of all the woman died also. 28. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.

Mark xii. 18; Luke xx. 27. "Acts xxiii. 8. "Deut. xxv. 5, 6.

The attempt of the Pharisees to entice the Saviour within the sphere of the controversy between politics and religion having entirely miscarried, another class of His enemies now seek to allure Him upon another not less dangerous territory. *Sadducees*. This Jewish sect taught, among other things, that God was not to be served from mercenary motives, that there were no future rewards and punishments appointed unto men, and, consequently, no world of retribution. Their intention is to show, from Moses, that the doctrine of the resurrection involves an inexplicable mystery. *Saying, Master, &c.* They propose to Jesus a difficulty that would grow out of their law, if the relations which it prescribes were to be extended beyond the grave. The law referred to is found Deut. xxv. 5, 6. *Seven brethren*. It is very likely that the Sadducees increased the number, merely to make the question the more difficult.

In the resurrection whose wife, &c. With their gross, materialistic views, they thought that if there *was* any future state, it must resemble the present, and assumed it to be a necessary consequence of the doctrine of the resurrection, that every man's wife should be restored to him. How was this confusion to be settled? This method of arguing by *insinuations, from imagined difficulties, against authenticated revelation, or even stubborn facts*, forms a species of logic for which infidels, ancient and modern, have shown a peculiar predilection, and indeed it is the best method which can be taken of perplexing weak minds, and amusing superficial inquirers. There is great comfort in the thought that truth must triumph. Infidelity may, from time to time, make a stir in the world, but can produce no lasting impression. The great evidences of Christianity remain, like the Pyramids, unshaken and unmoved.

29. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

Do err, &c., that is, "ye deceive your-

selves by assuming a false hypothesis," namely, that if there be a future state it must be like the present, and by your ignorance of the true sense of the Scriptures, and not considering the *omnipotence* of God. Unbelief has always two springs: 1. The want of historic faith; 2. The want of personal faith. These Sadducees did not perceive the Divine, the spiritual in the Scriptures (1 Cor. ii. 14), hence their ignorance of the Scriptural doctrine of the resurrection. Neither did they understand the power of God, inasmuch as they put no trust in His power over death, in His power to raise the dead: and hence they had no ability to conceive of or anticipate the glorification of the present body into a higher state, into a life in which present sexual relations should no longer subsist. The numerous and multiform objections advanced against the resurrection, by the opponents of the doctrine, are all, when analyzed, found to result from not knowing the power of God. He who weighs the dust of the earth in a balance, and whose omniscient eye surveys all things, can easily gather up the dust of those who sleep in Jesus, to become spiritual bodies, bearing the image of the heavenly. (See 1 Cor. xv. 35-54.)

30. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.—1 John iii. 2.

Neither marry. Spoken of males. *Given in marriage*. Spoken of females, with reference to the Oriental custom, according to which fathers gave their daughters into marriage. In the resurrection, the relations that are beautiful on earth shall be utterly unknown. Not that one shall fail to recognize another, but that the relationship which they have sustained, the one to the other, as man and wife, shall have ceased; when all shall be perfectly holy, and perfectly happy. *As the angels*. The meaning appears to be, that the saints shall be angel-like, in freedom from death and disease, in not being subject to the appetites and propensities of the body, and in complete deliverance from a condition of being in which marriage and birth are needful to supply the continual waste occasioned by death. From this comparison it does not follow that the saints in heaven will not have bodies. (See 1 Cor. xv. 42, &c.)

31. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, 32, *I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?* God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.
Ex. iii. 6, 16; Mark xii. 26; Luke xx. 37; Acts vii. 32; Heb. xi. 16.

Our Lord, instead of quoting for His purpose of proving the resurrection, the apparently plainer passages in the prophetic writings (such as Isa. xvi. 9; Ezek. xxxvii; Dan. xii. 2), refers to a word spoken by God Himself, and recorded in Ex. iii. 15—probably because the Sadducees placed the Pentateuch above all other writings of the Old Testament. He argues, as God is not a God of the *dead* (that word being equal, in the sense of the Sadducees, to an eternal annihilation), but of the *living*, it therefore follows, that if He be *the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, these are not *dead*, but *alive*—alive *with God*, though they have ceased, for some hundred years, to exist among mortals. Hence it is said, not “*I was* their God,” but, “*I am.*” A being who is elevated enough to have a true, personal, immortal God, to be *his* God, must himself be neither the creature of time nor annihilation. The same thing is true of all believers, for the promise is to them also, as Abraham’s seed.

Our Lord, in this argument, does not *directly* prove the resurrection of the body distinctively from the immortality of the soul, because He is arguing with those who hold the former to be included in, and inseparably identified with, the latter. To prove one, therefore, is to prove both. A future *personal* existence, where Abraham is Abraham still, involves a resurrection of the dead. *But of the living.* The patriarchs here mentioned, were living in God’s presence, although they had long departed this life. He was their God, the author of their continued existence and enjoyments, as He was when they lived on earth.

33. And when the multitude heard *this*, they were astonished at his doctrine.—Chap. vii. 28.

Our Lord reanimated the dead letter of the Old Testament in such a way as to astonish their minds and elevate their hearts. He poured the sense of immortality upon their spirit from the pages that had by the lifeless teachings of their masters contained the sentence of death.

34. ¶ But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.—Mark xii. 28.

Had heard. Whether the Pharisees were present, mixed up with the crowds, or absent, so that they learned what had taken place through their spies, does not appear. *Sadducees to silence.* (See on verse 15.) *They were gathered together*—they met together with one accord, or for the same purpose, *i. e.* to ensnare Jesus in His discourse. Though previously defeated, they determined to make another effort.

35. Then one of them, *which was a lawyer*, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, 36. Master, which is the great commandment in the law?—Luke x. 28.

One of them, who seems to have been of their party, and knew, too, their plots and plans. *A lawyer.* He was one of the Mosaic jurists, whose special province was the interpretation of the law. *Tempting him*, that is, trying Him; not, however, with a bad intention, but with the purpose of yielding where truth required. (See Mark xii. 28.) *Which is the great commandment in the law?* The reference was to the five books of Moses, which contained the ceremonial laws and the moral. This question involved a matter of no little controversy among the Jewish doctors, as involving the comparative importance of different precepts, some maintaining the pre-eminence of one, some of another. Some said “sacrifices;” some “circumcision;” some “the law of the Sabbath;” some “the law of meats, washings, phylacteries,” &c. Only while they distinguished the Divine precepts (of which they numbered 613) into *great* and *small*, they constantly gave the preference to the *ceremonial* ones.

37. Jesus said unto him, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind.” 38. This is the first and great commandment.—Deut. vi. 5, x. 12, xxx. 6; Luke x. 27.

Our Lord’s answer is in a strain of respect very different from what He showed to cavillers. (See chap. vii. 6.) *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, i. e., Jehovah*, the self-existent One, who hast revealed Himself as the “*I AM*,” and there is “none else,” who, though by His name *JEHOVAH*, apparently at an unapproachable distance from His finite creatures, yet bears to *thee* a real and definite relationship, out of which arises *His claim* and thy duty of *love*. By this love we are to understand the unqualified surrender of our whole being to God. Of such a love man is

capable, though not by his own strength, but by Divine grace, because he finds in God alone all his wants fully and everlastingly satisfied. Our Lord, by calling the commandment to love God supremely, *the first and great commandment*, does evidently not design to represent it as one out of many, though greater in degree than others. On the contrary, the love of God is *the* commandment, and the whole law, with all its injunctions and prohibitions, is only a development of this one commandment. Whether the object of it is considered, or the manner in which it is to be observed, or its being the principle from whence all the duties and actions of men should flow, and the end to which all are to be referred, it is the first command in order of nature, time, dignity, and causality.

39. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

40. xix. 13; chap. xix. 19; Mark xii. 31, Luke x. 27; Rom. xiii. 9; Gal. v. 14, Isa. ii. 8.

Second is like unto it, in spirit—in being founded in love, like in being in fact included in the first. Yet as the object of love, in the latter case, is so infinitely below that of the former, it is to be regarded of secondary rank. *Neighbour*. (See on verse 43.) *As thyself*. The law here laid down, does not require that we neglect our interests for those of another, or share our necessary means of subsistence, with every chance comer, but it is opposed to selfishness, and to a cold-hearted indifference to the wants of others. It demands the exercise of charity in behalf of the destitute and suffering, and teaches us to sympathize in all the griefs and afflictions of our fellow-men, so far as the scope of our observation and influence may extend. As *sincerely* as ourselves, we are to love all mankind, and with the same readiness to do and suffer for them, as we should reasonably desire them to show to us. (See on xix. 19.)

Leighton says: "Seems it not rather a *contrary* commandment? Whereas in the former the whole stream of LOVE is directed in one undivided current toward God, this second commandment seems to cut out a new channel for it, and turn a great part of it to men, 'thy neighbor as thyself.' No, they are not contrary, if we

take them right; yea, they do not only agree, but are inseparable. They do not divide our love, but set it in its right course; first, wholly to God as the sovereign good, and then back from Him according to His own will, it is derived downward to our neighbor. For then only do we love both ourselves and others aright, when we make our love to Him the reason and rule of both."

40. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.—Chap. vii. 12; 1 Tim. i. 5.

These two commandments. The first is a comprehensive epitome of the first four commandments of the decalogue; the second, of the last six commandments. *Hang all the law and the prophets*. The spirit and intent of the Scriptures is to promote love to God and man, the love which the law required, and the prophets were given to enforce and predict. (Rom. xiii. 10; 1 John iv. 20. See on chap. vii. 12, v. 17.) *These two* contain the substance or abridgement of all the moral and religious duties contained in the law and the prophets. They are like the first and last links of a chain, all the intermediate ones depend on them. How simple are these two rules, and yet how comprehensive! How soon the words are repeated, and yet how much they contain! How humbling and condemning they are! How much they prove our daily need of mercy and the precious blood of atonement! Happy would it be for the world if these rules were more known and practiced.

41. ¶ While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42. Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David.—Mark xii. 35; Luke xx. 41.

Our Lord having answered the three questions successively proposed to Him, now in His turn puts a question to the Pharisees, the object of which is to show to them how far their notions of the Messiah's dignity fell short of the truth, and also to prove His Divinity. Let us make a practical use of the solemn question, "What think ye of Christ?" What do we think of His Person and His offices? of His life, His death for us on the cross, His resurrection, ascension, and intercession at the right hand of God? Have we tasted that He is gracious? Have we laid hold on Him by faith? Have we found by experience that He is precious to our souls?

Can we truly say He is my Redeemer and my Saviour, my Shepherd, and my Friend? We should never rest until we can give a satisfactory answer to these serious inquiries. It will not profit us to read about Christ, if we are not joined to Him by living faith.

Whose son is he? The Saviour thus gave them an opportunity of acknowledging Him as Messiah. The doctrine of the Divine Unity (verse 37), is illustrated by that of the Trinity. *Of David.* Human reason more easily accepts moderate views of Christ, than those which are either more humble or more glorious.

43. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, 44. "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?" 45. If David then called him Lord, how is he his son?
 *Ps. cx. 1; Acts ii. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 5; Heb. i. 13, x. 12, 13.

How then, i. e. in what sense, doth David call him, i. e. the Messiah, Lord? The Lord said unto my Lord, that is, God the Father said to God the Son, who was to be incarnate, whom David called his Lord, both as God and as Mediator, his Lord by right of creation and redemption. *Sit thou on my right hand.* Take the place of the greatest eminence and authority. Rest, glory and an almighty power in heaven and on earth to form the kingdom of God, are here denoted. This ought to be the continual object of our adoration, our joy and our confidence.

Till I make thine enemies thy footstool—until I subdue both Jews and Gentiles under thee, and cause them both to acknowledge thee as their Sovereign and Lord. All wicked men, the fallen angels, and death itself, are included in the word *enemies*. It is not implied in these words that the Messiah's royal state will cease when the

result stated has been reached. *If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?* Here was the point to be explained. The question concerning the Messiah's person could only be answered by admitting that He must be God as well as man, and man as well as God—David's son, as man, David's Lord, as God-man. Jesus might have quoted many other Old Testament passages which prove the Divinity of the Messiah, such as Mi. v. 1; Ps. xlv. 7, 8; Mal. iii. 1; Isa. vii. 14, ix. 5; Jer. xxiii. 6. But He quotes the passage which speaks of the Messiah as David's Son and David's Lord at the same time, consequently as God and man in one person.

46. "And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions."

^aLuke xiv. 26. ^cMark xii. 34: Luke xx. 40.

No man was able, &c. "From whence it is evident," says an old writer, "that the Jews of old, even the Pharisees, the most accurate and skillful among them, did interpret this Psalm (cx.) of the *Messias*: for if they had conceived the prophecy belonged either to Abraham or David, or any other, they doubtless would have answered our Saviour that this belonged to the Son of David." *Neither durst, &c.* No one of the scribes, the Pharisees, or the Sadducees, durst ask him any question for the purpose of *tempting* Him or entangling Him, all feeling that they were not a match for Him, and that it was vain to enter the lists with Him. See the effect of Divine wisdom! What an awfulness there is about it! These wicked men were not afraid of Christ's earthly power. Yet in spite of themselves they could not help feeling awe. They were rebuked before Him. Vice quails before the majesty of virtue.

1. What is said of the parable of the "king?" 2. Why did he send forth his servants? 3. Why did he send forth "other servants?" 4. How was their invitation received? 5. What was the result? 6. For what purpose did the Pharisees take counsel? 7. How did they proceed? 8. Explain Christ's reply to their question. 9. What did the Sadducees ask Him? 10. How did He dispose of their objection? 11. What did the lawyer ask Jesus? 12. State our Lord's answer? 13. What did Christ ask the Pharisees? 14. What was their reply? 15. How did Jesus meet it? 16. What was the effect of His answer?

CHAPTER XXIII.

¹ Christ admonisheth the people to follow the good doctrine, not the evil examples of the scribes and Pharisees. ⁵ His disciples must beware of their ambition. ¹³ He denounceth eight woes against their hypocrisy and blindness: ³¹ and prophesieth of the destruction of Jerusalem.

THEN spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, ² saying, "The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: ³ All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

^aNeh. viii. 4, 8; Mal. ii. 7; Mark xii. 38; Luke xx. 45. ^bRom. ii. 19, &c.

The multitude—the common people, who had hailed with acclamations His advent into the city. His disciples, more especially the Apostles and other disciples, who had followed Him from Galilee. There were, doubtless, many of the scribes and Pharisees present, when our Lord pronounced the terrible woes which follow (beginning at verse 13), but they either feared to interrupt Him, or were silent through hope that in the vehemence of His feelings, He would say something which they could turn against Him. *Scribes and Pharisees*, that is, those of the latter class who were at the same time scribes. *Sit*. The Jewish teachers stood to read, but sat to expound the Scriptures. *In Moses' seat, i. e.*, as interpreters of the law given by Moses.

All therefore, &c. As long as the scribes occupied the place of Moses, were clothed with his authority, and spoke forth his words, not their own—those words, because they were true, not because they were uttered by them who officially proclaimed them, the people were called upon to keep and do. *But do not, &c.* Our Lord warns the people against the too common practice of rejecting truth and duty, because of the inconsistent lives of the teachers. *For they say, &c.* What could be more pitiable than a Teacher, to imitate whom is ruin—to refuse to follow whom is salvation.

⁴ For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. ^cLuke xi. 46; Acts xv. 10; Gal. vi. 13.

The scribes and Pharisees, by strictness and harshness in enforcing the precepts of Moses, though in respect to outward ceremonial observances, rather than to piety of heart, imposed heavy burdens on others, but kept themselves from such burdensome obedience, so that, while others were made to carry a load that required all their strength, they would not take a burden that could be moved with their finger; nor did

they present those cheering encouragements which were needed, and which the Old Testament afforded to those who truly desired to serve God. (See Rom. ii. 17–24.) Teachers who press that upon others, which they neither believe nor do themselves, are like bells that call others to church but hang out of it themselves, or like direction posts that point the way to others but stand still themselves.

⁵ But shall their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, ⁶ And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, ⁷ And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

^dChap. vi. 1, 2, 5, 16. ^eNum. xv. 38; Deut. vi. 8 and xxii. 12; Prov. iii. 3. ^fMark xii. 38, 39; Luke xi. 43 and xx. 46.

To be seen of men. They have but one motive—human applause. *Phylacteries*—"strips of parchment, on which were written four passages of Scripture (Ex. xiii. 2–10, 11–17; Deut. vi. 4–9, 13–22) in an ink prepared for the purpose. They were then rolled up in a case of black calf-skin, which was attached to a stiffer piece of leather, having a thong one finger broad and one and a half cubits long. They were placed at the bend of the left arm, and after the thong had made a little knot in the shape of the letter" [*Yodh*, the tenth letter in the Hebrew alphabet] "it was wound round the arm in a spiral line, which ended at the top of the middle finger. . . . They were also worn on the forehead."

Garments. The Jews were required to wear a blue border, or fringe, on their outside garments, to remind them that they were God's people. (Num. xv. 38; Deut. vi. 8, xxii. 12.) These fringes the scribes made excessively large, in order to impress on the minds of the common people an opinion of their own holiness, and their great reverence for the law. *And love, &c.* There was nothing wrong in the scribes occupying the seats set apart for them, or receiving marks of respect and deference in places of public concourse; but to "love" these things, to court them, was not only indicative of a weak, ill-judging mind, but it was also utterly inconsistent with the very elementary principle of a truly good character—supreme regard to what is true and right, whether it pleases men or not. (John v. 24.) *Rabbi, Rabbi.* This is a Hebrew word, signifying a great one. It was an honorary title given to the Jewish teach-

ers, much like our *doctor, teacher*. It was doubled for the sake of greater emphasis. These rabbis were looked up to as infallible oracles in religious matters, and usurped not only the place of the law, but of God himself.

8. ^aBut be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.
^bJames iii. 1; ^csee 2 Cor. i. 24; 1 Peter v. 3.

For one is your Master, or, Teacher. Here is the ground of the prohibition. There was a special reason for this prohibition in the case of the scribes against which it was aimed, for *Rabbi* was not with them a mere title of literary or theological attainments; they claimed the prerogative of supreme jurisdiction in all religious matters, imposing whatever rites, forms or ceremonies they pleased, and lording it over the consciences of the common people, and, hence, with them it was a title of spiritual rank and dignity, which no man had a right to assume. Some excellent men, as *Albert Barnes*, in his "Notes on the Gospels," consider the modern title of Doctor of Divinity as condemned by the spirit of these words. It is certain that the minister who schemes for the purpose of obtaining it, gives humiliating proof of having, in that respect, the spirit of the men who loved to be called Rabbi. All ye are brethren—all substantially equal; none, by office or precedence, nearer to God than another. Nothing is here said about Peter having authority over the rest. If he had such authority, it would have been natural and necessary now to mention and adjust it.

9. And call no man your father upon the earth: ^bfor one is your Father, which is in heaven.—^cMal. i. 6.

The titles, *teacher, father, master*, are prohibited by our Lord with reference to their hierarchical sense and use, but not absolutely, as is evident from the harmless and proper use of the word father. We are not to have regard to human authority in matters of faith or in doctrines of religion. We are to acknowledge no man as our father in spiritual things, so as to have "dominion over our faith," for we have but one such father, even our Father, which is in heaven. The word Pope signifies father. If ever, in the history of men, the title *father* has been assumed in express transgression of Christ's command, it is

in his case. This may be regarded as a warning against that itch for ecclesiastical superiority which has been the bane and the scandal of Christ's ministers in every age.

10. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.

The Greek word for *master* here means a leader of a school or party, whom his followers have to obey *implicitly*. Against setting up any such party leader, Paul warns the Corinthians. (1 Cor. i. 12.) No one shall assume the position of master in the Church of Christ. He is the only Master, and all the members of the New Testament Church are to sustain a real life-union with the one Head of the Church, and the relationship of brethren to one another. All these titles are forbidden to Christ's disciples in the sense in which they were applied to the scribes, but not as titles of respect to our superiors in age, influence and acquirements.

11. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.—^aChap. xx. 26, 27.

"Humility and the spirit of usefulness compose the true dignity to which you ought to aspire. Let greatness be shown among you by your cherishing deep humility and regard for the good of others." *Baxter* well says, "church greatness consists in being greatly serviceable." *Shall be, i. e.*, let him be. (See on chap. xx. 26.)

12. ^aAnd whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

^bJob xxii. 29; Prov. xv. 33 and xxix. 33; Luke xiv. 11 and xviii. 14; Isa. iv. 6; 1 Peter v. 8.

The way to arrive at the highest degree of dignity in the sight of God is, by being willing to become the servant of all. Jesus was exalted because He took on Him the form of a servant. Even so will God, according to this universal law, exalt every one in Christ, who after the same manner exalts himself. The sentiment of this saying of our Lord occurs at least ten times in the Evangelists. This repetition is a striking proof of the Christian grace of humility. (1 Peter v. 5.) Let us seek that blessed grace day by day. None is so beautiful, however much despised by the world. None is such an evidence of saving faith and true conversion to God.

13. ¶ But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.—^aLuke xi. 52.

Woe is a word of solemn denunciation of punishment. As here uttered, it implies that calamities of the most awful nature are impending over its guilty objects from the Divine justice. *Pharisees*, the name of the sect; *scribes*, of the profession. *Hypocrites*—dissemblers, having a mere show of piety. *For ye shut up*, &c. By their false views, they excluded themselves from the blessings of the new and better economy, and so far as these views prevailed, they prevented others from participating in these blessings. They thus became the authors of destruction, both to themselves and to others. The sin here denounced is the sin of the Romish priest, who forbids the poor man to read his Bible; of the unconverted Protestant minister, who sneers at the idea of conversion of the ungodly; of the thoughtless husband, who dislikes his wife becoming “serious;” and of the worldly-minded mother, who cannot bear the idea of her daughter thinking of spiritual things, and giving up the gayeties and follies of the world.

14. *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!* for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

Mark xii. 40; Luke xx. 47; 2 Tim. iii. 6; Tit. i. 11.

Woe. (See on verse 13.) *Devour*, &c. This was done sometimes by plotting with the children to deprive their widowed mother of her estate, and sometimes by inducing the widow to give up her estate to them for superstitious purposes. *Long prayer*. A religious rabbi would pray nine hours a day. It was not the length of the prayers which was their crime, but the fact that they were a mere *pretence*—“for a show.” *Greater damnation*. For this hypocrisy, doing the most despicable deeds under the show of piety, they should be the more severely punished in the future world. There will be degrees of condemnation and misery in hell. However feeble our faith, hope, love and obedience may be, let us see to it that they are real, genuine and sincere. God requires “truth in the inward parts.” The very first piece of Christian armor recommended by Paul is “truth.” (Eph. vi. 10.)

15. *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!* for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

Woe, &c. (See on verse 13.) *Compass*,

&c. A proverbial expression, meaning, ye make untiring efforts. But we may suppose that missionary journeys were made by the Jews for the purpose mentioned, and that a proselyting impulse generally drove them through the world. *Proselyte*, literally, a *stranger*, or *foreigner*; one who is come from his own people and country to sojourn with another. Here the word is applied to a convert from Paganism to Judaism. *Twofold more*, &c., condemned for the hypocrisy he would learn to practice, both by the religion he left and that he embraced. The proselytes did not only disbelieve Christ's doctrine, but were abundantly more blasphemous against Him than the Jews themselves, endeavoring to torment and cut off the Christians wherever they could, they being in this the instruments of the scribes and Pharisees. *Children of hell*—equivalent to “worthy of hell” in phrases of this kind, as 2 Sam. xii. 5, where the phrase, translated “*shall surely die*,” is, in the original, “*is a son of death*,” and John xvii. 12, where Judas is called “*the son of perdition*.”

16. *Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, 'Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!'*—Chap. xv. 14, verse 24.

Blind guides. He had previously styled them *hypocrites*, from their personal character; now He gives them another title, respecting their influence upon others. *Whosoever shall swear*, &c. The Jews divided oaths into great (such as, by God and Corban) and small, (which might be violated without guilt) such as, by the temple, altar, &c. (See on chap. v. 33.) *By the temple, it is nothing*—it has no significance and imposes no obligation. *By the gold of the temple*, the golden ornaments or utensils of the temple, or, most probably, at least chiefly, the money contained in the treasury, gathered from the yearly tax for the support of the temple (see xvii. 24), from the payment of vows and from voluntary donations. *He is a debtor*—bound to observe the oath. So that these money lovers, in swearing by the temple *treasure*, swore their most binding oath by their own god. The covetous man still gives preference to the object of his lust; *gold* has still the first place in his heart. A

man is to be suspected when he recommends those good works most, from which he receives most advantages.

17. *Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, for the temple that sanctifieth the gold?*
Ex. xxx. 29.

Fools and blind. They sinned even against common sense, which determines that that, from which another thing derives its character, must more have that character itself. *Sanctifieth the gold*—renders the gold deposit sacred.

18. And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.

The altar the gift. The words are general in their application, and not to be limited to any one altar or gift. *It is nothing.* (See on verse 16.) *By the gift.* The origin of this error was the self-righteousness of the offerers. They esteemed their own gifts more highly than the Divine institution. *He is guilty, i. e.,* bound to fulfil his oath. The word in the original is the same as the one translated, *he is a debtor*, in verse 16.

19. *Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?*
Ex. xxix. 37.

The gift. The offering made to God, so called because it was devoted or given to Him. (See on verse 17.)

20. Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. 21. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. 22. And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

1 Kings viii. 13; 2 Chron. vi. 2; Ps. xxvi. 8, cxxxii. 14. Ps. xl. 4; chap. v. 34; Acts vii. 49.

For, as the less is contained in the greater, so in the oath which is sworn by the temple and the altar, is contained the oath by the gold and the gift. Moreover, since no inanimate thing can be supposed to be the witness of an oath, he who swears by the altar, by the temple, or by heaven itself, must be understood as swearing by Him to whom all these belong. And thus, on quite another ground, our Saviour convicts the Pharisees of blindness. *Swear by the temple.* We expect to hear “he sweareth also by the gold of the temple.” But this is self-understood, and therefore Christ returns back to the Lord of the temple, who makes the temple what it is, and makes heaven, the great temple, what it is. The oath has its significance generally in this, and in this only, that it is a confirmation by God, a declaration uttered

as before God. *Him that dwelleth therein.* That is, God. The temple was His house, His dwelling. In the first, or Solomon’s temple, He dwelt between the cherubims, in the most holy place. He manifested Himself there by a visible symbol, the cloud of glory, resting on the mercy-seat. (1 Kings viii. 10; Ps. lxxx. 1.) *By heaven.* Our Lord had before expressly forbidden all such oaths as these (chap. v. 34), and He here shows it is vain to attempt to distinguish them from each other, as to their effects in binding the conscience.

23. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.
1 Luke xi. 42. 1 Sam. xv. 22; Hos. vi. 6; Mic. vi. 8; chap. ix. 13; xlii. 7.

Woe (see on verse 13). *Tithe.* The law of tithes is found in Lev. xxvii. 31. The tithe of a thing is its tenth part. Of the yearly products of the land of the Israelites, the first fruits were deducted, out of the rest, the tenth part was taken for the Levites. (Numb. xviii. 21.) *Mint, anise, &c.* The herbs here specified correspond mainly to those of the same name in Europe and America, *anise* being the aromatic plant by us called dill, and *cummin*, corresponding to the caraway, and used by the Orientals as a condiment. But, whilst strict in these little matters, these Pharisaic scribes were very loose in great matters—they omitted, or passed over the weightier matters of the law. They neglected, they transgressed the great laws of religion and morality.

Judgment, is just equivalent to the discharge of duties according to the principles of righteousness or justice. *Mercy*—kindness. *Faith.* We have no doubt that a belief of the Gospel of Christ, even such a one as is connected with salvation, is required by the moral law, and is one of its most weighty matters, for the moral law requires love to God with all the heart, and love to God would certainly lead us to embrace any revelation which He should make of Himself, such a revelation especially in which the glory of God is provided for in the highest degree. But the term faith here, we consider synonymous with *fidelity* or *veracity*, being ranked with *judgment* and *mercy*, which are duties

of the second table. *These, i. e.,* the great duties of morality and religion, *ought ye to have done*—ought to have been first attended to, while at the same time, ye ought not to leave undone the paying tithes of mint, &c., which are duties too, though of a far inferior order. (See Mic. vi. 6, 8.)

The neglect of the distinction between that which is great and that which is small, first and second, essential and non-essential, has been the source of enormous evil in every age of the Church. It is a distinction which the never-dying school of the Pharisees is unable to draw. There are many now who are enthusiastic in the secondary things of religion, who know little or nothing of the great practical duties of humility, charity, meekness, spiritual mindedness, Bible reading, private devotion, and separation from the world.

24. *Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.*

Blind guides. (See on verse 16.) *Strain, &c.* It should be “strain out a gnat.” In southern countries gnats swarm, and therefore may easily fall into wine vessels, and are sometimes bred in them. Passing the liquor through a strainer that no gnat or part of one might remain, grew into a proverb for exactness about little matters. The meaning is, “if there is an omission in paying tithe of mint and anise and cummin, you are most excited, and would seem to be angels of heaven, so shocked are you that the law should be broken even in the most minute jot, but crimes, provided they be committed by a Pharisee, are, in your mind, so trivial that of you it is strictly true that while you “strain out a gnat, you swallow a camel.”

25. *Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.*

¹Mark vii. 4; Luke xi. 39.

Woe unto you, &c. (See on verse 13.) *Make clean, &c.* The figure here is that of a person who takes great care to make the outside of the vessel used at meals, thoroughly clean, while he knowingly allows the inside of those vessels, with which, of course, the food he eats must be brought into contact, to remain foul and uncleansed. This is altogether different from “the form of godliness.” There is implied a satisfac-

tion with inward corruption, only so that the exterior is fair and plausible.

But within, &c. The figure which began with “the outside of the cup” is here dropped, and the heart or internal moral state is substituted for what, if the metaphor had been continued, would have been the “inside of the cup.” *Full, literally, loaded.* *Extortion* is the same word rendered “ravensing” in Luke xi. 39. *Excess.* The word so rendered is a general term for excess. Luke says “wickedness.” The meaning is, that though they took much pains to appear well, yet they obtained a living by extortion and wickedness. These miserable men procured unjustly what they used intemperately. No wonder tables so furnished proved a snare, as many find by sad experience. Thus luxury furnishes fraud, while it feeds disease with the fruits of injustice.

26. *Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.*

¹Isa. iv. 7; Jer. iv. 14, xiii. 27; Ezek. xviii. 31; Luke vi. 45; 2 Cor. vii. 1; Heb. x. 22; James iv. 8.

Cleanse, &c.—the inside. Sanctify thy enjoyment by righteousness and temperance. *That the outside, &c.* Since God has created the inside as well as the outside, one as much as the other must be held holy, and it is not only evil, but foolish, to wish to separate, even in thought, to say nothing of act, that which, in the nature of things, is absolutely inseparable.

27. *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.* 28. *Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.*

¹Luke xi. 44; Acts xxiii. 3.

Whited sepulchres. Deeply imbedded among the rank grass, the tombs about Jerusalem were often invisible, so that persons were apt to stumble over them, and thereby contract ceremonial uncleanness. As, however, such an occurrence would have been attended with the greatest inconvenience to the multitudes who crowded the city during the celebration of the national festivals, it was an annual practice to have the grass cleared away, and the stones white-washed. The general sentiment is, that those persons are peculiarly criminal and dangerous, who, while they are under the influence of the most depraved principles, yet maintain a decent

exterior, and that, however they may impose on their fellow-men, they are regarded with disapprobation, and will, if they repent not, be visited with punishment by Him who, as He searches the heart, and tries the reins of the children of men, all things being naked and open before Him, cannot be deceived, and will not be mocked.

29. ^aWoe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, 30. And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. 31. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. 32. ^bFill ye up then the measure of your fathers. 33. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

^cLuke xi. 47. ^d1 Kings xix. 10; Acts vii. 52; 1 Thes. ii. 15. ^eGen. xv. 16; Dan. vii. 23; 1 Thes. ii. 16. ^fChap. iii. 7.

Ye build the tombs, &c. You profess great respect for the memory of the martyred prophets, and great disapprobation of your ancestors who put them to death, and yet you cherish the same malignant dispositions, and are about to imitate the very conduct which you so loudly condemn. How does your conduct contradict your professions? *Wherefore ye be witnesses, &c.* This witness does not refer to their building the tombs of the prophets, and garnishing the sepulchres of the righteous, but to the manner in which they had treated John, and were treating Jesus Himself—and were to treat both Him and His inspired messengers. You persecute, and ere long will imbrue your hands in the blood of men possessed of the same characters, invested with the same authority, and teaching the same doctrines, as those on whom you heap posthumous honors, and of whose murder and murderers you profess so strongly an abhorrence. Your conduct to me, in desiring my death as you are doing just now, can be vindicated only on principles which would vindicate the conduct of the opposers, and persecutors, and murderers, of the ancient prophets. *Fill ye up then, &c.* Some say this was spoken prophetically; others permissively; others still, make it an ironical imperative. “Do what ye purpose at once.” If this is irony, it is Divine irony, as in Psalm xxi. 4. The pronoun *ye*, is expressed not only in contrast to *your fathers*, but also to show an indicative force in the imperative, *fill ye up, ye will fill up, fill ye up* therefore. Comp. John xiii. 27. When ye will, be no longer

hindered. Be ye left to yourselves. What you cherish in the heart, do with the hand. *The measure of your fathers, i. e.*, what remains to be filled up of the measure of the national sin which your fathers have been filling up. (See Isa. vi.; Matt. xiii. 14; Acts xxviii. 26.) They would fill up the measure of iniquity by crucifying the Messiah, and abusing and putting to death His Apostles and followers. As the individual man may fill up the measure of forbearance granted him by God, and thus come to destruction, so may a people, viewed as a body, or, as it were, as a larger individual. (See Gen. xv. 16; Amos i. 3, &c.) *ye serpents . . . generation of viper.* Their subtlety was like that of the serpent. (See on Chap. iii. 7, xii. 34.)

How can ye escape, &c. The question is sometimes the strongest mode of affirmation. Our Lord here means to assert that as their heart is so corrupt, and their habits of sin are so confirmed, reformation in them is not to be expected; in other words, they cannot escape *the damnation of hell, i. e.*, the condemnation and sentence of punishment in hell, to be pronounced by the Judge, at the day of final account. (See on chap. v. 22.) The language here used is that of grief and despair respecting their amendment and salvation, and of surrendering them to their own will.

34. ^fWherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: ^gand some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: 35. ^hThat upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, ⁱfrom the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

^jChap. xxi. 34, 35; Luke xi. 49. ^kActs v. 40, vii. 53, 59, xxii. 19. ^lChap. x. 17; Mark x. 39; Acts v. 40; 2 Cor. xi. 24, 25. ^mRev. xviii. 24. ⁿGen. iv. 8; Heb. xi. 4; 1 John iii. 12. ^oChron. xxiv. 20, 21.

Wherefore. In consequence of all this wickedness. *Prophets; or preachers;* (for, as the Word of God is a great prophecy of the world to come, so he who preaches it, truly prophesies), to reprove the people for their sins, and warn them of the judgments of God. *And wise men and scribes—* evidently evangelical messengers, but called by the familiar Jewish names of “prophets, wise men and scribes,” whose counterparts were the inspired and gifted servants of the Lord Jesus, for in Luke (xi. 49) it is, “prophets and apostles.” *And some of them, &c.* A large share of the first preachers, thinkers and writers of the

Church, were martyrs. Stephen was stoned (Acts vii. 59), James was slain with the sword (Acts xii. 1-3), Peter was crucified (See John xxi. 18, 19; 2 Peter i. 14), the Apostles were imprisoned with scourging (Acts v. 18, 40), Paul and Barnabas were persecuted from city to city (Acts xiii. 50, xiv. 5, 6, 19, 20).

That. In order that—a statement of the inevitableness of the result. Not that this was the purpose for which these prophets and messengers were to be sent, but that this would be the consequence of the Jews slaying and persecuting them. *Upon you may come all the righteous blood, i. e.,* all the judgments for the slaughter of righteous men. *From the blood of righteous Abel, &c.* Abel, who was the first martyr. He is counted among the prophets, because he prefigured Jesus Christ by his innocence and death, as Cain did Judas, &c. *Unto the blood of Zacharias,* the last of the prophets, whose martyrdom is, according to the arrangement of the Hebrew canon, recorded in the Old Testament. *Son of Baruchias.* In 2 Chron. xxiv. 21, the martyr Zechariah is called the son of Jehoiada. But Jehoiada and Barachia are words of the same meaning, and it is not improbable, though there is no proof, that in our Lord's day the one name was substituted for the other in ordinary discourse. By the case of Abel and that of Zacharias Jesus couples the first and last of Old Testament martyrs.

36. Verily, I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

The accumulated guilt of ages was, as it were, to become theirs, by the murder of the Messiah and His Apostles, and awful was the retribution which awaited them. The history of the last days of the Jewish republic, as recorded by their own unbelieving historian, shows that the judgments executed on the Jewish nation were such as to fill to the full, human nature's capacities for suffering. Thousands have shed their blood for the truth. The frequent triumphing of the wicked is perplexing. The judgment day will show that however Christians may die, "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

37. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!*

38. Luke xiii. 34. 39. Dent. xxxiii. 11, 12. Ps. xvii. 8, xci. 4.

The prospect of Christ's death, with all its attendant horrors, did not excite angry feelings in His heart. Instead of expressing anger, He burst forth into these lamentations, which for tenderness and pathos, have never been equalled. *O Jerusalem.* (See on Luke xiii. 34.) From the scribes and Pharisees Jesus now addresses Himself to Jerusalem, the central point of the hierarchy, the metropolis of Judaism. *That killest, &c.,* identifying the Jerusalem of the then present day with the Jerusalem of past ages. *Sent unto thee,* as messengers of truth from the Lord.

How often, &c. The beautiful tenderness of this verse shows that the warnings of the previous verses are the language, not of human anger, but of terrible Divine justice. Love, deep love, may dwell in the breast of the judge who pronounces the sentence of death. *Would I . . . ye would not.* How majestic is this *I* of the incarnate Logos! The Greek word in both these phrases is stronger than appears from our English translation. It is, literally, "I willed, and ye willed not." *Even as a hen, &c.* The emblem here employed is similar to what is used with respect of JEHOVAH. (See Deut. xxxii. 11; Ruth ii. 12; Ps. xvii. 8, xxxvi. 7, lvii. 1, lxiii. 7, xci. 4.) It shows the Saviour's tender love and faithful care of His redeemed people, and His power is also adequate to the confidence reposed in Him. He bore the storm of Divine justice against our sins, in order to save us from it, and "suffered being tempted, that He might succor us when tempted." He calls sinners to take refuge under His protection, and there keeps them safe, and nourishes them unto eternal life. We must not, because we are Christians, shut our eyes to the bright world that is around us, for in the instinct of birds, in the habits of bees, in the peculiarities of all created things, in the structure of minerals, in the petals, fragrance, habits and climates of flowers, there is an immensity of Divine teaching. Only it needs nature's book to be read in the splendor in which it was originally written, and when a Christian's eye reads that book, its page is full of deep, significant, and precious meaning.

Ye would not. Our Lord does not say,

"thou wouldest not." By this mode of speaking, He makes it plain that He charges the guilt of Jerusalem on its inhabitants, the men and women who dwelt there, and specially on the priests, and scribes and Pharisees, who governed the city. They were neither willing to be gathered themselves into the kingdom, nor allowed others to enter. Christ was willing, but they were unwilling. Most deplorably and inexcusably will they perish, who perish by their own willfulness and obduracy under the Gospel.

38. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. 39. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."—Ps. cxviii. 26; chap. xxi. 9.

Your house. Here there may be an allusion to the temple. Your temple (now not God's house, but *your* house), in which you glory. *Is left unto you desolate.* The Greek word for "desolate" means solitary, deserted, not laid waste. But the meaning is the same: desolation and destruction are the necessary consequences of the Divine withdrawal, as the Lord had foretold even unto Solomon. (1 Kings ix. 7-9.) This declaration of the parting Messiah

has been literally fulfilled, not only by the destruction of the temple, but also by the futile attempt of Julian, the apostate, to rebuild it, and by the condition of Jerusalem up to this day.

Till ye—in your posterity in a future age. *Blessed is he*, &c. The language by which the children in the temple recognized Him as the Messiah. (Ps. cxviii. 6.) Some think that Christ here refers to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, when the fulfilment of all His predictions would oblige the Jews to confess that He was the Messiah. Others think that our Lord's words are not yet fulfilled, and that they refer to the last times, when the Jews, after their last tribulation, shall "look on Him whom they pierced," and believe, at the time of His second advent in glory. Though Jerusalem be still desolate, and Israel scattered, the unseen person of Jesus is still on Zion, and His unseen feet still stand on Olivet. His ever preserving care perpetuates the race in its vicissitudes, waiting for the day when devoted Israel shall say, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

1. What did Jesus say concerning the scribes and the Pharisees in Moses' seat? 2. What did they love? 3. Explain verses 10 and 11. 4. What is the first "woe" Christ denounced? 5. What the second? 6. What the third? 7. What the fourth? 8. What the fifth? 9. What the sixth? 10. What the seventh? 11. Explain verses 34 and 35. 12. How are we to understand "all these things shall come upon this generation?" 13. Repeat Christ's lamentation over Jerusalem. 14. What is the great reason why sinners are not saved?

CHAPTER XXIV.

1 Christ foretelleth the destruction of the temple; 3 what and how great calamities shall be before it; 29 the signs of his coming to judgment. 36. And because that day and hour is unknown, 42 we ought to watch like good servants, expecting every moment our master's coming.

This chapter is full of prophecy; prophecy of which a large portion is unfulfilled; prophecy, which ought to be deeply interesting to all true Christians. It is a subject to which the Holy Ghost says, we "do well to take heed." (2 Peter i.)

AND Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple.—Mark xiii. 1, xxi. 5.

Went out, &c. Our Saviour thus gave in

action a farther expression of the sentence He had pronounced in word. (Chap. xxiii. 38.) *To shew him*, &c., i. e. to draw His attention to the magnitude, splendor, apparent solidity and stability of that magnificent structure. As the whole temple was built with the greatest cost and splendor, so nothing was more stupendous than the uncommon measure of the stones, some of which, particularly those employed in the foundations, were in magnitude 40 cubits, and the superstructure was worthy of such foundations. A cubit

was about 22 inches of our measure. Some of the stones were of the whitest marble, 45 cubits long, 5 cubits high, and 5 broad. "The appearance of the temple," says *Josephus*, "was such as to strike the mind, and astonish the sight." *Tacitus* describes it as "of immense opulence." The disciples probably meant to insinuate to their Divine Master that this unrivalled edifice was built for eternity; was formed to stand the shock of ages, and to resist the utmost efforts of human power to destroy it.

2. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, ¹There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

¹ Kings ix. 7; Jer. xxiv. 18; Mi. iii. 12; Luke xix. 44.

See ye not, &c. Our Lord, by His conduct, teaches us what use we ought to make of the sight of such objects as these, namely, to consider that in a very little time they will disappear and be no more, and that there is nothing solid and durable but that which is not seen. *There shall not be, &c.* This prediction will strike us the more, if we bear in mind that these huge stones were bound together with lead and fastened with strong iron cramps. *Josephus* says: "Cæsar gave orders that they should now demolish the whole city and temple, except the three towers, Phaselus, Hippicus and Mariamne, and a part of the western wall, and these were spared; but for all the rest of the wall, it was laid so completely even with the ground, by those who dug it from the foundation, that there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe it had ever been inhabited." (Comp. Ps. cxxxvii. 9.) *Maimonides*, a Jewish rabbi, says, that "the very foundations of the temple were dugged up, according to the Roman custom." *Eusebius* also assures us that the temple was plowed up by the Romans, and that he himself saw it lying in ruins. (See on Luke xix. 44, xxi. 6.) Learn, hence, 1. That sin has laid the foundation of ruin in the most flourishing cities and kingdoms. 2. That the threatenings of God are to be feared, and shall be fulfilled. whatever apparent improbabilities there may be to the contrary.

3. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world."

¹ Mark xiii. 3. ² 1 Thes. v. 1.

The Mount of Olives commanded a very fine view of the temple from the east. *Disciples.* Peter, James and John. (Mark xiii. 3.) *Privately*—apart from the other disciples. *When and what sign.* They wished to know, 1. The precise time of the approaching catastrophe; 2. The sign of it. It seems plain from their inquiry, that they had gathered from some of our Lord's sayings that there was some intimate connection between the destruction of the earthly Jerusalem, and the final coming of our Lord at the end of the world, though how to separate the type from the antitype, the less from the more full accomplishment, they knew not. Jesus answered the last question of the disciples, while He in reference to the first gave to them only general intimations. The signs which He gives are at the same time of such a nature, that they, in fact, are only to be seen precursively at the destruction of Jerusalem, but will appear decisively and in their full force at the end of the world, of which Jerusalem's destruction was a type. By thus judiciously mingling these two important catastrophes, He gives at the same time a most interesting admonition to His immediate hearers, the Jews, and a most awful lesson to all His future disciples, and the benefit of His predictions, instead of being confined to one occasion, or to one people, is by this admirable management extended to every subsequent period of time, and to the whole Christian world.

4. And Jesus answered and said unto them, "Take heed that no man deceive you. 5. For many shall come in my name; saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many."

¹ Eph. v. 6; Col. ii. 3, 18; 2 Thes. ii. 3; 1 John iv. 1. ² xiv. 14, xxiii. 21, verse 24; John v. 43, &c.

Jesus answered, &c. The discourse separates into four divisions: 1. The first (5-14) suggests the probable sources of deception in regard to the coming of the Son of man; 2. The second (15-28) considers the calamities of Jerusalem, as a special source of deception; 3. A description of the coming of the Son of man with special reference to the question of the disciples; 4. The discourse is summed up (32-36), and is the answer to the question of the disciples, so far as any answer can be given. Here our Lord distinguishes between "these things" (33, 34) and "that day and hour" (36). By the

former, which the disciples had used in their question, He means the calamities of Jerusalem; by the latter, His coming at the end of the world.

Take heed, &c. A most needful warning. Satan knows well the value of prophecy, and has ever labored to bring the subject into contempt. In our day we see some persons putting a literal meaning on figurative prophecy, and others putting a figurative meaning on literal prophecy. Amidst this tangled maze of discordant opinions we need greatly the solemn warning of our Lord. *For many, &c.* Among the false Christs that soon appeared, were Dositheus, the Samaritan, and Simon Magus. *Josephus* says, "Many affirmed the time of the advent to have arrived;" and *Hegesippus* says, "Many false Christs came." We find a false Christ whenever we find a deceitful guide, who directs us not to Jesus Christ, who leads us to a Church which is not His, who inspires us with a doctrine which He never taught, who diverts us from the way of the Gospel, and who, by his whole conduct, carries us at a distance from the cross and from salvation.

6. And ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of war: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

That there were wars and great disturbances during the interval of forty years, appears from all the historians of that period, especially *Josephus*. *The end, &c.* of the Jewish State. It is vain to expect peace until the Prince of Peace returns. Then, and not until then, the swords shall be beaten into plowshares, and nations learn war no more.

7. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places.
12 Chron. xv. 16; Isa. xix. 2; Heb. ii. 22; Zech. xiv. 13.

Nation shall rise against nation. This portended the dissensions, insurrections, and mutual slaughter of the Jews, and those of other nations who dwelt in the same cities together, as particularly at Cesarea, where the Jews and Syrians contended about the right of the city, which contention proceeded so far that about 20,000 Jews were slain, and the city was cleared of the Jewish inhabitants. The whole Jewish nation being exasperated at this, flew to arms, and burnt and plundered

the neighboring cities and villages of the Syrians, making an immense slaughter of the people. The Syrians, in return, destroyed not a less number of the Jews.

Kingdom against kingdom. This portended the open wars of different tetrarchies and provinces against one another; as that of the Jews who dwelt in Perea against the people of Philadelphia, concerning their bounds, while Cuspius Fadus was procurator; and that of the Jews and Galileans against the Samaritans, for the murder of some Galileans going up to the feast at Jerusalem, while Cumanus was procurator; and that of the whole nation of the Jews against the Romans and Agrippa, and other allies of the Roman empire. But there was not only sedition and civil war throughout Judea, but likewise in Italy, Otho and Vitellius contending for the empire.

Famines and pestilences. It is evident from *Josephus*, as well as *Eusebius*, *Suetonius*, and several other profane historians, that there were famines and pestilences in divers places. The first named historian says, that the famine under Claudius Cæsar, predicted by Agabus (Acts ii. 28), was so severe that at Jerusalem many died of starvation. Famines and pestilences are ever attendant upon civil commotions and wars. The cessation of the labors of husbandry produces scarcity; exposure, hardship, and the effluvia of the dead produces *pestilences*.

Earthquakes in divers places. In the time of Claudius and Nero there were great earthquakes at Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, Samos, Laodicea, Hierapolis and Colosse, in Crete, also, and Campania, and one at Rome in the reign of Galba. In Judea, likewise, there were judgments of the same kind. It is probable that Jerusalem herself was warned most loudly by a terrible earthquake, accompanied by thunders, lightnings and overwhelming storms.

8. All these are the beginning of sorrows.

Terrible as all these omens—wars, famines, pestilences, fearful sights, and great signs from heaven—were, they are small compared to the miseries of the siege and downfall of the city. The word translated *sorrows*, should rather be rendered "birth-pangs." The expression is remarkable in

its secondary application, and in the highest degree suggestive, recalling those many other places of Scripture where creation is spoken of in kindred terms: now, as groaning and travailling (Rom. viii. 22); now, as destined to undergo a process of "regeneration." (Matt. xix. 28.)

9. "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake."

¹Chap. 17; Mark xiii. 9; Luke xxi. 12; John xv. 20 and xvi. 2; Acts iv. 2, 3 and vii. 59 and xii. 1, &c.; 1 Peter iv. 16; Rev. ii. 10, 13.

There appears to be a special reference here to the persecutions undergone by the early Christians between the time of our Lord's ascension and the destruction of Jerusalem. There is a noticeable climax in the indicated persecutions, verified in the sufferings of the Apostles and disciples. We learn from the Acts of the Apostles, that the lives of the Apostles were one continued scene of affliction and distress of every kind. They were imprisoned, beaten, brought before councils, and sanhedrims, and kings, such as Herod, Agrippa, and the Roman emperor, for the sake of Christ, that is, for being called by His name and devoted to His service. (Rom. viii. 35-37; 1 Cor. iv. 9, 10; 2 Cor. xi. 23-29; Heb. x. 32-34.)

10. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

¹Chap. xi. 6 and xiii. 57; 2 Tim. i. 15, and iv. 10, 16.

The meaning is, that many who professed faith in Christ, terrified with these persecutions, should become apostates, and renounce their faith. (See 2 Tim. i. 15; iv. 10.) *Betray one another.* This is remarkably verified by the testimony of *Tacitus*, who, in describing the persecution under Nero, tells us, "that several Christians at first were apprehended, and then, by their discovery, a multitude of others were convicted, and cruelly put to death with derision and insult."

11. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

¹Chap. vii. 15; Acts xx. 29; 2 Peter ii. 1. = 1 Tim. iv. 1.

Many false prophets. Such was the Egyptian, who collected together above 30,000 Jews whom he had deceived (Acts xxi. 38), and *Theudas*, a magician, who, as *Josephus* says, deceived many, and a multitude of others who deluded the people even to the last, with a promise of help from God. And in the time of Nero, when Felix was procurator of Judea, such a number of these

impostors made their appearance, that many of them were seized and put to death every day.

12. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

It is here predicted that the great prevalence of impiety, lawlessness and terror, shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, which was typical of His judicial coming, and the cruel treatment which the adversaries of the Messiah's followers would exercise toward them, would chill mutual love, make men more anxious about their own safety than about the good of others, and cool their love to their Master. (See 2 Tim. i. 15, iv. 10; Heb. x. 25.) It is the nature of love to *burn*. Love is the ornament and strength of Christians. (See Phil. i. 9; 2 Peter i. 7; Rev. ii. 4.) When Jesus shall come again, surely none will feel so much ashamed to see Him as those who professed to walk with Him a little way, and to love Him for a little while, but whose feet grew weary, and whose love waxed cold.

13. "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."

¹Chap. x. 22; Mark xiii. 13; Heb. iii. 6, 14; Rev. ii. 10.

He whose hope (verse 10), and faith (verse 11), and charity (verse 12), endure to the end, and he who bears afflictions, persecutions, &c., faithfully, that throughout all trials, even unto death, maintains his attachment to Christ and adheres to the truth, shall inherit the kingdom prepared for those who overcome. It is the uniform doctrine of Scripture, that they who persevere in the belief and practice of Christianity to the end of their lives, shall, through the merits of their Redeemer, be rewarded with everlasting life.

14. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come.

¹Chap. iv. 23 and ix. 35. = Rom. x. 18; Col. ii. 6, 23.

Notwithstanding the persecutions foretold, there was to be an universal publication of the announcement of Messiah's reign, and the doctrines of His religion. (See on chap. iv. 23.) Paul (Col. i. 6, 23) speaks of the Gospel "being come unto all the world, and preached to every creature under heaven." And we learn from the most authentic writers, and the most ancient records, that the Gospel was preached within thirty years after the

death of Christ in Idumea, Syria and Mesopotamia, in Media and Parthia, and many parts of Asia Minor, in Egypt, Mauretania, Ethiopia, and other regions of Africa, in Greece and Italy, as far north as Scythia, and as far westward as Spain. The words, *in all the world*, are not to be limited, in their application, to the Roman empire or to the destruction of Jerusalem. *For a witness*, &c. Testified to them faithfully, even unto martyrdom, it will be a witness unto them, and then it will be a witness concerning them and against them. By *the end*, in the sense which the Saviour mainly attached to it, the end of the whole great period is meant during which Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, closed by the judicial coming of the Lord. The Gospel, that is, the tidings of the fullest revelation of God, must be *preached unto all*, so that each and every man is thereby, as it were, compelled to take part either for or against Christ. The gigantic missionary operations of our days have brought us considerably nearer than ever before, to the fulfillment of this word of our Lord.

15. When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand.) 16. Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.

^aMark xlii. 14; Luke xxi. 20. ^bDan. ix. 27, xii. 11. ^cDan. ix. 23, 25.

The abomination of desolation, &c. This was intended to point to the Roman ensigns, as the symbols of an idolatrous, and so unclean, Pagan power, &c. Upon the standards of the Roman army, were depicted the images of their emperor and their tutelary gods, whom they worshipped: and it is well known that idols were held by the Jews in the utmost abhorrence, hence the term *abomination*. *Desolation* is added for an obvious reason, because this mighty army brought ruin and desolation upon Jerusalem. The city, and the mount on which it stood, and a circuit of several furlongs around it, were accounted holy ground, and as the Roman standards were planted in the most conspicuous places near the fortifications of the city, they are here said to *stand in the holy place*. *Josephus* tells us that after the city was taken, "the Romans brought their ensigns into the temple, and placed one of them against

the eastern gate, and sacrificed to them there, which was the greatest insult and outrage that could possibly be offered to that wretched people."

Whoso readeth, let him understand. This seems a warning of the Evangelist to his Christian reader to note the admonition to escape, though some understand these words as having come from the lips of Christ Himself, exhorting to a proper understanding of the dark saying, in reference to the passages (Dan. xii. 4, 10, ix. 23, 25) where Daniel himself is exhorted to listen closely in order to understand. *In Judea*. In the heart of the population. *Flee into the mountains*. Lonesome and inaccessible retreats, to which an army could not follow them. There is a commendation of a hasty flight as the only means of deliverance. These kind admonitions were not lost upon the disciples. Ecclesiastical history informs us that no Christians perished in the siege of Jerusalem. When the Roman general, Cestius Gallus, three years before the siege by Titus, invested the city, he "very unadvisedly," as *Josephus* says, "withdrew his armies." From this attack, a large number of the inhabitants of Jerusalem took alarm, and withdrew from the city as soon as the Roman army had retired. Among those who escaped were the Christians, some of them retiring to Pella, and some to Mount Libanus. The result of this was, that when the last great war, under Vespasian and Titus, broke out shortly afterward, the Christians almost entirely escaped its desolation.

17. Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house: 18. Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

The Jew on the top or flat roof of his house, looking for the signs of the approaching judgment, or watching the manœuvring of the Roman army, when he saw this great abomination, or heard it had taken place, was here warned not to go down into his house to carry away any of his goods, but to leave them, and escape with all speed to the mountains. *To take his clothes*, i. e., the upper garments (the cloak and coat), which husbandmen of the southern countries have ever, when at work, laid aside, or left at home. These passages intimate the greatness of the peril of that

hour, when the guilty city, like another Sodom, should be marked for destruction.

19. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!—Luke xxii. 23.

This is not an imprecation, but a bitter lamentation, in which the compassion and the sympathy of the Saviour expresses itself for suffering humanity. Sad would it be for those who, in such a time of terror and distress, had any natural impediments to obstruct their flight.

20. But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day.

Not in the winter—making escape perilous, by reason of the coldness of the season or the bad state of the roads, or tempting you to delay your flight. *Neither on the Sabbath day.* The Jewish Christians might entertain scruples against traveling on the Sabbath beyond the legal distance, which was about five furlongs. But even if free from such scruples, they would be liable to detentions on the roads should they attempt to travel contrary to Jewish laws. Besides, at a time when fanaticism was at its height, they would have been in the utmost danger of the worst persecutions by the Jews. The instruction which Jesus here gives to His disciples, to pray for alleviating circumstances at the consummation of the woes foretold here, teaches us that special interpositions of Divine Providence are dependent on Christian prayer.

21. For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, nor ever shall be.—Dan. ix. 26 and xii. 1; Joel ii. 2.

For then. By the greatness of the terror, which the Lord only hints at circuitously, they were to measure the swiftness of their flight. *Shall be great tribulation, &c.* The siege of Jerusalem was indeed attended with unexampled horrors, as well as the most appalling wickedness. *Josephus*, who was an eye-witness of the sufferings which our Lord here predicts, states it as his opinion “that the misfortunes of all men, *from the beginning of the world*, if they be compared to these of the Jews, are not so considerable as theirs were,” “nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness *from the beginning of the world.*”

Not only did civil strife rage within the city, but three powerful factions contended

for the mastery with such violence and hate, that captivity seemed a far inferior evil to the actual sufferings of the inhabitants. The city was densely crowded in consequence of the multitudes which had come up to the Feast of the Passover. Pestilence ensued, and, in consequence of the destruction of their stores by fire, famine followed shortly after. The very instincts of humanity seemed to forsake the people. Women snatched the food from the mouths of their husbands and children. The most revolting acts of violence were practiced without remorse and without rebuke; barbarities were perpetrated too disgraceful even to be described. The houses, the very streets of the city, were filled with dead bodies, which armed assassins rifled and mangled with fiendish exultation. So excessive was the stench that it became necessary to hurl above six hundred thousand corpses over the walls. Meantime, the besieged were reduced to such extremity that they gladly ate not only their belts and shoes, but the very filth of the streets. One woman, a mother, as if unconscious of natural instinct, killed, roasted and devoured her infant son, deliberately reserving half for a second meal. So monstrous an iniquity had been foretold in prophecy for fifteen hundred years. (Deut. xxviii. 56, 57; Lev. xxvi. 29.) It is plain that our Lord here speaks of the tribulation connected with the approaching destruction of Jerusalem as the type which shall be connected with His judicial coming.

22. And except those days shall be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.—Isa. lxxv. 8, 9; Zech. xiv. 2, 3.

The consequence of long protracted hostility would probably have been the universal destruction of the Jews. But for the preservation of the sound portion, however small, of the Jews, and especially the Christians, God by His Providence *shortened the duration of the war*, as by the same providence He had *protracted the commencement of it*, in order to give time to the Christians to escape. The following causes have been enumerated as contributing to this result: 1. Claudius, A. D. 42 or 43, ordered Herod Agrippa to stop strengthening the walls; 2. In consequence of their divisions, the Jews had made no prepara-

tion to withstand a siege; 3. The corn and provisions had been burnt just before the arrival of Titus; 4. Titus arrived suddenly, and the Jews voluntarily abandoned some part of the fortification; 5. According to *Josephus*, Titus acknowledged that it was by God's power he had succeeded in capturing the city.

No flesh, no human life. *The elect's sake*, &c. Christians, God's chosen and beloved ones, not only those then living in Palestine, but such as in future were to be gathered from the Jews (Rom. xi. 15), and which promise depended upon their continued existence as a nation. God specially loves His people. They are jewels among mankind. He hears their prayers. All things work together for good to them. Happy are those who know that they are one of the number of God's chosen ones! There breathes not the man or woman who can prove that he or she is not one. The promises of the Gospel are open to all. May we give diligence to make our calling and election sure! God's elect are a people who cry unto Him night and day. When Paul saw the faith, and hope, and love of the Thessalonians, then he knew "their election of God." (1 Thes. i. 4; Luke xviii. 7.)

23. ^aThen if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not. 24. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. 25. Behold, I have told you before. 26. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth; Behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not.

^aMark xliii. 21; Luke xvii. 23 and xxi. 8. ^bDeut. xlii. 1, verse 5, 11; 2 Thes. ii. 9, 10, 11; Rev. xlii. 13. ^cJohn vi. 37 and x. 28, 29; Rom. viii. 28, 29, 30; 2 Tim. ii. 19.

Lo, here is Christ, &c. The local Messiahs who would start up in different places, or might be rumored to have started up, would prove deceivers. This warning was the more important, inasmuch as the notion that the coming of Christ would be at the destruction of Jerusalem was liable to lead them to credit false deliverers, by which the Jews were deluded in immense numbers to their own destruction. This warning is unquestionably also meant to apply to the time immediately preceding the second advent. False Christs, false prophets and pretenders to Divine commission may be expected in the latter days, and believers must be on their guard against them. (See 2 Thes. ii. 1-10.) There

are false churches, as well as false Christs, and the true spouse is known by the same marks with the true bridegroom. (See on verses 4, 5, 11.)

There shall arise false Christs, &c. *Josephus* informs us that false prophets and impostors prevailed on multitudes to follow them into the desert, promising there to display prodigies and signs, but that those who listened to them suffered the just punishment of their folly, and were either slain or dispersed by the Roman governor. One such case of imposture on the part of an Egyptian is found alluded to in the Acts (xxi. 38).

Inasmuch that if it were possible, &c. (See verse 22.) Implying that this, though all but done, would prove impossible. (See 2 Thes. ii. 9-12.) *Behold, I have told you before.* I have now forewarned you against these impostors. *Wherefore, i. e.,* in view of the warning now given you. *They shall say, &c.* This refers to such persons as professed to have found the Messiah. Our Lord had just told them that the seduction of the elect would prove impossible, but since this would be all but accomplished, He bids them "take heed," be on their guard, as the proper means of averting that catastrophe.

27. ^aFor as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.—^bLuke xvii. 24.

The coming of false Christs would be on earth, while the next coming of Jesus would be in the sky, like the lightning flashing along the firmament. It is here distinctly declared that His second advent, when it does take place, will be so sudden, so clearly marked, and so unmistakable, that true believers shall at once recognize it as the coming of their King. Christians are thus assured that when the Saviour comes, they shall see Him, wherever they may be, or whatever they may be doing. Only a few disciples saw Him ascend in the clouds from the Mount of Olives, but every eye shall behold Him when He comes again. How exceedingly great will be the brightness of that day! When the Lord Jesus appeared to the persecuting Saul, the light was beyond the brightness of the sun at noonday, and its dazzling splendor blinded the eyes of the astonished man. (Acts xxvi. 13.) But when He comes

again, the light will spread over the whole world, saints will be strengthened to gaze upon the scene, and will be changed into the image of their Lord, while impenitent sinners will find the day of *brightness* a day of *darkness* to them. (Amos v. 18-20.) The suddenness of Christ's second appearing is a solemn thought. It ought to make us study a continued preparedness of mind. Our heart's desire and endeavor should be to be always ready to meet the Lord. (Rev. xvi. 15.)

23. "For whosoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together."

^aJob xxxix. 30; Luke xvii. 37.

The carcass is, &c. This proverbial expression is generally understood as referring to the Romans, suddenly and openly gathered together for the destruction of Jerusalem. It denotes that where sin and crime abound, God's judgments will be sure to follow. Under the general name *eagle*, the Bible includes the *vulture*, a well known bird of prey, which is probably here meant, as eagles rarely, if ever, feed upon dead carcasses. Probably this expression will only be fully understood at our Lord's second coming. Let us not be too curious to pry into the "secret things" which "belong unto the Lord."

23. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken."

^aDan. vii. 11, 12. ^bIsa. xlii. 10; Ezek. xxxii. 7; Joel ii. 10, 31 and iii. 15; Amos v. 20 and viii. 9; Mark xiii. 24; Luke xxi. 25; Acts ii. 20; Rev. vi. 12.

"The words, *those days*," says a learned commentator, with whom we agree, in his interpretation of the passage, "here refer to the latter days implied in Luke xxi. 24, of which Matthew has preserved but a fragment. The *those days* of this verse, then, are the *days* of the great period of which *the eagles and the carcass* in the preceding verse are a fragmentary symbol. This symbol is a broken label of the whole period between the downfall and the advent, Luke supplying the condensed remainder of the label. The *contrast* lies between the *slow expansion* of that period and the *suddenness of the advent* to break and close it. *Immediately*, suddenly, after the 'tribulation' following the *those days* of the treading down of Jerusalem, and the fullness of the Gentiles, shall the advent take place. The phrase *those days*

thus stands in contrast with the phrase 'these things,' in the Apostles' question. (Mark xiii. 4; Luke xxi. 7.) The period of the destruction and the period of the advent stand, as the Lord intended, in stupendous contrast." If we ask, When shall the second advent take place? Mark answers, It is in *those days* which are *after* that (Jewish) *tribulation*. If we ask, In what part of *those days*? Matthew will answer, *Immediately after* the (mundane) *tribulation of those days*. We have then this parallel: a tribulation including Jerusalem's destruction, a tribulation ending in the world's judgment. That a tribulation is to precede the second advent is the clear doctrine of Scripture. Thus, in Rev. xx. 7-10, at the close of the millennial thousand years, Satan, who had been bound during that period, is let loose, and with his armies besieges the camp of the saints just before the appearance of the judgment throne. And in 2 Peter iii.: "In the last days scoffers shall come," &c. Of this truth the Jewish tradition gives a shadowing, in the doctrine that a desperate tribulation shall precede Messiah's advent. "The Jews (as *Kuinoel* observes) expected that great calamities would precede the advent of the Messiah, yet at the time when these calamities should have reached their height they hoped that He would unexpectedly appear."

Shall the sun be darkened, &c. Both *Josephus* and *Tacitus* tell us that a variety of astonishing signs and prodigies preceded the calamities that impended over the Jews. (See on verse 7.) The frame of nature was convulsed when the law of God was given at Sinai, and when Christ died on the cross. It was known, even from the Old Testament, that fearful signs in the realm of nature would herald the day of the Lord. (See Jer. iv. 23; Joel ii. 30, &c.) It may well, therefore, be expected that Christ's return to judge the world will be accompanied with cosmic changes and revolutions.

30. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

^aDan. vii. 13. ^bZech. xii. 12. ^cChap. xvi. 27; Mark xiii. 26; Rev. i. 7.

The sign of the Son of man. As our Lord does not say wherein this sign shall con-

sist, the commentator, as a matter of course, does not know. This much, however, is certain, that all the inhabitants of the earth will thereby be convinced of the nearness of Christ's coming to judgment, as lightning filling the whole horizon forebodes the impending storm. As the sign mentioned here, and those in verse 29, are the effects of Christ's coming, there is no contradiction in these verses of the repeated declaration that the coming will be without warning, and sudden. It is just, that He should appear for His glory, in His own natural greatness and majesty, who, for our salvation, was pleased to appear mean, abject, and contemptible to the eyes of men.

Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, that is, all unbelievers, all hypocrites, all enemies of Christ. *And they shall see,* &c. The appearance of Jesus will be visible to all. "Every eye shall see Him." (Acts i. 9-12; also Rev. xix. 11.) Whoever has despised the Son of man in His humility, shall be forced to see Him in all His majesty and power. Those to whom His state of weakness and humiliation, at His first coming, has been an occasion of scandal and incredulity, shall, in the power and glory of His second, behold their infidelity confounded.

31. 1. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.—Chap. xiii. 41; 1 Cor. xv. 52; 1 Thes. iv. 16.

His angels. (See on xiii. 41.) Angels are spoken of as the ministers of Divine providence, the instruments by which God accomplishes His purposes. (Ps. xxxiv. 7, xci. 11, 12, ciii. 21.) *With a great sound,* &c. The Jewish assemblies used to be called together by the sound of a trumpet, as ours are by bells. (Num. x. 2; Judg. iii. 27.) Our Saviour speaking to the Jews, described the assembling of the people at the last day in a way which would be peculiarly clear and impressive to them. (See 1 Cor. xv. 52; 1 Thes. iv. 16; Rev. xi. 15.) *And they shall gather together,* &c. Here the resurrection of the elect (the first resurrection, primarily) is declared. Properly, "gather together into one place," that is, to the Son of man where He is just about to make His appearance on earth.

His elect, that is, His chosen people, the

followers of Christ. With the appearance of the Lord, His Church also, hitherto scattered and concealed among the nations, will be fully united and appear in festal array. The bride of Rev. xxi. 9. *The four winds one end of heaven to the other.* The original word for *end* signifies any *extremity*. Where earth ends, there heaven begins: hence also *mountains* and *heavens* are sometimes made parallel. (2 Sam. xxii. 8; Ps. xviii. 7.) The *four winds* are spoken of, as there are said to be "four corners of the earth." (See Isa. xliii. 5. 6; Matt. viii. 11; Ezek. xxxvii. 9; Zech. ii. 6; Rev. vii. 1.) In the day of judgment true Christians shall be perfectly safe. Then, the mighty angels who rejoiced in heaven when each sinner repented, shall gladly catch up the people of Christ to meet their Lord in the air. Then, too, the saints of every age and every tongue shall be assembled out of every land. All shall be there, from righteous Abel down to the last soul that is converted to God—from the oldest patriarch down to the little infant that just breathed and died. Let us think what a happy gathering that will be, when all the family of God are at length together.

32. Now learn ka parable of the fig tree: When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: 33. So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.—Luke xxi. 29. James v. 9.

This comparison was designed by our Lord to show that the signs of which He had spoken were as indubitably precursors of the appearance of the Son of man, as the sprouting of the fig tree, and other trees, was an indication of the approach of summer. Whoever sees the one, knows then of himself that the other is at hand. As in the kingdom of nature, so in the kingdom of Providence, there is a sequence of one event on another. *When ye shall see,* &c. Our Lord here teaches that His kingdom will not be near until after a period of fearful wars and tribulation. (See Luke xxi. 31.)

Let us pursue the hint which Christ is here pleased to give us, by accustoming ourselves to look upon this present world, its elements and seasons, as a representation of the world to come. Sensual and sordid persons look upon the spring as a time which is favorable to their pleasures and their covetousness: true Christians

look upon this general resurrection of nature as a slight draught of the resurrection of the children of God, and as a sign of the approach of the Sun of Righteousness.

34. Verily I say unto you, ^aThis generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

^bChap. xvi. 28, and xxiii. 36; Mark xiii. 30; Luke xxi. 32.

Commentators widely differ as to the meaning of this difficult verse. It would only be perplexing to state the numerous and various interpretations it has received. Its true signification appears to be, "This generation shall not pass away without the beginning of the end of the world, here foretold you, having come to pass, in the actual destruction of Jerusalem." The justness of this interpretation is rendered the more probable if we connect the verse with the question in verse 3, as referring to the destruction of the temple. Jerusalem was taken A. D. 70, or forty years after this prediction. It was, therefore, within the lifetime of many then living.

Many eminent men regard the Saviour as teaching here, that until He returns to this earth, the Jews will always remain a separate people. Certainly, the continued existence of this people as a distinct nation is a great miracle. Without a land, without a king, without a government, scattered and dispersed over the world for eighteen hundred years, the Jews are never absorbed among the people of the countries where they live, like Frenchmen, Englishmen and Germans, but "dwell alone." Nothing can account for this but the finger of God. The Jewish nation stands before the world a crushing answer to infidelity, and a living book of evidence that the Bible is true.

35. ^aHeaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

^bPs. cii. 25; Isa. li. 6; Jer. xxxi. 35, 36; chap. v. 18; Mark xiii. 31; Luke xxi. 33; Heb. i. 11.

This was a peculiarly strong and solemn mode of declaring the certainty of the whole prophecy being fulfilled. The words evidently reach far beyond the destruction of the Jewish State. The heavens were to pass away like a scroll, at our Lord's coming. But His word was to stand forever. Nothing could prevent its being accomplished. Possibly there is an allusion to the new heavens and new earth which are to succeed the destruction of

the earthly economy. (2 Peter iii. 12, 13; Heb. i. 11, 12; Isa. li. 6; Rev. xxi. 1.)

36. ^aBut of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

^bMark xiii. 32; Acts i. 7; 1 Thes. v. 2; 2 Peter iii. 10. pZech. xiv. 7.

As to the temple and the city, the Lord shows the time (verse 32-34); as to the world, He declares here that the day and the hour are unknown. *But* implies a contrast; *these* and *this* (verse 34) refer to the near, *that* to the distant. If, however, the former time is defined with some latitude, *that day* and *hour* is much less definitely indicated here; and yet He does not speak of a *day* and *hour* without cause. *Day* is a whole, *hour* a part. *Knoweth no man*, &c. It has been a matter of much controversy even among the firmest believers in the proper Divinity of Christ, whether this statement concerning the Son, means that *He was not at that time in possession of the knowledge referred to*, or simply that it was not among the things which he had received to communicate. The Greek word which properly signifies, "I knew," when used in the sense of the Hebrew conjugation, *Hiphil*, as it here seems to be, signifies, *I make another to know, I declare*. The word has this meaning without dispute (1 Cor. ii. 2), "I determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," *i. e.*, I determined to make known, to preach nothing among you, but Jesus Christ. So, also, in this passage, "But of that day and that hour, none maketh you know," none hath power to make you know it (just as the phrase, Matt. xx. 23, "is not mine to give," signifies, "is not in my power to give"), "no, not the angels, neither the Son, but the Father."

In support of this interpretation, we have our Lord's way of speaking of His communications to men, as, for example, in such passages as these: "And what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth." "I speak to the world those things that I have heard of Him." "The Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak." (John iii. 32, viii. 26, xii. 49.) In this view, as the precise time of Christ's coming was certainly not in His instructions, as He had not "*seen and heard*" it, and so could not "testify" it, as He had

no communication from His Father on that subject, it is not difficult to understand how He might, in this sense, after saying that neither men nor angels knew it, add, that *Himself knew it not*, without the danger of lowering, even in the minds of His half-instructed disciples, the impression of His Omniscience, which every fresh communication to them only tended to deepen.

Jesus had a human as well as Divine nature, and His humanity was complete, or, in other words, His human nature was limited, like ours, in its mental capacities. Hence, the ignorance of the Son here referred to involves no greater difficulty than what is said by Luke (ii. 52), that He "increased in wisdom, and in favor with God and man," which certainly could not be predicated of His Divine nature. The fact that our Lord possessed two natures, the Divine and human, each complete, and neither of the two interfering with or modifying essentially the attributes of the other, is distinctly and abundantly revealed in Scripture. The manner of their co-existence in one person, in such distinctness and yet intimate union, is, of course, wholly beyond our comprehension. It is possible, however, that this union is more inexplicable than the union of our soul and body, solely because it occurs but once and has no analogy.

How remarkable it is that the time of Christ's second coming should be concealed from the knowledge of every creature! *Angels* know not the time, they know not when they shall be summoned to attend their King in His chariot of clouds. *Devils* know not the time, they know not when they shall be immured in their dark prison, and no longer permitted to tempt the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea. *Wicked* men know not the time, they know not when their day of grace will end. Righteous men know not the time, they know not when they shall be caught up to meet their Lord in the air.

37. But as the days of *Noe were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 38. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that *Noe* entered into the ark. 39. And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.
 Gen. vi. 3, 4, 5; Luke xvii. 26; 1 Peter iii. 20.

As the days of *Noe were*. Although the

coming of our Lord will be the perfect redemption of His disciples out of all tribulation (Luke xxi. 28), it is here represented especially as a judgment upon the godless and unbelieving world, and this judgment is typified in the fate of the contemporaries of *Noah*. The same illustration is used in 2 Peter iii. 5, 6, and the parallelism shows that it is the judgment day alone that is the present subject. We here have a very solemn picture of what the *state* of the world will be when the Son of man returns.

So shall also the coming of the Son of man be. The days preceding His second advent, just as the days of *Noah* were the days preceding the flood. (See Luke xvii. 26, 27.) It should be noted that the universality of the flood is asserted in both passages, and thus valuable collateral evidence is furnished of the totality of that catastrophe, as recorded in *Genesis*. In the days of *Noah*, the old world being entirely unaffected with the admonitions he gave them while building the ark, and with the threatenings which he then denounced, went on as usual, following their ordinary occupations, and pursuing their pleasures, both lawful and unlawful, in great security, even until the point of time when *Noah* took possession of the ark. The consequence was, that, ere they were aware, the flood came and destroyed all except those who were in the ark. It is thus plainly taught that the coming of Jesus will be unlooked for by the mass of mankind.

40. Then shall two be in the field, the one shall be taken, and the other left. 41. Two women shall be grinding at a mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.—Luke xvii. 34, &c.

In the field, pursuing their daily labor. Two women, &c. Corn was then ground, as it still is in the East, by a hand-mill, and generally by women. (See Ex. xi. 5, also *Isaiah* xlvii. 2.) The Saviour in these verses strengthens His admonitions still more by allusion to the definitive terrible *division*, which will coincide with the great *decision*. At His coming, that will be torn asunder which outwardly, as well as inwardly, appeared to be as closely as possible joined together. Two—one is a Christian, the other is a sinner. One of the men may have just vented his profane oaths, while the other may have reproved him,

and reminded him of the future judgment. Both women may that morning have sung the same hymn, but one was an humble believer, and the other a lover of the world. Men save and lose their souls in all places, states, and conditions. Some are lost while laboring for the necessities of life, by allowing the noise and hurry of their employments to hinder them from hearing the voice of God and the warnings of approaching calamity.

42. *Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.
*Chap. xxv. 13; Mark xlii. 33, &c.; Luke xxi. 36.

Be wakeful, vigilant, always on your guard, that you may not be taken unawares. We are kept uncertain concerning the precise time of our Lord's coming, that we may be always ready. (See Luke xii. 40.) He who made us is acquainted with all the secret springs of our nature. He knows that when we have a long time before us we are disposed to loiter. There is a spirit of sloth and delay that steals over our hearts, which nothing overcomes so much as the idea that the opportunity for exertion may soon be past. The coming here referred to is the same as in verse 39. We must not be like the world in the time of the flood, slumbering and revelling, but watch, for it will be a sudden event. (Heb. x. 37.) Christians are to be frequent in prayer, and continually in a prayerful frame of mind. (See Luke xviii. 1.) Watching and praying are here joined together, as in Matt. xxvi. 41, 1 Peter iv. 7. 8.

43. † But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.
*Luke xii. 39; 1 Thes. v. 2; 2 Peter iii. 10; Rev. iii. 3 and xvi. 15.

The good man of the house, that is *householder* simply. The word *good* implies here no moral character. In the northern parts of Great Britain the master of the house is still called "*the good man of the house*," and the mistress "*the good woman*." *Had known*, &c.—had been warned, as you are warned; especially if he had known in *what watch* the thief would come, he would have kept watch against his approach, and not have suffered his house to be broken up, *i. e.*, be digged through, for the walls of the Eastern houses are often of clay, and the house would be attacked by excavation. It is noticeable how frequently

the coming of the day of the Lord is compared, in all manner of forms, with the coming of the thief. (1 Thes. v. 2, 6, 8; 2 Peter iii. 10; Rev. iii. 3, xvi. 15.) Life is the time of probation. It is the watch time in which we are to be on the alert for the coming of the Son of man.

44. *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.
*Chap. xxv. 13; 1 Thes. v. 6.

Therefore, i. e., because your situation is like that of the householder, in the sudden and unexpected test to which your watchfulness will be put. (See on verse 42.) *Be ye also ready*. Be in a state of constant readiness. *For in such an hour*, &c. The individual death is the virtual coming of the Son of man. Not that the coming of the Son of man here is death, nor truly to be identified with death, but the being on the watch for judgment is pressed instead of the being on the watch for death, inasmuch as death is nothing but a passage to judgment. This is a point which our blessed Master frequently presses upon our notice. Christians should strive to be always on their guard. They should behave like the sentinel of an army in an enemy's land. They should resolve by God's grace not to sleep at their post. (1 Thes. v. 6.)

45. *Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?
*Luke xii. 42; Acts xx. 23; 1 Cor. iv. 2; Heb. iii. 5.

Who then, &c.—whoever, and whenever, and wherever he is? This question the Lord asked in order to arouse and exhort every one to ask himself the question, *Is it I?* As the steward was burdened with the care of the whole domestic establishment, his post was in the fullest sense one of confidence, and therefore faithfulness in every respect was required. *Over his household*. The construction of the original refers to a constant and vigilant oversight, as though his authority and supervision rested upon his charge continually. We must be faithful in performing the duties of our state in the time of our life, if we would be found at that of death employed in the work which God has committed to our care. Observe here two main qualities in a pastor. 1. Fidelity in not appropriating to himself the gifts of God, as time, talents, &c. 2. Prudence in

employing them to the profit of his household, which is the church. Whoever remembers that he is only a steward, is far from desiring to command and dispose of everything as master. God will be served in His own way, not in ours. *To give them meat, &c.* The family is here properly the Church of God, considered as a great congregation, through all ages, waiting for the coming of Christ. It is that Church of all ages to whom He said of the Lord's supper, "Ye do show forth the Lord's death until He come." It is a great part of pastoral prudence to give the proper portion, and to do it in due season.

46. "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing." 47. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.
†Rev. xvi. 15. †Chap. xxv. 21; Luke xxii. 29.

So doing. This refers to verse 45, where the Christian is represented as a faithful and wise servant, &c. This conduct includes 1. A diligent attention to our own spiritual concerns; 2. An anxiety for the welfare of others; 3. Zeal for the glory of God; 4. The happiness secured—"blessed" with all spiritual blessings in life and death, in time and eternity. Miserable then is he whom death surprises either doing evil or doing nothing, or doing that which God does not require of him. No one should ever quit his post of duty, either through discouragement, or idleness, or indifference. *Ruler over all his goods*, simply the image of his Master, drawn from the custom of appointing a competent or favorite servant to be head steward, as was Joseph in the house of Potiphar. The more extended sphere of action is represented as the reward of fidelity. The labor is great, but the reward is without measure. We should be able to comprehend it, could we comprehend all the riches of God, that is, God Himself.

48. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; 49. And shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; 50. The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, 51. And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall he be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
†Chap. viii. 12 and xxv. 30.

That evil servant. As no evil servant has previously been mentioned, the word *that* is to be explained by supposing an ellipsis: *But if that evil servant* (on the supposition

that he is evil) *shall say, &c.* *My lord delayeth his coming*—the speech of folly, which believes the day of reckoning and judgment to be far distant, only to abandon itself to the more unrestrained indulgence of its lusts. It is remarkable that every mistake on the subject of Christ's coming hitherto made, arises from requiring it to be *too soon*. *And shall begin, &c.*—laying claim in arrogance and hard-heartedness to a right belonging to the lord. *Eat and drink with the drunken*, revelling upon that which has been withdrawn from others, and, at the same time, wickedly squandering the goods of his lord. Thousands are emboldened in sin by the idea that the Lord delayeth His coming. If the coming of our Lord to judgment were a living reality for the professors of Christianity, for which they looked, there would certainly not be so much strife, contention, bitterness, envy, ambition, domineering and revengefulness among the different branches of the Church and the members of the same Churches. (1 Cor. iv. 5.) Nor would there be so much luxury and extravagance in the Church; the contributions for the support of the preaching of the Gospel at home and abroad would be much more liberal.

The lord of that servant shall come, &c.—surprise him in his sin and false security. The Lord continually, by death, defeats such presumptuous calculations of the ungodly. *Cut him asunder*, means quarter him—the image of a very hard punishment at that time inflicted on certain offenders. It points to the punishment connected with the dividing asunder and laying open of the wicked heart. (Heb. iv. 13.) *Appoint him, &c., i. e.,* he shall have the same fate. The Lord will judge His servants according to the condition in which He finds them—no previous faithfulness shall compensate for negligence at the time. *There shall be weeping, &c.* (See on chap. viii. 12.) Were Jesus to come to-day in His chariot of clouds, should we be able to say, "we have waited for Him?" (Isa. xxv. 10.) Would He come to interrupt our pleasures, or to drown our hopes? to make us weep and gnash our teeth, or to wipe away all tears from our faces forever?

1. What did Jesus say to His disciples about the temple? 2. How did He answer the question, "when shall these things be?" 3. What wars were referred to? 4. What is said in reference to famines, &c.? 5. What effect was abounding iniquity to have? 6. What was "the abomination of desolation?" 7. Explain the injunctions in verses 17, 18, 19, 20. 8. How is the coming of the Son of man to be like the lightning? 9. How are we to understand verse 28? 10. What does the parable of the fig-tree teach? 11. What is said of "that day and hour?" 12. How is Christ's coming to be "as the days of Noe?" 13. What duty is enjoined in verse 42? 14. Who is the "faithful and wise servant?" 15. Who is "that evil servant?" 16. What is to be his doom?

CHAPTER XXV.

1. *The parable of the ten virgins, 14 and of the talents.*
 31. *Also the description of the last judgment.*

THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

^aEph. v. 29, 30; Rev. xix. 7, xxi. 2, 9.

The circumstances of a marriage which furnish the groundwork of this parable, form an exact and literal representation of the customs which, in ancient times, generally prevailed in the East on such joyous occasions, and which hold in full force to the present day.

Then—at the time spoken of in the preceding chapter, namely, the "coming of the Son of man." *The kingdom of heaven*,—the kingdom as it appears outwardly before men in this dispensation. The visible Church on earth will "then be likened," &c. *Ten*. In the Jewish Church ten persons were required to constitute a valid synagogue. Probably this number was here selected because it was most familiar to the Jews in their varied ecclesiastical and political economies. No symbolic character should be attributed to the *virgins*, as such; it is when they take their lamps and go forth to meet the bridegroom that they first acquire a spiritual significance. The whole group represent that portion of any community who hear the Gospel, accept its terms, and profess to be the disciples of Christ. The sincerity and depth of their profession will be tested afterward. *Took their lamps, &c.* Marriages were always celebrated in the evening, or at night. (Judg. xiv. 11, 18; 1 Sam. xxv. 42.) The taking their lamps and going forth to meet the bridegroom, represents an open, intelligent and seemly profession of faith in Christ. *Bridegroom*. The Church is "the Lamb's wife"—the union which faith forms between Christ and His people being represented as a mar-

riage. (See Ps. xlv. 13–15; Cant. i. 5, 6, viii. 13, 14; John iii. 27–36; 2 Cor. xi. 1–6; Rev. xix. 7, 8, xxi. 1–4.) The image which our Lord uses here, raises such joyous expectations as are sufficient to divest of their terror all the frightful circumstances with which His coming is also connected. Believers under the Old Testament looked for the coming of Messiah. (Isa. lx. 1, &c., lxiv. 1; Luke ii. 25.) Believers under the New Testament look for His second coming. (Phil. iii. 21; Heb. ix. 28; Tit. ii. 11, &c.) This expectation is a powerful means, in the hands of God, for raising and sanctifying the heart. It springs out of faith in the promises of the Lord (Matt. xxv. 31; John xiv. 3, xvii. 24; Acts i. 9–11), and is at once the proof and nourishment of love to Him. (Col. iii. 1, &c.; 1 Peter i. 8.)

² And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.
^b Chap. xiii. 47, xxii. 10.

Five, &c. The number is of no moment to the point in question, the distinction alone is essential. It is not a distinction of the head, but a distinction of the heart. The "wise" are called so, because they kept steadily in view the end and the means, thought of the future with foresight, and, during the present, held in contemplation distant possible contingencies, all which the "foolish" did not. Christians are "wise unto salvation," mere professors have "their foolish hearts hardened." It is not to be inferred from this, we think, that half the human family shall be lost, and that half shall be saved. We must never wring from every incident in a parable, distinct and specific meaning.

³ They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

The *lamps* used on such occasions were probably flambeaux or torches. They consisted of small bars of iron or brass inserted

into a stick, to which were fastened small pieces of linen or lint, or other substance, which of itself burned, but required to be supplied from another vessel with oil, in order to make the burning bright and permanent. Verse 4 shows that the oil was in another vessel, and not in the lamp itself. The persons whom the foolish virgins represent are not hypocrites, not self-conscious dissemblers, much less the openly profane and ungodly, but the negligent in prayer, the slothful in work, such as lay out their scheme for a Christian life to satisfy the eyes of men, and not to please God, who seeth in secret. They have, in some degree, experienced convictions, and they have made professions, but their profession does not proceed from any experience, or full-wrought conviction of the truth and Divinity of the Gospel. They are eager to "go forth," but have "no oil with them," no grace in their heart.

4. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

Vessels. (See on verse 3.) *Oil.* This points to the Holy Spirit as a spirit of grace and supplication dwelling in a believer's heart. (2. Cor. i. 21; 1 John ii. 20, 27, &c.) The persons whom the "wise" represent, have passed from death unto life; they have received their new life through the Spirit's ministry, and it is "hid with Christ in God." (Col. iii. 3.) From this source they have an unfailing supply. They foresee that they may have a long life to live of toil and self-denial, before they shall be called to cease from their labors, before the kingdom shall come unto them, and consequently feel that it is not a few warm, excited feelings which will carry them successfully through all this—which will enable them to endure unto the end.

5. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.—cf 1 Thes. v. 6.

Bridegroom. (See on verse 1.) *Tarried,* not really, for Christ's day of arrival is absolutely fixed, but it seemed to them as if He tarried—the time appeared longer than they expected. Here was a hint from our Lord that the time of His return might be delayed beyond the expectation of His first disciples. If more than a hint had been given, if Jesus had said plainly

that He would not come for many centuries, then the first ages of the Church would have been placed in a disadvantageous position, being deprived of that powerful motive to holiness and diligence supplied to each generation of the faithful, by the possibility of the Lord's return in their time. It is a necessary element of the doctrine concerning the second coming of Christ, that it should be possible at any time, that no generation should consider it improbable in theirs.

All slumbered and slept. It certainly was not our Lord's design to represent the wise virgins as sinking along with others into carnal security, indifference and slothfulness. This would have been to disfigure the image He was drawing of Christian wisdom by a leading characteristic of folly. The trait referred to is, we think, simply an indication of the long delay of the bridegroom, which naturally led the virgins to fall into other employments than those immediately connected with the expected festivity. So, in regard to the second coming of Christ, though the great object of the Church's hopes, yet it was to be so long deferred, as to render it both allowable and necessary for her members to mingle in employment not immediately connected with His advent. His people, as well as others, must betake themselves to the cares and business of life—must enter into occupations, which, in themselves, are no way connected with Christ's appearing, but, while amidst these, work and business of their Christian calling, the holy oil of Divine truth and the Divine Spirit still abides in the heart of real Christians, and shines forth in their conduct; and all they have to do, when called to meet their Lord, is just to recall their minds from their other necessary duties, and address themselves more immediately to the work of meeting, in a suitable manner, the presence and glory of their Divine Master. Still, it is true, that the delay of Christ is, alas, often the occasion of a diminution of watchfulness, fervor and activity, even on the part of true disciples. Against such a tendency Christians should prayerfully guard.

6. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, so ye out to meet him.

^aChap. xxiv. 31; 1 Thes. iv. 16.

The parties being united, the bride, preceded by her virgin attendants with lighted torches, was conducted to the house of the bridegroom's father. This *cry* we may suppose to have been made either by a part of the retinue running before, or by the applauding multitude, who, even till that late hour, had been waiting to see the passage of the procession through the streets, and thus testified their lively sympathy in what was going forward. *Midnight.* Jesus may come much later than was expected, but He is true and faithful. (2 Peter iii. 3.) His coming is sudden. Every stroke which our pulse beats, strikes the knell of a passing soul. There are sixty human lives go out every minute. But while that is the average number, death, each day, like the tide, has its flow and ebb. As harmonizing with its gloomy scenes, night is the most common period for dying. She throws her sable veil over the appalling features of life's last struggle. (1 Thes. iv. 16, v. 2.) *The bridegroom cometh.* Such rousing cries in the Church of God, and in the lives of individuals, are often found in great outward changes, national judgments, desolations, diseases, extreme dangers, extraordinary deliverances, and other solemn occurrences, through means of which zealous and godly Christians, as well as those who are lukewarm and ungodly, are constrained to think of the coming of the Son of man as near at hand.

7. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.—Luke xii. 35.

All—arose. There is no visible distinction at this stage between those who have only a name that they live, and those who have attained also the new nature. When life is closing behind, and eternity opening before us, we are all aroused. Every one who has a lamp hastens then to examine its condition and stimulate its flame; all who have borne Christ's name search themselves to see whether they are ready for His presence.

8. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out.

Many put off the examination of the very grounds of their faith and hope to the last moment. When the day of Christ comes, it will be impossible for any to remain ignorant any longer of his true state. *Give us, &c.,* that is, permit us to have an

interest in your faith. Here is a representation of those formalists, who, if they are Catholics, betake themselves to the dead saints, or if they are Protestants, to the living, whom they have been accustomed to revere as their guides on account of their wisdom and grace, and plead, Help us, comfort us, pray for us, that we may be brought into a state of grace. *Our lamps are gone out,* rather, as in the margin, "are going out," for oil will not light an extinguished lamp, though it will keep a burning one from going out. Ah! now, at length, they have discovered not only their folly, but the wisdom of the other class, and they do homage to it. They did not, perhaps, despise them before, but they thought them righteous overmuch, now they are forced, with bitter mortification, to wish they were like them. There is a devotion which is temporary, and a devotion which is real and permanent. That devotion which is not sustained by truth and holiness is necessarily transient, and when it is wanted most, is found most to fail. It will be observed that the foolish virgins applied to the wise ones, not to the Fountain Himself. It can scarcely be doubted that if they had ever truly known the bridegroom, they would have applied to Him instead of their companions.

9. But the wise answered, saying, *Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.*

¹Ps. xlix. 7; Jer. xv. 1; Ezek. xiv. 14, xvi. 18.

Not so. These words are supplied in our translation. They are omitted in the original, as the ancients felt a sort of shame or delicacy in denying a request, and the clause which follows marks with sufficient clearness the denial. *Lest there be not, &c.* Here is a striking denial of the Romish doctrine of supererogation, by which the merits of particular saints may by surplus save other persons. The righteous are "scarcely saved." After we have done all, we are "unprofitable servants." *Go ye rather, &c.* This counsel was the best that in the emergency could be given. "Sell" and "buy," mean simply, "Go, get in the only legitimate way." And yet the word "buy" is significant, for we are elsewhere bidden, "buy wine and milk without money and without price,"

and "buy of Christ gold tried in the fire," &c. (Isa. lv. 1; Rev. iii. 18.) Now, since what we pay the demanded price for becomes thereby *our own property*, the salvation which we thus take gratuitously at God's hands, being bought in His own sense of that word, becomes ours thereby in inalienable possession. (See Prov. xxiii. 23; Matt. xiii. 44.) This feature of the parable intimates that those who are found destitute at the coming of the Lord, enjoyed their day and their opportunity, but neglected them. Christians may tell the person who wants grace where it is to be had; they may direct him to the fountain out of which he may draw; but no priest, or person, no minister or man of any denomination can communicate grace—the Lord the Spirit alone can bestow it.

10. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut.—Luke xiii. 25.

Went to buy, &c. There is no forgiveness to be had at the judgment day—the throne of grace is superseded by the throne of judgment, the cross is then veiled, the fountain for uncleanness is then sealed, the sun of grace has then set. *They that were ready, or prepared, viz.:* the wise virgins. *Went in, &c.* The Greek word rendered *marriage*, rather means, "the apartment in which the marriage feast was kept," or the house where the marriage was celebrated. The marriage ceremony took place before the bride left her father's house, but a feast was given at the house of her husband, and which was also called the *marriage*, or a part of the marriage solemnities. *Door was shut*—shut as much for the security and joy without interruption of those within, as for the lasting exclusion of those without. (See Gen. vii. 16; Rev. iii. 1, 2, also xix. 7, xxi. 27.) What door? The door that has now engraved on its lintels, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out"—the door which is now open, and so wide that the greatest sinner may enter, and yet so holy that no sin shall be tolerated within it.

11. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.—Chap. vii. 21-23.

Afterward came, &c. Not that they have now found the oil, but having sought it in vain they come looking for mercy, when now it is the time of judgment. *Lord,*

Lord. Now, at length, they realize all the consequences of their past folly. In addressing the bridegroom, *Lord*, they claim to stand in a near relation to him, and their repeating it is an evidence of the earnestness with which they now claim admission. *Open to us.* So that no one can then claim or take away anything for himself, it must be given him by Christ. Many professing Christians care nothing about decided Christianity. But they will experience an entire change of opinion in regard to its necessity, when, alas, it is too late.

12. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. ¹Ps. v. 5; Hab. i. 13; John ix. 31.

The word *know* here is used in a somewhat peculiar sense; it is equivalent to acknowledge or approve, a sense of the term of not unfrequent occurrence in Scripture. "The Lord *knoweth* the way of the righteous," Ps. i. 6, *i. e.*, He approves, and gives tokens of His approval of their way. "You only have I *known* of all the nations of the earth" (Amos iii. 2), *i. e.*, acknowledged as my peculiar people. "I *know*"—acknowledge—"my sheep, and am *known*"—acknowledged—"of mine." "As the Father *knoweth*"—acknowledgeth—"me, even so *know*"—acknowledge—"I the Father." (John x. 14, 15.) The words *I know you not*, just show that they never *knew* Christ, that there had never been anything save a barren lifeless calling Him "Lord, Lord," and that now, though *seeking* to enter in, they "shall not be able."

13. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

¹Chap. xxiv. 42, 44; Mark xiii. 33; Luke xxi. 36; 1 Cor. xvi. 13; 1 Thes. v. 6; 1 Peter v. 8; Rev. xvi. 15.

Watch therefore. (See on chap. xxiv. 42, 44.) The spiritual watchfulness, or preparedness of the Christian, is that state of mind wherein one is truly conscious to himself of his actual condition, of the aim and tendency of his life, of his relation to the Redeemer and the things of this life, and everything is so applied and used as to be of service to us for our eternal salvation. The ground of this watchfulness is our ignorance of the exact time for the coming and manifestation of Christ, which uncertainty or ignorance true believers improve to their salvation.

14. ^aFor the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

^bMark xiii. 34; Luke xix. 12-27. ^cChap. xxi. 33.

This parable and that of the talents, in Luke xix. 11-27, are not, as some have regarded them, one and the same, although in many of their features there is a strong resemblance. *That* was spoken in the house of Zaccheus, *this* on the Mount of Olives. *That* was addressed to a mixed multitude, *this* to Christ's own immediate disciples. Other points of difference will reveal themselves on examination.

The words *kingdom of heaven*, are evidently to be supplied from verse 1. The *man* is the Son of man, a name that appropriately expresses the relationship of Jesus to us, and our relationship to Him. Christ, as Lord of this kingdom, will act toward those who have come in connection with Him, just as a rich man does with his servants. The *far country*, here, is that called by Isaiah "the land that is afar off"—the holy place, from which sin has projected us to an almost infinite distance. Christ's continued presence, spiritually, with His people, is not inconsistent with this representation, for the parable deals with the bodily and the visible.

Who called his own servants, &c. Slaves in antiquity, in many parts of the East, were often artisans, or were allowed otherwise to engage freely in business, paying, as it was frequently arranged, a fixed yearly sum to their master, or, as here, they had money committed to them wherewith to trade on his account, or with which to enlarge their business, and to bring him in a share of the profits. *Delivered, divided, unto them his goods.* So, also, has Christ bestowed many gifts upon His servants; in particular, He assigned to His Apostles an appointed sphere of labor, and still now gives life, health, powers of body and of soul, many talents, capacities, spheres of duty, and opportunities for action. There is here indicated the relation of entire dependence in which we stand to Christ, as servants to their Lord.

15. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to every man according to his several ability: and straightway took his journey.

^aRom. xii. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 7, 11, 29; Eph. iv. 11.

In this distribution different amounts are consigned to different persons. Here the representation obviously accords with

the fact: of time, of intellect, of health, of learning, of wealth, scarcely any two persons possess a precisely equal portion. *To every man according to his several ability.* The master, at the moment of his departure, graduated his gifts according to the abilities and acquirements of the servants, that he might not throw a great responsibility on a weak man, or leave a man of vigor only half employed. This shows, probably, that while all the gifts that a man possesses are bestowed by God, some, such as bodily constitution and mental capacity, are conferred by God, as governor of the world, while others are subsequently conferred by the Lord Jesus, as the king and head of the Church. We are inclined to understand these latter gifts by the goods which the master bestowed on the eve of his departure.

Through the unequal distribution of manifold gifts, the Church of the Lord appears like a body composed of many members, every one of which must contribute to the good of the whole, according to the part assigned, and the capacity bestowed on it. (1 Cor. xii. 4-30; Rom. xii. 4-9.) There is not a power, nor a possession, nor a privilege that we enjoy, that is not a talent, and there is not a talent, minute or otherwise, which may not be sanctified to the Master's use, and devoted to His glory. God does not tell the man who has two talents to beg for five, nor the man who has one to ask for two, nor does He say that the one who has two should produce as much as the man who has five. He only asks for the vigorous use of that which we have, and on that vigorous and prayerful use He will bestow His blessing.

And straightway took his journey. See Chapter xxi. 33, where the same departure is ascribed to God, after setting up the ancient economy. In both cases, it denotes the leaving of men to the action of all those spiritual laws and influences of Heaven, under which they have been graciously placed for their own salvation, and the advancement of their Lord's kingdom.

16. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. 17. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. 18. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

The goodness of the giver, as expressed in the gifts received, kindled gratitude in the first two servants. They felt a responsibility, but a joyful responsibility. They, therefore, turned their talents to account. Their gain and increase of goods stand in exact proportion to the sums committed to them. The talents doubled, are just good fruit springing from active, diligent use of opportunity to serve Christ. Although the first of these servants did absolutely more for Christ and the world than the second, both were equally diligent and faithful according to their means. Examples, both of the likeness and the difference, occur by hundreds, day by day, before our eyes. (See Luke xii. 48.)

He that had received one, went and digged, &c. This was not the case because his talent differed from that of others, and was therefore incapable of increase, or because he had no opportunity of turning it to account, or no inherent energy of action able to do so, or because he had no intelligible instructions, for this is not pleaded. Christ distributes in the exercise of sovereignty, and each is responsible, not for the amount he receives, but only for the practical use to which he turns that which he has received. It was not, let it be observed, a sinful prodigality, or a bad use of the lent talent, which served for the condemnation of this servant, but only his slothful indifference, that he had not employed it either for himself or for others.

^{19.} After a long time the Lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

Long time. The time is not long in the account of the Lord himself: his latest warning to the Church is, "Behold I come quickly," and with him a thousand years are as one day. Nor is the time long to ungodly men, for in such an hour as they think not, the Son of man cometh. At whatever time He comes, He comes too soon for them who would give all the world, if it were theirs, that He should not come at all. When Jesus comes, He will take account of all that has passed during His absence, whether it be good or bad. He will reckon with His servants, that thus His sentence may appear before all the world as conformable to the strictest principle of righteousness.

20. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliverest unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside thee five talents more. 21. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. *Chap. xxiv. 47, verses 34, 36: Luke xii. 44, xxii. 29, 30. *2 Tim. i. 12; Heb. xii. 2; 1 Peter i. 8.

He that had received five talents came, &c. In the joyful coming forward of the faithful servants, we see an example of boldness in the day of judgment. (See 1 John iv. 17, ii. 28.) They had something to show, as Paul so earnestly desired that he might have. (1 Thes. ii. 19; 2 Cor. i. 14; Phil. iv. 1.) *Behold I have gained, &c.* Grace bestowed, and diligence inspired by grace, gained. Observe that here the phrase, "*I have gained*," is preceded by the words, "*thou deliverest unto me*,"—it is only *thy* gift which I have so multiplied. Whereunto we have attained, and whatsoever we have gained, are entirely from first to last, by the distinguishing grace of Him who makes us to differ, and who gives us grace to put our talents to their legitimate and proper use.

Well done thou good and faithful servant. We should not study to please men so much as to please God. If we please Him, we shall please all who love Him; and, as to others, they are not on any account worthy of being pleased at the expense of displeasing God. The term "good" stands opposed to "unprofitable." A good and faithful servant. True, we cannot profit Christ absolutely, but we may relatively; He has an interest in the world, and we may profit that—a people, and we may profit them; and He will consider anything done to them for His sake as done to Him. It is not enough that we do no harm, as is evident from the case of the servant, who was not cast out for what he did, but for *not* doing what he ought to have done (verses 24–30), we must be *faithful* servants, diligent, conscientious, persevering. We are not required to be *successful*; our Lord and Master was not very successful, but he was faithful, and so must we all be in our respective spheres.

Thou hast been faithful over a few things. He calls, even the highest, the richest and most honorable gifts, which He bestows here, a *few things*, in order to raise our expectations the more concerning the much greater and more glorious things

which He has reserved for His people hereafter, and so to fill our hearts with blessed hopes, as well as admonish us to a conscientious fidelity. It often happens, that labor spent on what is little brings great glory. The minister who has only a small congregation, consisting of a few people, and these chiefly poor, and this for many years to come, should think often of the commendation of our Lord here given. Instead of being anxious for a large charge, he has reason to tremble lest he should be found unfaithful in that which he has.

I will make thee ruler, &c. Christ will at the last show greater confidence in His faithful servants than ever. They will have a glorious augmentation of honor and blessedness. The language is figurative. The idea conveyed is evidently this: that a faithful discharge of the trust committed to us in this world will, through Divine grace, contribute to our honor and blessedness in the world to come. All will not have an equal degree of happiness in heaven. All will be perfectly happy, but some will not have so large a capacity for happiness as others. Every vessel will be full, but some vessels will contain more than others. Paul must enjoy more in heaven than a soul caught up from infancy, since part of the happiness of heaven will consist of remembrance of the past.

Enter thou into the joy of thy lord. So the Lord Jesus shall, as it were, call his people "no longer servants, but friends" (John xv. 15; Luke xii. 37; Rev. iii. 20); bring them into such close and intimate union with Himself as they never had before—cause them to sit down with Him at the feast prepared to celebrate His return, and so make them partakers of the joy which will satisfy Him, as He sees the fruit of the travail of His soul.

22. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliverdest unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. 23. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.—Verse 21.

Well done, &c. We are to notice that the servant who had received *two talents*, was addressed in precisely the same terms of commendation as he who had received five. He had doubled his money, and

was, therefore, equally as faithful as the one who had received the greater amount. In distributing His commendations, the Lord looks more to the honest heart, the approved fidelity and tender conscientiousness, than to the greater or less result of the activity of his servants (2 Cor. viii. 12). For explanation of these verses, see notes on verses 20, 21.

24. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed: 25. And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. ^aJob xxi. 14, 16; Isa. lviii. 3, Jer. ii. 31, Ezek. xviii. 25, 29, Mal. i. 12; Luke xix. 20, 22.

He which had received the one talent. "Our Lord placed the example of negligence in him to whom the least was committed, probably to intimate," says Doddridge, "that we are accountable for the *smallest* with which we are entrusted; but it cannot imply that they who have received *much* will ordinarily pass their account *best*, for it is too plain, in fact, that most of those whose dignity, wealth and genius give them the greatest opportunities of service, seem to forget that they have a Master in heaven to serve, or any future reckoning to expect, and many render themselves much more criminal than this wicked and slothful servant, who hid his talent in the earth." *Lord, I knew thee, &c.* The faithless and unconscientious servant, when called to give his account, tries to defend himself. It would have been better had he been led before this to a conviction of his guilt and liability to punishment, as he might have been, either through the example of his good fellow-servants, or through the knowledge he had of his lord's will. *A hard man*—an avaricious person, who allows himself to be drawn away by avarice and greed into unrighteousness. But the conduct of the lord toward him, verse 15, was an indication of good feeling, and, therefore, manifested the groundlessness of his subterfuge.

Reaping, &c., that is, requiring more of us than thou givest us power to perform. *And I was afraid, &c.* The other servants did not regard the lord as a hard master, but as a good master. Think of God as your Father and your Benefactor, and you will serve Him joyously as a child. Think of God as a hard task-master, and you will

either serve Him as a slave, or you will give up serving in despair.

Thou hast that is thine. Let it be observed that this servant's disobedience was not active, but passive; he did not positively injure his master's property, he simply failed to turn it to, profitable account. His action seems that of one anxious that the gift should not be missed or lost, but ready to be returned, just as he got it. His terror was too lively to admit of his enjoying a debauch purchased by the treasure which had been placed under his charge. Fear is a powerful motive in certain directions and for certain effects; it makes itself felt in the heart, and leaves its mark on the life of a man. Like frost, it has power to arrest the stream of energy, and fix it cold, stiff, motionless. Only love can, like the sun of summer, break the chains and set the prisoner free to run his way rejoicing.

26. His lord answered and said unto him, *Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strewed:* 27. *Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.*

Thou wicked and slothful servant, &c. What this servant had contrived for his justification, the Lord applies to his confusion. "If you knew I was such, instead of that being an argument against the use of this talent, it was only a stronger argument for your use of it."

Exchangers. These discharged not only the offices of our *bankers* in receiving and giving out money, and giving interest upon it, but also, in exchanging coins, and distinguishing genuine from forged money. *With usury, i. e., with interest.* Anciently the import of the word *usury* was no other than profit, whether great or small, allowed to the lender for the use of borrowed money. As this practice often gave rise to great extortion, the very name at length became odious. A German critic makes the remark on this: "Thus timid natures, that are not suited to independent labors in the kingdom of God, are here counseled at least to attach themselves to stronger characters, under whose leading they may lay out their gifts to the service of the Church." Let it be noted that as in the parable of the ten virgins, the five foolish set forth those who are rejected at last because they think too lightly of the re-

quirements of the of the Lord; so here, on the other hand, this servant represents those who are rejected because they think too hardly of His commands. Our Lord touches the root from which both these spring, "*wickedness and sloth.*" "Slothful" is added to mark the precise nature of the wickedness. We have here this very solemn truth pressed upon us, that the judge who will reckon with us will not be satisfied with the plea that we have *done no harm* (which plea, however, *never* can be substantiated), but He will equally condemn on the ground of our having *done no good*. It will be our ruin merely to bury, amid the cares and pleasures of life, our opportunities of serving Christ. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." (Luke xvi. 10.)

28. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

Take therefore, &c. This deprivation may be considered partly as directly penal, and partly as the *natural* consequence of his sloth. There is an analogy between the course of things in the natural and in the spiritual world. A limb which is never called into exercise loses its strength by degrees; its muscles and sinews disappear. The disuse of any faculty of the mind gradually but surely diminishes or destroys its power. Corn kept hoarded up in the granary is soon destroyed, scattered on the earth and in good soil, it grows up into a golden harvest. Even so the gifts of God, unexercised, fade and fail from us. Hence, to waste life in the hope of getting all made right by an energetic repentance at the close, is a very foolish and mischievous species of superstition; it is the exercise of a very strong faith, without any promise from God on which it may lean.

And give it unto him which hath ten talents. A deep and precious truth lies under this. The man who had received *five* talents got that number "*according to his ability.*" By having another talent given him at last, is intimated that his "*ability*" has become greater than it was before. And so it will be, indeed, with the faithful servant who shall enter into his Master's joy in heaven. His ability, his capacity, his power, will be gloriously increased and enlarged, and still "*according to that ability*" will his

Divine Master place within his reach increased and enlarged opportunities of serving Him. (See on verse 29.)

29. *For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance, but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

*Chap. xiii. 12; Mark iv. 25; Luke viii. 18, xix. 26; John xv. 2.

Unto every one that hath—every one that has rightly employed what was committed to him; exercised his gift with the required diligence, fidelity and conscientiousness. *Shall be given*, &c. It is not merely that one receives more, and the other loses what he had, but *that very gift* which the one loses the other receives; he is enriched with a talent taken from the other, while on his part, another takes *his* crown. We see this continually; one, by the Providence of God, steps into the place and the opportunities which another left unused, and so has forfeited. (1 Sam. xv. 28; see on Luke viii. 18, xix. 26.)

From him that hath not, &c. From him who, wanting diligence and carefulness, has not therefore rightly executed the trust committed to him, *shall be taken away even that which he hath*—the just desert of his guilt (Luke xvi. 10-12), and a judgment demanded alike by the wisdom and righteousness of God. The hand of diligence makes rich. The way to accumulate is dispersion.

30. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall he be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

*Chap. viii. 12, xxiv. 51.

It will be noticed that the reward of unfaithfulness is, "take the talent from him and cast him out." In both parts the sentence of condemnation corresponds to its opposite in the reception of those who had been faithful to their trust. These retain their employed gifts, from him the unused talent is taken away. These are received into their master's favor, he is cast out of his master's sight. The sentence, "take it from him," goes before the sentence, "cast him out." A sinner is given over to himself, before he is given up to judgment. The first prepares the way for the second death; the process is now going on by which the destiny is decided. Now is the accepted time, now either salvation or condemnation is wrought out. *Unprofitable servant*—literally, *useless*, worthless, bad. (See on verses 25, 27.) *Outer dark-*

ness, &c. (See on chap. viii. 12.) This is the consummation of judgment. Loss of all further means of Divine favor, and rejection from the life and glory of the Divine presence.

31. *When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

*Zech. xiv. 5; chap. xvi. 27, xix. 28; Mark. viii. 38; Acts i. 11.

Truthfully has it been said that if this scene, here described, does not describe a personal, public, final judgment on men, according to the treatment they have given Christ, we shall have to consider again whether our Lord's teaching on the greatest themes of human interest, does indeed possess that incomparable simplicity and transparency of meaning which, by universal consent, has been ascribed to it. *When the Son of man*, &c. In connection with the majesty and grandeur of His appearance on this great and awful occasion, our Lord speaks of Himself as the Son of man. It is not in His Divine character alone that He is to act as final Judge, but as God manifest in the flesh, the humble, despised Jesus of Nazareth. Hence we see the reason why the Father is said to have committed all judgment to the Son. (John v. 22.) As Mediator He is officially subordinate to the Father, and His office as final Judge is a delegated and not an independent one.

In his glory. These words say more than the "with power and great glory," of chap. xxiv. 30. The Messiah is here represented as a king coming in royal state. *All the holy angels with him*. As kings, on great and special occasions, make their appearance attended by their high officers, so the Messiah will come to judgment, attended by holy angels as ministers of His will. (Mark viii. 38; 2 Thes. i. 7; Rev. v. 11.) *Upon the throne of his glory*—the glory of His judicial authority.

32. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

*Rom. xiv. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10; Rev. xx. 12. *Ezek. xx. 38, xxxiv. 17, 20; chap. xlii. 49.

Before him shall be gathered all nations. All nations are now before Him, and ever have been. He sees them, He sustains them, He speaks to them by His Providence and His Word. But millions have

denied His very existence, and millions more have lived in utter indifference to His claims; but now all nations are brought into *conscious* contact with Him. The blaspheming atheist, the cruel idolater, the degraded savage, the foul apostate, and the hardened worldling, will feel His presence more intensely than Isaiah did when he fell down and cried, *Woe is me!*

And he shall separate them one from another. The judgment will be simultaneous: all will be judged together. Reason might probably have supposed that every one would be judged separately at the time of his death. But God has reasons for a public judgment: God must not only do right, but be known to do right. Though every one at death enters the region either of happiness or despair, yet it is fit there should be a day prefigured by the day of visitation at the deluge, at Sodom, and at Jerusalem, a day for the gathering of all men to their own class, as either righteous or wicked. This arrangement, if not necessary, is expedient for the illustration of the Divine justice; thus all may be convinced of the fitness, not only of their own retribution, but of that of others also. If the "day" designated in Scripture for the judgment should seem to us too brief, in view of the immensity of the subject and the multitude of persons concerned, it should be recollected that this term denotes "a portion of duration set apart for this purpose," and that God can in a moment let in such light as would equal what, according to our present ideas, it would require eternity to disclose, just as our Saviour could, in a few moments, impress on the woman of Samaria such a sense of His Omniscience, that she went away declaring "He had told her all that she ever did."

Sheep, representing the righteous, because of their innocence and harmlessness, and their being objects of the tenderest care of the shepherd, as well as the imitators of Christ in His benevolence. (Chap. xviii. 12, 13; John x. 11, 14.) *On his right hand*—the side of honor. (1 Kings ii. 19; Ps. xlv. 9, cx. 1, &c.) *But the goats on the left*—the wicked shall be on the side, consequently, of dishonor.

34. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom: prepared for you from the foundation of the world;

*Rom. viii. 17; 1 Peter i. 4, 9, iii. 9; Rev. xxi. 7. *Chap. xx. 23; Mark x. 40; 1 Cor. ii. 9; Heb. xi. 16.

Then shall the King. Magnificent title! here for the first and only time, save in parabolical language, given to Himself by the Lord Jesus, and that on the eve of His deepest humiliation! It is to intimate that in then addressing the heirs of the kingdom *He will put on all His regal majesty.* *Then.* Here Christians walk by faith, not by sight. Now they sow in tears, then they will reap in joy. Now they run, then they obtain the prize. Now they fight the good fight of faith, then they will lay hold on eternal life. *Say unto them on his right hand.* (See on verse 33.) *Come, &c.* This invitation will be given before He condemns the ungodly. Whenever our Lord describes the final judgment, He invariably lays down this order of proceeding. He does so three times over in this chapter. See the parables of the Virgins and the Talents. We may discern here the mercifulness of His nature. Judgment He calls His "strange work." He passes it by therefore till He has finished His accustomed, His more congenial and pleasant work. The word "come" gives new sweetness to all the rest of the invitation. It shows that Jesus when He calls us to heaven will not take His own departure to some other world, but dwell with His people in that splendid world forever. Not one of them will then so long to draw near to Christ, as Christ will long to have him near. He will lead His redeemed to their glory with greater joy than they will follow Him there.

Ye blessed of my Father. In what are they blessed of His Father? It must be something peculiar and distinguishing. What says the glowing thanksgiving of the Apostle? "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ." He has redeemed them from the curse of the law, justified them from all things, called them by His grace, and prepared them for His presence.

Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Every word is significant. *The manner of taking posses-*

sion: Not take as a reward, but *inherit*. A son inherits his father's property, not because the son is virtuous and excellent, but because he is the son. So, while we must be virtuous, good and moral, we inherit heaven, we do not purchase it. We inherit it as sons, whilst contemporaneously we serve God as His servants day and night. Going there as children and heirs, all that is in it is ours, and ours forever. The *reward*: Not a mansion, an estate, a city, a province, but a portion more extended and dignified, and suited to the highest ambition of the soul, a *kingdom*. The saints shall reign in heaven in magnificence, and liberty, and power. The *qualification*: *Prepared for you*. It was not a natural endowment, or an easy acquisition. How many things were to be removed, and how much was to be done and suffered by an agency and passiveness the most illustrious! "I go," said He, "to prepare a place for you;" and His ascension, death, obedience, incarnation, as well as the dispensations of His grace and providence, were all necessary to the full salvation of a soul. Heaven is accommodated to the nature of the saints, furnished for their happiness, and all things are ordered in it with a reference to their abode in it. The *earliness* of the provision: *Before the foundation of the world*. How impossible was it that we should be saved by works of righteousness that we had done! All was purposed, planned, promised, secured, not only without our desert, but without our desire, and ages and ages before our existence. The grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

35. *For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: *I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36. *Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: *I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38. When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39. Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40. And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. *Isa. lviii. 7; Ezek. xlviii. 7; James i. 27. *Heb. xiii. 2; 3 John 5. *James ii. 15, 16. *2 Tim. i. 16. *1 Chron. xxix. 14; Prov. xv. 33; Isa. lxiv. 6. *Prov. xiv. 31, xix. 17; chap. x. 42; Mark ix. 41; Heb. vi. 10.

The persons to whom the invitation (verse 34) will be given, are not described, all that is said of them is, that they are on the King's right hand. Three marks of these persons are given: 1. *They abounded*

in good works. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat, &c. With great tenderness our Lord distinguishes them, not by what He has done for them, but by what they have done, and not what they have done for Him, though He speaks of it as such, but what they have done for one another. He recognizes them, not by their dispositions, but their actions, not merely by what they have believed or felt, or by any undefined state of mind, but by the deeds of charity they have performed for His name's sake in the passed away earth. 2. *They think nothing of their good works*. The surprise they express when they heard of them, proves this: *Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee, &c.* Here is humility and self-renunciation. This is more than a casting away of our own righteousness, it is feeling that we have no righteousness of our own to cast away. The self-righteous would do well to notice that here are men commended by Christ Himself for their good deeds, and yet can think of no deeds of theirs that are worthy of commendation.

3. *They are those whom the Father has blessed*. *Ye blessed of my Father*. Jesus, who, as we have just seen, appears to delight in keeping His own doings out of sight, in order to bring forward those of His people, now puts Himself aside again, and honors His Father. It was God the Father, who sent Him down to be their Saviour—who made Him a propitiation for their sins. He was only doing His Father's work when He gave Himself for them. It was the Father's grace that chose them, His mercy that pardoned them, His power that kept them, His love and pity that from beginning to end redeemed them. Passing over, therefore, all His own sufferings and doings, Jesus says, "Come ye blessed of my Father." (See on verse 34.)

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, &c. We have here an explanation of what was meant at verses 35, 36. So close is the union between Christ and His members, that He looks on whatever is done to them as done to Himself, and rewards accordingly. (Comp. chap. x. 42; see also Prov. xix. 17, and Acts ix. 4.) Jesus identifies Himself with the humblest object of charity, and

assumes that all mercy done by His followers is done to Him. He places an infinite value upon the least of their good or approvable acts.

41. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* 42. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; 43. I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45. Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

⁴¹Ps. vi. 8; chap. vii. 23; Luke xiii. 27. ⁴²Chap. xiii. 40, 42. ⁴³2 Peter 4; Jude 6. ⁴⁴Prov. xiv. 31, xvii. 5; Zech. ii. 8; Acts ix. 5.

On the left hand. (See on verse 33.) *Depart from me.* What a contrast between this sentence and the invitation given to those on the right hand! (Verse 34.) *Ye cursed, i. e.,* accursed ones, doomed to punishment. The omission of the words, *of my Father*, which follow the word *blessed*, in verse 34, is noticeable, as showing that the condemnation or accursed condition of the wicked results from their own evil doings, while the salvation of the righteous is all of grace. *Everlasting fire.* (See on iii. 12, v. 22, x. 28; also verse 46.) These words are just the correlative of everlasting blessedness. Those who argue that the punishment of the lost is not eternal, ought to argue, with logical consistency, that the happiness of the saved is not eternal. How can the lost ever escape, seeing that punishment has no expiatory virtue or purifying power? It is impossible for a plain man to read God's word and come to any other conclusion than this: That if heaven is eternal, hell, also, is eternal. If the fire is "everlasting," there can be no place for annihilation, or for final restitution. (See on iii. 12, xiii. 42; 2 Thes. i. 9, &c.)

Observe, 1. The origin of the dreadful state here described. It was *prepared for the devil and his angels*. Yet, being prepared, the abode could receive any other rebels as well as they, and those who will join his party in our world, and do the works of the devil, as they have shared in the same sin, must share in the same suffering with him and his followers. Thus the sinner renders their place his *own*, as it is said of Judas, "he went to his own place." We see here plainly *why* sinners are destroyed; not because there was no

salvation for them, but because they neglected to *receive* good and *do* good. They are *cursed* because they *refused* to be *blessed*; they are *lost* because they *refused* to be *saved*. 2. The certainty. "Then shall he say." The denouncement is not an idle tale; it is not the offspring of the nursery, or the creation of priestcraft. The consciences of men tell them this, and much more, frequently and seriously, than they are willing to acknowledge.

They also answer him. How different their spirit of exculpation from the humility and sense of unworthiness manifested by the righteous. These wicked persons had never in their whole lives exhibited any love to Christ or His people. Yet they imagine that because they had not treated Him with personal neglect, having had no opportunity of doing so, they are guiltless of the charge here brought against them. *When saw we thee an hungred, &c.* "It is true we did despise the sorrows of Thy brethren, but we saw nothing in them but trembling limbs, decrepitude, meanness and poverty; we saw nothing of that glorious power of Thine, and how could we suppose there was any alliance with Thee, the Lord of glory?" *Least of these* refers here, as in verse 40, to the righteous. *Ye did it not to me.* Christ here imputes an infinite demerit to their character and conduct. All their sins of omission and commission were against the very person of Him—of Him, the incarnation of the infinite mercy of God. By the infinite dignity of His person does He measure the infinite demerit of their sin. Hence eternity alone can measure the length of their penalty.

46. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

⁴⁶Dan. xii. 2; John v. 29; Rom. ii. 7, &c.

This judgment is final, emphatically the last judgment, from which there can be no appeal; as it is called, Heb. vi. 2, "eternal judgment." It is universal in its extent, not only with respect to persons, but to the duration of its effects also; it extends to all the destinies of infinite duration, all powers and possibilities of body and soul. *These, the wicked, shall go away, &c.* (See on v. 22, x. 28, verse 41.)

Everlasting eternal. "Both words," says Mr. Williams, "are alike in the original,

and should have been rendered alike. 1. If the punishment of the wicked is to cease, no logic can prove that the life of the righteous is not also to cease. Common sense teaches that no other than the usual interpretation is possible. 2. As further evidence that the punishment is never to cease, consider that the sin against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, *neither in the world to come* (xii. 32); that the chaff is to be burnt up with *unquenchable* fire (iii. 12); that Sodom and Gomorrah are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of *eternal* fire (Jude 7); that the beast and the false prophet (Rev. xx. 10) are to be tormented day and night *forever*. 3. If the word here rendered *everlasting* does not here mean *continuing without end*, the Greek language, with all its wonderful powers, had no word by which it was possible to express the idea. 4. If the Greek language had none, the English has none; *forever* being as incapable of expressing the idea of endless duration as the Greek word. It is admitted that the Greek word is sometimes applied with latitude to hills, &c., "everlasting

hills," but this no more disproves that the real meaning of the word is endless duration, than the occasional use of the English word *forever* in a limited sense proves that that does not denote endless duration."

Everlasting punishment! This "terror of the Lord" was not intended to be defined and comprehended, but was to be left to those forebodings of imagination in which there can be no danger of excess—"Who knoweth the power of thine anger? according to thy fear so is thy wrath." *Life eternal!* Who can describe its blessedness? It passes the power of man to conceive. It can only be measured by contrast and comparison. An eternal rest after warfare and conflict, the eternal company of saints after buffeting with an evil world, an eternally glorious and painless body after struggles with weakness and infirmity, an eternal sight of Jesus face to face after only hearing and believing; all this is blessedness indeed. And yet the half of it remains untold. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

1. What is said of the two parables in this chapter? 2. Whom do the wise virgins represent? 3. Whom the foolish? 4. What is meant by the oil? 5. What by the lamps? 6. Explain "they all slumbered and slept." 7. What did the foolish virgins do when they found their lamps had gone out? 8. What when the door was shut? 9. Who was this "man traveling into a far country?" 10. What are we to understand by the talents? 11. How did the servants respectively act? 12. How were they treated? 13. What is said of the coming of Christ? 14. What division will He make? 15. What will He say to them on the right hand? 16. What to them on the left hand? 17. What is said of "everlasting punishment?" 18. What of "life eternal?"

CHAPTER XXVI.

1 *The rulers conspire against Christ.* 6 *The woman anointeth his head.* 14 *Judas setteth him.* 17 *Christ eateth the passover: 26 instituteth his holy supper: 36 prayeth in the garden: 47 and being betrayed with a kiss, 57 is carried to Caiaphas, 69 and denied of Peter.*

AND it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, 2. "Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified."

*Mark xiv. 1; Luke xxii. 1; John xiii. 1.

Sayings—those recorded in xxi.-xxv. Ye know, for He had forewarned them. (xx. 17, 19.) *After two days.* Our Lord's predictions concerning His approaching

passion and death increase in clearness as the event approaches. *Feast.* This word, in modern use, does not answer to the idea of the Passover. It was a religious celebration extending through a whole week. It was commemorative of the Hebrews' departure from the land of Egypt, and the preservation of their first-born, on the night when the first-born of Egypt were slain. This festival, associated in the type, was to be associated in the fact, with a greater deliverance of God's people by the

blood of Christ. Accordingly it was so ordered, that precisely at the Passover season, "Christ our Passover should be sacrificed for us." *Betrayed* *Crucified*. The first and the last steps of His final sufferings are here brought together.

3. ¶ When assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, 4. And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. 5. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.

^bPs. ii. 2; John xi. 47; Acts iv. 25, &c.

Chief priests, scribes, elders, &c. These constituted the Sanhedrim, the supreme legislature, especially in ecclesiastical matters, of the Jewish nation. *Caiaphas* was the actual high-priest at the time of our Lord's crucifixion, although Annas is also thus called (Acts iv. 6), because of his having formerly borne the office, and his near relationship to Caiaphas. *Consulted*. (Ps. ii. 2.) This was a secret consultation, and hence they did not assemble, according to the usual custom, at the temple. *Might take*—a forcible seizure. *By subtilty*, more correctly, "without the knowledge of the populace." *Kill him*—they are engrossed with designs of death against Jesus, while He is cherishing a purpose of salvation for the Jews and for all mankind. *Not on the feast day, &c.* They concluded to delay the matter until the people, who were there in great numbers for the Passover, and who might heed some kind of tumult, should be gone after the end of the feast. But when the traitor offered, they broke their purpose of delay. Thus the Divine counsel was fulfilled. (See Mark xii. 37; Luke xix. 48; Acts xviii. 10.)

6. ¶ Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper. 7. There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat.

^cMark xiv. 3; John xi. 1, 2, &c., xii. 3. ^dChap. xxi. 17.

Of *Simon* we know nothing beyond the fact that he had been a leper, and probably one whom Jesus had cleansed, and a near neighbor of Lazarus and his sisters—our Lord's most intimate friends. The *woman* referred to was Mary. (John xii. 3.) *Poured it on his head*. The anointing of the head and feet with oil, was the highest honor. She took advantage of this occasion to signalize her devotion to her Lord, and her reverence for His person. The *Oriental alabaster*, which is so much valued on account of its translucency, and for its

variety of colored streakings, red, yellow, gray, &c., . . . is a fibrous carbonate of lime. This has been long used for various ornamental purposes, such as the fabrication of vases, boxes, etc. *Ointment*—pure *nard*, a celebrated perfume which was a compound of all the most valued perfumes of antiquity. *Very precious*—the "three hundred pence" for which it might have been sold (Mark xiv. 5), were worth about \$45, thrice the price for which Judas sold his Lord.

8. ¶ But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? 9. For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.—John xii. 4.

Saw it. It is more than probable that the attention of the company was first attracted to Mary's act of devotedness and love, by the delicious perfume of the ointment. (John xii. 3.) *They had indignation*. They turned away from the *moral quality* to the *expediency* of the question. Here is an example of objections, based on the utilitarian principle, to outlays on the outward form of public worship, that worthily express the feelings of reverence and love. We are here also warned against those cold judgments on the pious acts of devout hearts, against those frequent criticisms on spontaneous acts of feeling, against that bigotry which has for the conduct of others no other standard than that of one's own sentiments, and against that officiousness that would lay down rules according to which alone good works are to be performed. *To what purpose, &c.* This question seems to have been proposed by Judas, who was treasurer of the party, and who made wrongful appropriations of this common fund to his own private uses. Where love to God is strong, the offering to Him will be so large, as in the eye of the world to look like profusion and extravagance. They who clamor most about the demands of the poor, often least express their sympathy by practical goodness and liberality. Our sacrifices for Christ may be called "waste," waste of time, money, strength. Let none of these things move us. (1 Cor. xv. 58.)

10. When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. 11. For ye have the poor always with you, but me ye have not always. 12. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. 13. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

¹Deut. xv. 11; John xii. 8. ²See chap. xviii. 20 and xxviii. 20; John xiii. 33, xiv. 19, xvi. 5, 23 and xvii. 11.

Our Lord saw at once the piety of the woman's heart, accepted her offering, and defended her against the illiberal cavils which it called forth. *Why trouble ye, &c.* What mildness and gentleness was this toward a wretch who was a vile hypocrite! Jesus makes no discovery of the avarice of Judas; whereas men seldom spare their brethren the shame of their vices, when it is all for their interest to discover them. *A good work.* It was good in itself, and so was acceptable to Christ; it was eminently seasonable, and so more acceptable still; it was "what she could" (Mark xiv. 8), and so most acceptable of all. It was the last token of honor Christ received before His death. *Ye have the poor always with you,* referring to Deut. xv. 11, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good, *but me ye have not always*—a gentle hint of His approaching departure. This was also intended to impress the unexampled significance of the occasion. *In that she hath poured, &c.* Our Lord may have communicated a clearer knowledge of His approaching death to Mary than to His disciples; or, to her, as to a Divine love, may have been imparted the spiritual presentiment of the truth; or, she may have acted from the simple impulse of love, and Jesus gave the act a higher meaning. *This gospel shall be preached.* Jesus thus predicted the everlasting spread and universal triumph of His Gospel. What calmness, composure and certainty of ultimate triumph! *Be told, &c.* This prophecy is receiving a fulfillment every day. The deeds of many a king, and emperor, and general, are completely forgotten. But the grateful act of one humble Christian woman is recorded in one hundred and fifty different languages, and is known all over the globe. The pathway of lasting honor, is to honor Christ. (Ps. cxiii. 3, 6; Eccl. vii. 1.)

14. ¹Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, 15. And said unto them, ²What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. 16. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

³Mark xiv. 10; Luke xxii. 3; John xiii. 2, 30. ⁴Chap. x. 4. ⁵Zech. xi. 12; chap. xxvii. 3.

One of the twelve—which is so high an aggravation of his sin, that it is mentioned with emphasis by all the Evangelists.

Iscariot is the Greek form of Isch Kerieth, a man of Kerieth, which was a small town of Judea, mentioned in Josh. xv. 25. *Went unto the chief priests*—to the house of Caiaphas, whom he knew to be a most bitter enemy of Jesus. *What will ye give me, &c.* This is a true bargainer's question. This reveals the sin which was his ruin. He is ready to betray his Master if he can get the *pay* for it. He has a man, a Divine man to sell, and he hucksters for his price. (1 Ti. vi. 9, 10; 2 Peter ii. 14, 15.) *Deliver him unto you, i. e.,* notify you where He passes the night, so that you may easily apprehend Him. *They covenanted, &c.* They bargained and agreed at once. *For thirty pieces of silver, or shekels, i. e.,* to pay this sum to him when Jesus had been actually delivered. This was the ordinary price of a slave (Ex. xxi. 32), being about fifteen dollars. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah (xi. 12), uttered five hundred years before. If the sum which the traitor received seems trifling, why may we not assume that it was only intended as a preliminary payment, to be followed by a more considerable one if the plan should be carried out successfully? Covetousness is the root of sin, and eager and insatiable thirst after the world is the parent of the most monstrous and unnatural sins. It is an evil that works very deceitfully. It carries us captive before we are aware of our chains. *Sought opportunity, &c.*—kept on the watch for a convenient occasion to put Jesus into their hands in as private a manner as possible. *To betray him.* Being disappointed in the prey he hoped to have from the sale of the precious ointment (verse 9), he sold his Master to help to make up the sum.

17. ¹Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?—Ex. xii. 6; Mark xiv. 12; Luke xxii. 7.

The first day, &c. They called the day on which the Passover, or paschal lamb was killed, the first of the days of unleavened bread, because it was preparatory to that feast, and on that day the Jews began to eat unleavened bread (Ex. xii. 18), though, properly speaking, the feast of unleavened bread did not begin till the day after the Passover, the fifteenth day of the month Nisan. *Where wilt thou, &c.*

This question was doubtless proposed as the day began to draw to a close. They meant at what house. *To eat the passover*, i. e., to celebrate the paschal feast. (See on verse 2.) This great festival our Saviour observed with His disciples the evening before He suffered, and with them ate the paschal lamb, which was a prophetic type of Himself. (Rev. xiii. 8.)

18. And he said, Go into the city, to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand: I will keep the passover at thy house, with my disciples. 19. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.

Into the city—the city of Jerusalem, for a paschal lamb could be eaten at no other place. The word *Master* is correlative to the word *disciple*, and thus it is clearly implied that the householder is a *follower* of Jesus. *My time is at hand*. My time of suffering, previous to which I have promised to eat the paschal lamb at your house. The name of the blessed individual who had the honor to receive Christ into his house on this, the greatest of all occasions, is not mentioned on earth, but we may well suppose that it is known and honored in heaven. *Made ready the passover*. (See on verse 17.) Peter and John prepare a passover for the Son of God and His disciples, but He Himself is preparing another which they know not of, for themselves and for the whole Church. How blessed are we if we have committed ourselves,

and all we possess, into the Saviour's hands! Then we need feel no anxiety about the future, for the Lord will provide. At the very *moment* we want a friend, He will raise one up. There is no request too *small* for Him to regard, nor too great for Him to grant.

20. ¶ Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.
Mark xiv. 17-21; Luke xxii. 14; John xiii. 21.

Between three o'clock and nine was the time for killing the lamb, called, also, "between the evenings," in the Hebrew. (Ex. xii. 6.) *He sat down*—reclined on a couch. All the Apostles were present, Judas not excepted.

21. And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, That one of you shall betray me.

Verily. This preface indicated a statement accompanied by circumstances of peculiar pain, or at least emphasis. It is here evident that Jesus contemplated His death as certain. It was kind in Jesus to start a subject so painful to Himself, that Judas might yet reconsider his purpose, and abandon it. A state of conviction, however painful, is better than a state of delusion, however peaceful.

According to *Newcome's* Harmony, the following order shows the successive stages of the exposure of Judas by Jesus, after which, as is generally supposed, the traitor departed:

HARMONY.	MATT. XXVI.	MARK XIV.	LUKE XXII.	JOHN XIII.
1. Jesus indicates it shall be one of them	21	18	21	21
2. Answering their inquiries, He indicates that it is one near them, dipping into the same dish.	22-24	19-21	22-24	22
3. To John, in a low voice, He declares that the betrayer is the one to whom he shall give the sop, and gives it to Judas.				23-27
4. Satan enters into Judas, and Jesus bids him do quickly. None but John yet knows the exact one.				28-29
5. Judas at last asks, <i>Is it I?</i> and Jesus, before them all, declares that <i>it is he</i> .	25			

22. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord is it I?

It is not wonderful that the disciples should have been amazed and shocked at our Lord's announcement that He was to be exposed to shame, torture and death, and that the treason of a professed friend, and that professed friend one of themselves, was to be the means of bringing on their beloved Master's sufferings which they so deeply deprecated. *Began every one*, &c. See here what distrust of self! Each

disciple did not say, "Lord, is it John? Lord is it Peter?" &c., but, "Is it I?" Yet is not this the very last question we are apt to put? Are we not more ready and willing to detect and discuss the sins of a brother, than to analyze our own hearts, and trace out our own sentiments? But the way to make practical and personal improvement, is to look little at a brother, to look exclusively to ourselves.

23. And he answered, and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.
Ps. xii. 9; Luke xxii. 21; John xiii. 18.

Our Lord here narrows the circle, and makes the exposure still more direct. As the Jews ate the passover a whole family together, it was not convenient for them all to dip their bread in the *same* dish, they therefore had several little dishes or plates, on different parts of the table, and those who were nigh one of these dipped their bread in it. Judas seems to have carried his effrontery and hypocrisy so far as to have taken his place near his Master. This aggravated the crime of the traitor. (See Ps. xli. 9.) *The same shall betray me.* Sad is the condition of any one who is secretly siding with Christ's enemies while he appears to be His friend. With what compassion Jesus regards such a miserable creature! He knows what remorse will one day tear him, what despair will take hold of him.

24. The Son of man goeth, as it is written of him; but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born.

*Ps. 22; Isa. liii.; Dan. ix. 26; Mark ix. 12; Luke xxiv. 25, 26, 46; Acts xvii. 2, 3, and xxvi. 22, 23; 1 Cor. xv. 3.

The Son of man. Christ was a real man, a perfect man, the representative man, the predicted man. *Goeth.* This denotes His marching with unflinching step to the scene of His crucifixion, His return to His Father through death and the resurrection, His going down to the lowest point He could reach in this world—the depths of the grave—and His going up to the highest point He could reach in the world to come—the throne of God. *As it is written.* Christ passed through His humiliation to His subsequent exaltation, in the character, for the purpose, with the dispositions, and in the circumstances in which it was determined that He should. *Woe unto that man, &c.* The Divine foreknowledge and prediction of events does not affect their moral character. Judas was not the less guilty because by his perfidy a Divine purpose was fulfilled. Judas, who least of all understood the Divine purpose of redemption, is an eminent instrument in its accomplishment; a man, *by means* of whom something takes place which was to take place, and as it was to take place. *His purpose,* nevertheless, meant it very differently when he became the betrayer of Jesus, and this his *act*, as such, falls, therefore, as certainly under the Divine *imputa-*

tion as the *event* falls under the arrangements of Divine *providence*. There is no room here for finding an excuse for sin in predestination, based upon prescience. Ten thousand times does this interweaving of Divine foresight and the imputation of guilt, this combination of certainty and freedom, the one not affecting the other, occur in history; indeed, the providential government of the world is the perpetual exhibition of this deep mystery.

It had been good, &c. Let it be observed, that the Lord does not say, *It would have been better if that man had not been born*, for this would imply, better absolutely, and would border on that forbidden question, which invades the region of unexplained mystery, Why, then, did God permit him to be born? The Lord's word, "It had been good for that man," avoids all liability to such application. It had been good for him, *as he will feel and wish it eternally*. This includes a direct refutation of the annihilation of the damned. We are not to look upon this judgment of the Lord upon Judas—with all the majestic calmness of the eternal righteousness of God in which it is spoken, and in his humanity, according to the love of God incarnate in Him—as a cold and rigorous judgment of a condemned enemy, bereft of all sympathy and feeling. Rather is it the most affecting and melting lamentation of love which feels the woe as much as holiness requires or will admit.

25. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

Master. Judas is never said to have called Jesus *Lord*. *Is it I?* What those of single heart say for love, the darkened counterfeit by imitation. *Thou hast said*—a formula of answering affirmatively, first to those who affirm, thence also to those who inquire. It is equivalent to, Thou knowest it—why dost thou ask? (Comp. 1 Kings xx. 40.) "Meanwhile," says *Bishop Hall*, "how hath Judas deceived his companions! Had his former life been stamped with notorious wickedness, the disciples would have found an object on which to rest their just suspicions. Now, his past villainy has been so studiously concealed, that every one of the Apostles is as ready to suspect himself as him who

was really guilty. Well might the God of all knowledge exclaim, 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked!' Judas can hear the denunciations of judgment against himself—he can hear his Master say, 'Wo be to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed—good were it for that man if he had never been born,' and yet he is no more appalled than very innocence. He has made a covenant with death, and with hell an agreement. And, as if the shameless offender would brave all accusation, and stifle all remorse, he too dares ask, 'Master, is it I?' No disci-

ple shall protest more loudly against this crime, than he who fosters it in his own bosom."

We now come to the institution of what is called the *Lord's Supper*. To every part of this most solemn and interesting ceremony the utmost attention should be paid. To aid in securing this result, we present in parallel columns, the text of the three Evangelists who have transmitted the whole account, together with that part of Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians which speaks of the same subject, and which, he assures us, he received by Divine Revelation:

MATT. XXVI.	MARK XIV.	LUKE XXII.	1 COR. XI.
26. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is my body.	22. And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.	19. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.	23. . . the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread.
27. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;	23. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it.	20. Likewise also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you.	24. And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.
28. For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.	24. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many.		25. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.
29. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.	25. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.		

The Passover was *once* celebrated by anticipation, before the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, and the Lord's Supper once before our ransom had been paid. The very fact that our Lord instituted His Supper on the same evening as the paschal supper, shows that it is a *continuance* in a modified form. It simply drops off the bloody elements, so that it is in fact true that our Sacramental ordinance has been continued from the departure of Israel to the present time, and will be continued until the full redemption and departure of the spiritual Israel, under the greater Moses to the full fruition of the heavenly Canaan.

26. "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is my body."
 "Mark xiv. 22: Luke xxii. 19. "1 Cor. xi. 23, 24, 25. "1 Cor. x. 16.

As they were eating, &c. It was during the time of the Passover, and probably toward the end of the feast, that our Lord

instituted the Eucharist. He only is fit to institute a sacrament, who is able to give virtue and blessing to it. *Took bread*. As the natural bread satisfies the wants of the mortal body, and imparts strength to it, so the vicarious sacrifice of Christ is the bread which alone can impart life to, and satisfy the longings of, the immortal soul after salvation. This bread was in the form of cakes. As we are not under the ritual law, and as nothing in this respect is spoken in the New Testament, it does not appear that unfermented bread is essential to the Lord's Supper. *Blessed it*, or, as in Luke xxii. 19, He "gave thanks." He thanked God for all His covenant mercies, for His love, for His faithfulness, for what He had done, for what He had promised to do. *Brake it*. This symbolized the violence by which our Lord's body was put to death. Romanists, instead of breaking one bread among many,

give to each one an entire cake, transubstantiated, as they say, into the body, blood, soul and Divinity of Christ. *Gave it to the disciples*, those reclining around Him. Not only the *breaking*, but also the *distribution* of the bread are necessary parts of the rite. *Take, eat*. The expression, of eating, says an old divine, denotes four things: 1. The near mystical union between Christ and His saints. (John xvii. 23.) 2. The infinite delight the believing soul hath in Christ. 3. Spiritual nourishment. (John vi. 54.) 4. The wisdom of God, who restores us by the same means by which we fell. *This is my body*. This statement, *This is my body*, is made in accordance with the style of the sacred writers. Thus, it is said, "The three branches are three days," (Gen. xl. 12.) Paul, speaking of Sarah and Hagar, says, "These are the two covenants." (Gal. iv. 24.) He also says, "They drank of the spiritual rock which followed them, and the Rock was Christ." (1 Cor. x. 4.) It has been remarked, that, in the Hebrew and the Syriac, a dialect of which was spoken by our Lord, there is no word which expresses to *denote*, *signify*, or *represent*, and that its place is supplied by the verb of existence. When we would say, this thing *signifies* another thing, the Jews said, this thing *is* another thing. For examples of this, beside those already given, see Gen. xli. 26, 27; Dan. vii. 24; Rev. i. 20. There is one passage in particular which exactly resembles the words under consideration, and is a sure guide in the consideration of them, as it expressly refers to that ordinance, in the room of which the Lord's Supper has succeeded. Moses said of the paschal lamb (Ex. xii. 11), "It is the Lord's passover," just as our Saviour said of the bread, "This is my body." The passover was the act of God, who *passed over* the houses of the Israelites, the lamb was only a memorial of it, and was so understood by every Israelite. Now, if we reflect that the Jews were accustomed, in this case, to call the sign by the name of the thing signified, we shall perceive that the disciples were in no danger of mistaking their Master's meaning, when He called the bread His body, that they must instantly have understood

His design, and known that nothing more was intended than to constitute the bread a sign or memorial of His body, especially as He added, "This do in remembrance of me."

This view of the case is strengthened by the circumstance that the disciples expressed no surprise, and stated no objection, as they would have done, if the doctrine of transubstantiation had occurred to them, and as the Jews did on another occasion, when they interpreted literally what our Lord had said about eating His flesh and drinking His blood. (John vi. 52.) Our Lord could not have meant that the bread was His real body, or the wine His real blood, because His body was present at the table, breaking the bread, His blood was still unshed, and He was speaking and acting in person among them. Surely if our Lord's body could sit at the table, and at the same time be eaten by the disciples, it was not a human body like our own. Observe, too, He broke the bread after it was blessed, when Papists think it was transubstantiated. The Apostle Paul, also, *after* the act which, according to the Church of Rome, transubstantiates the bread and wine into the body and blood of the Son of God, calls them still "this bread" and "this cup." (1 Cor. xi. 26.)

27. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it: 28. For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins
*Mark xiv. 23. *See Ex. xxiv. 8; Lev. xvii. 11. *Jer. xxxi. 31. *Chap. xx. 28; Rom. v. 15; Heb. ix. 22.

The cup, in which was contained the wine drank at the passover. (1 Cor. x. 16.) *Gave thanks*. The two words employed with reference to the action of our Lord after He had taken the bread and wine, one signifying to *bless*, the other to *give thanks*, seem to have virtually the same meaning. It is by praise and thanksgiving that we must prepare ourselves to receive the gifts of God, and to offer and present our duties unto Him. He gives us more than He receives, when He gives us the grace to offer as we ought. *Drink ye, &c.* As it was necessary, in order to confirming the covenant of God with His people, that this ordinance should be instituted by our Saviour, so something must be done by them to signify their consent to the cove-

nant, hence the command to "eat" and "drink" the bread and wine. How strange that the Romanists, in face of this passage, and notwithstanding the cup was received in the ancient Church for 1400 years, as is confessed by two popish councils, should prohibit the laity! The same argument which confines the wine to the clergy, when fairly applied, must limit the bread also to them. But in regard to neither of the elements is there any restriction; the whole body of believers are to receive both.

This is my blood, &c., i. e., the new covenant, made in or by my blood, not by the blood of the Old Testament sacrifices. The Greek word for *testament* should be rendered "covenant." The same word is employed here as in Heb. viii. 8. It signifies a covenant or promise on the part of God to His people, sanctioned with the blood of victims, and depending upon certain stipulated conditions. The old covenant made by God through Moses is found in Ex. xxiv. 3-8. The old covenant was ratified by the blood of bulls, goats and calves, the new covenant was ratified and confirmed by the blood of Christ. (Heb. ix. 11-28.) *Which is shed, &c. Is shed.* Present tense. The sacrifice is already virtually accomplished. Our Lord in these words conveys the nature of His death. It was not the example of the faithfulness of a martyr, but a sacrifice, an oblation for the remission of sins. The principal blessing is expressed, which has been purchased by the blood of Christ. Where there is forgiveness of sins there is life and salvation. The doctrine of atonement for sin by the shedding of blood was no new thing. It had been taught to the Jews by the whole appointed course of their sacrifices, which showed that "*without shedding of blood is no remission.*" (Heb. ix. 22.)

²⁹ But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

^aMark xiv. 25; Luke xxii. 18. ^aActs x. 41.

I will not drink, &c. This may have been an intimation that this was the last paschal supper Christ would partake of with His disciples, and though He ate and drank with them after His resurrection, as we know He did, in order that they might know that He was really alive (Acts x. 41), yet

He would not make use of any wine, and we do not find that He was ever present at any feast, at least we are sure He never celebrated another passover with them. Nor does it appear that He partook of the Eucharist with them, or ever administered it, but at this time of its institution. *I will not drink.* Of course He is not to drink His own blood. He is not to derive life and salvation from His own atonement. *Drink it new.* He will never drink it in its *sacrificial*, but in its *eucharistic* sense. Hence He does not say that He will drink the blood, but "this fruit of the vine." It is the *life part*, not the *death part* of the symbol of which He speaks. He will not drink the earthly wine even in its joyous character, but He will, in the glorious kingdom, drink that reality of which this life-symbol is the figure, namely, *life, the vita beata, the blessed life.* Let us take care to raise our hearts from the sacramental communion here on earth to the eternal communion in heaven, to be celebrated there, not under veils or sensible symbols, but openly and without veils.

³⁰ And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

^bMark xiv. 26.

It was usual with the Jews to sing a hymn after their repasts. The hymn that was sung on this occasion may have been one of what the Jews called *Paschal Psalms*, which began with the 113th and ended with the 118th. Or was it any one else of the compositions of David, "the sweet Psalmist of Israel?" We cannot determine. We have every reason to believe the subject of it was suited to the occasion, and never had language been so honored before. Observe, 1. That this hymn was *sung*. Singing, then, is a Christian ordinance. 2. That it was sung immediately after the administration of our Lord's own supper. Hence we learn that singing should accompany this sacred ordinance. "Joy becomes a feast," and this is a feast—a feast of love and friendship—a feast of reconciliation between God and us. 3. That this singing was immediately followed by Christ's entrance into Gethsemane. This garden was for Jesus a place of *suffering*. The prospect of suffering, then, should not prevent our

joy and praise. "Come," would *Luther* say to Melancthon, a wise man but more timorous than himself, when prospects looked dark and distressing at the beginning of the Reformation, "Come let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm; and let earth and hell do their worst."

31. Then saith Jesus unto them, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. 32. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee."
Mark xiv. 27; John xvi. 32. xxi. 6. Zech. xiii. 7. Chap. xxviii. 7, 10, 16; Mark xiv. 23 and xvi. 7.

By *all ye*, is to be understood the eleven, after Judas had left. Christ was betrayed by one, denied by one, forsaken by all His disciples. *Offended*—terrified by the dangers that awaited our Lord, and would desert and virtually renounce Him that very night. *It is written*. The quotation is from the prophecy in Zech. xiii. 7, in which God is said to thus address the sword of His justice: "Awake sword against my shepherd," &c., i. e., the shepherd of my people. Here God's sword is commissioned to do what was really done by the hands of wicked men who were His instruments, yet in such a sense as to be voluntary agents, deserving of Peter's charge, that with *wicked hands* they crucified the Lord Jesus Christ. The sword of God also pierced our Lord in those myterious agonies in the garden and on the cross, which far transcended His physical sufferings. The prophecy is a clear proof, both of the Divine nature of Christ and of the design of His death to satisfy the demands of Divine justice. *Risen again*. To console and support His disciples under this trial, the Saviour assures them that He would rise again from the dead, and after His resurrection He would meet them at a certain place He appointed in Galilee, the region to which most, if if not all, of them present belonged.

33. Peter answered and said unto him, Though all *men* shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. 34. Jesus said unto him, "Verily, I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. 35. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples."
Mark xiv. 30; Luke xxii. 34; John xiii. 38.

The Apostles, as we may easily imagine, were greatly hurt at the admonitory prediction of our Lord (verse 31), and protested that they would never forsake Him. But Peter more particularly, who, from

the ardor of his disposition, was always more forward in his professions, and more indignant at the slightest reflection on his character than any of the rest, immediately cried out with warmth and eagerness, *Though all men*, &c. The meaning of Peter was: nothing—nothing can shake my resolution. This confidence was entirely characteristic of the man. He was ardent, sincere, and really attached to his Master. This declaration was made evidently, 1. From true love to Jesus. 2. From too much reliance on his own strength. 3. From ignorance of himself and of the trial he was soon to pass through. And it most impressively teaches us, 1. That no strength of attachment to Jesus can justify such confident promises of fidelity made without dependence on Him. 2. That all promises to adhere to Him should be made relying on Him for aid. 3. That we little know how feeble we are till we are tried. (2 Kings. viii. 13.) 'Tis an humble fear of falling that must enable us to stand. We should renounce our own light and knowledge, especially as to what regards the disposition of our heart. God, and Christ, who is true God, know better than ourselves the use which we shall make of the freedom of our will, and yet this foreknowledge imposes no manner of necessity upon it.

Before the cock crow, &c., of the Evangelists are easily reconciled. With regard to the time of the event here predicted, our Lord intimated two things: 1. That all the denials should take place ere the period called the cock-crowing had passed—a period more fixed in Judea, where there is comparatively little difference in the length of the days than in our country, so much farther from the equator; and 2, That the cock which Peter should hear, should not crow twice, till he had a third time denied him.

Though I should die, &c. It became plain that nothing could cure Peter's mistaken estimate of his own strength, but experience of his weakness. It was a painful method of cure, but in his case it was an effectual one. Christians who share in Peter's self-confidence, will share in his signal fall and bitter tears. We cannot have too great a horror of denying Christ.

We cannot be too resolute never to deny Him. We cannot be too careful to keep out of the way of temptation to deny Him. But we cannot too earnestly take heed to Cowper's solemn utterance :

"Beware of Peter's word,
Nor confidently say—
I never will deny my Lord,
But grant I never may.

"Man's wisdom is to seek
His strength in God alone;
And e'en an angel would be weak,
Who trusted in his own."

Likewise also said all the disciples. The other disciples—sad, sorrowful and perplexed—appear to have kept a respectful silence, till Peter's repeated declarations that he would never deny his Lord, coupled, as they were, with the insinuation contained in the words, "Though all should be offended," seemed to make it necessary, for the purpose of clearing themselves of coldness, or false-heartedness, or half-heartedness, in their Master's cause, that they should solemnly declare that they were as determined as Peter could be, never to deny their Lord.

36. ¶ Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

Mark xiv. 32-35; Luke xxii. 39; John xviii. 1.

Then. Judas had already retired from the little company, and Jesus had been strengthening and consoling His disciples with instructions suited to their case. He had also foretold the fall of Peter. He then retired with His disciples to *Gethsemane*, a place, or a farm, just east of Jerusalem, and at the foot of the Mount of Olives. *Sit ye here, &c.* This direction seems to have been given as they entered the garden. *While I go, &c.* As Jesus had frequently left His disciples to enjoy prayer and communion with God by Himself, there was nothing unusual in His retirement, even at this late hour for prayer.

37. And he took with him Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.
38. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.—Chap. iv. 21. John xii. 27.

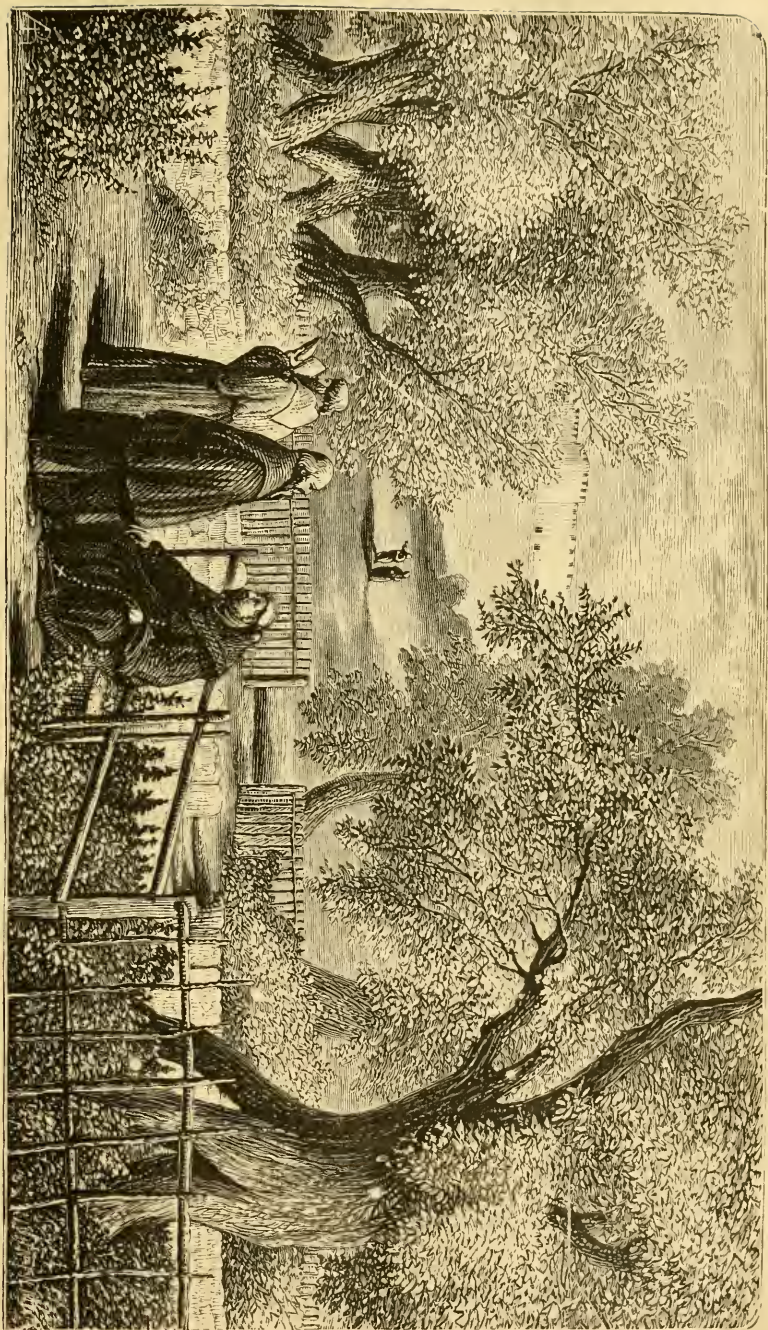
Sons of Zebedee. James and John. (See Matt. x. 2; Mark xiv. 33.) *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* The import of this complaint is not confined to the idea expressed by, "I am grieved to death," or "sorrow threatens my life," although the words certainly assert this in the first place. Even according to this explanation

of them, they convey an idea of the sorrows of the Redeemer's soul, which is the more appalling the less exaggeration we can suppose in the words of Him who was Himself the Truth. The being "sorrowful unto death," however, does not indicate merely the measure, but also the nature and kind of suffering. We read in the sequel that "he was in an agony," or, as other translators have it, "he wrestled with death." It was in the horrors of this state that our Surety felt Himself placed, not merely in the way of beholding them, but also in that of a mysterious entering into them. Whatever men may say, without holding firmly by the idea of a Mediator, the horrors of Gethsemane can never be satisfactorily explained. A mere representation of the death of the sinner, from which Christ came to redeem mankind, could not have laid hold of the Holy One of Israel so overpoweringly. He entered into much closer contact with "the last enemy." He emptied the cup of its terrors. *Tarry ye here, &c.* He means, "Do not leave me, your presence is a comfort." It is not they, but Himself, who is to be pitied. "Tarry ye here." In what terrific vicinity must He have found Himself, that even the sight of these poor, frail disciples, seemed so desirable and beneficial to Him.

39. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.

Mark xiv. 35; Luke xxii. 42; Heb. v. 7. John xii. 27. Chap. xx. 22. John v. 30 and vi. 38; Phil. ii. 8.

So that there were three divisions of the little band: there were the eight disciples, the three chosen ones, and, at a little distance, the suffering Saviour. *Fell on his face.* He first kneeled down (Luke xxii. 41), but as His mental anguish increased, He prostrated Himself on the ground, and "with strong crying and tears, offered up His prayers and supplications." (Heb. v. 7.) The disciples were entreated to "watch" with our Lord, but not to pray with Him or for Him. That work He does alone, and asks no participation. They cannot pray His prayer. He may intercede for them, not they for Him. *O my Father, &c.* It was thus implied that in *itself*, this cup, the extreme inward anguish of spirit which He was suffering, the fear with which He was oppressed,



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the anxiety with which He was tortured, the sorrow with which He was overwhelmed, and the intense agony, mental and physical, which yet awaited Him, was so revolting that only its being the Father's will would induce Him to taste it, but that *in that view of it* He was perfectly prepared to drink it up. There was no struggle between a reluctant and a compliant will, but between two views of one event—an *abstract* and a *relative* view of it, in the one of which it was *revolting*, in the other *welcome*. By signifying how it felt in the *one* view, He shows His beautiful oneness with ourself in nature and feeling; by expressing how He regarded it in the *other* light, He reveals His absolute obediential subjection to His Father.

Note, 1. The suffering which is here recorded, shows the extent of Christ's love. Had He suffered less, we should not have rightly known the greatness of that mercy which He exercised toward mankind. It was much, indeed, that "when he was rich" in the fulness of heavenly joy, He should "become poor," for man's sake, and descend to a world like ours. But that He should place Himself under the fierceness of that Divine wrath, from which His disciples are delivered, is a degree of love which "passes all understanding." One return He requires of us, one return we can attempt to make—our gratitude: gratitude which is to be shown by obedience to His will. (2 Cor. v. 14, 15.) 2. If we would imitate Christ in His prayer, we must (1.) Pray when alone. (2.) Humble ourselves internally, at least, and, if we are able, externally also. (3.) Be fervent. (4.) Lay our condition before God with plainness and simplicity. (5.) Be full of trust and confidence. (6.) Resign ourselves to the will of God, and choose rather to have that done than our own. (7.) Persevere in praying. The sacrifice of our own will is that which God loves the most, and which ought ever to accompany all others.

40. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, what, could ye not watch with me one hour?

Findeth them asleep. Dr. Rush, in his *Diseases of the Mind*, says, "There is another symptom of grief which is not often noticed,

and that is *profound sleep*. I have often witnessed it even in mothers, immediately after the death of a child. Criminals, we are told by Mr. Ackerman, the keeper of Newgate, in London, often sleep soundly the night before their execution. The son of General Custine slept nine hours the night before he was led to the guillotine in Paris."

Watch with me one hour? There seems to be rebuke in this question, but it is, we think, uttered more with the purpose of marking for us the fact that the pressure under which Jesus struggled was, even in its proximity, too much for them.

41. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.
Mark xiii. 33 and xiv. 38; Luke xxii. 40, 46; Eph. vi. 18.

Watch and pray, &c. At first they were directed to watch (verse 38), but now prayer is added as a duty. It is Christian watchfulness which is now enjoined upon them. They were wearied out in body and mind. This rendered them more liable to yield to the temptations, which were soon to beset them. How often shall we find, when we look back upon our past lives, that we received *warnings* before we fell into sin. While we exert our own energies against the evil powers, let us also supplicate Divine aid. Prayers are a sure succor against the most perilous assaults of our enemies.

That ye enter not, &c. This precept of our Lord has a general and comprehensive application. We must beware of the beginning, for it is in fatal connection with the next ensuing, and yet conceals what is behind. And since temptation is sure to be early with its beginnings, so, too, should watching and praying, early in life, early in the day, early in every undertaking. "Enter not," that is, that we be cautious of venturing into anything which we have reason to believe or suspect may, from its influence on our passions, and the mingling of other things, soon become a temptation. *The spirit indeed is willing, &c.,* that is, your souls are, indeed, kindly disposed toward me, but your animal nature is feeble, is exhausted, shrinks from trouble, and seeks repose. Do not trust to your pious resolutions. Your easily ensnared nature needs

much stronger restraint, especially when baneful influences from without are super-added. Hence the need of special prayer at this trying time. The benevolent Saviour found also, in this remark, some apology for His well-disposed, yet feeble disciples. All true Christians find within two contrary principles and a continual strife between the two. (See Rom. vii. 21-23.)

42. He went away again the second time and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

He went away again the second time, &c. Among other things, we may here learn, 1. That it is our duty to resign ourselves to the will of God. 2. That in times of sore conflict we should not continue in one uninterrupted strain of prayer, lest our devotion become feeble; we should rather pause and let the spirit, as it were, take breath, in order that our petition may be urged with all the more earnestness. 3. That it is not wrong, as some strangely suppose, to repeat prayer. Here we have prayer repeated. And wherever there is the deepest feeling, there will be the repetition of the same thing. The simplest words and the intensest thoughts oft repeated are generally the evidence of real feeling and of fervent prayer.

O my Father, if this cup may not pass away, &c. In this second prayer the spirit of perfect submission is prominent. Christ knew that the Father heard Him always (John xi. 42), for this reason He takes the continuance of His anguish as the answer to His last words—as thou wilt!—as the confirmation of the Divine will, that He should drink the cup.

43. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

For their eyes were heavy. Sorrow makes men sleepless sometimes, but when it is very great it may so weary down the whole outer and inner man that one, as it were, sinks into a condition of stupor. (See on verse 40.) The same three who slept at the transfiguration were the three who slept in Gethsemane. Jesus probably administered to them some gentle reproof, for Mark says that “they wist not what to answer Him.” It seems as if the air of that night were dense with fearful supernatural influences, weighing them down with stupor. In those circumstances of

trouble and affliction which oblige us to pray, we must not forget even the wants of those who are entrusted to our care.

44. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. See on verses 39, 42.

Let us not be tired with studying this pattern of perseverance, humility, and simplicity in prayer. Let us comfort ourselves with Christ, when God makes us sensible of our barrenness and poverty in prayer. If He reduces us to one single good thought, to one comfortable word, to one pious motion, it is reasonable that we should be contented therewith, and humbly make use of it.

45. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now and take your rest, behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

Finding His disciples again sunk in sleep, He says, *Sleep on now and take your rest.* But why should He bid them sleep now when the tramp of the soldier is almost in their hearing? Of all the renderings of this verse to meet this query, probably the best is that which by merely changing the punctuation, which is of no authority, makes it a question. Sleep ye on now, and take your rest? Is it a time for slumber when the betrayer is on the approach? There is another meaning admissible. The whole matter is now decided, and you may sleep on, as watching is needless.

The hour is at hand—the time of my calamity, time which demands your utmost vigilance. What an hour was that! The leader of the embattled host anticipates the coming conflict, amidst the stern struggle of opposing armies on the field of blood, with an awe and an agitation deep and overwhelming, which makes him count with harassing anxiety, every passing moment, till that awfully important hour arrives when he shall be either crowned as a victor, or loaded with the disgrace of a defeat. Often has the fate of kingdoms and empires been left to the decision of an hour, and that hour of inconceivable importance to millions. Often have the rights and the liberties, the freedom or the slavery of a nation, depended upon the result of a contest where valor, and patriotism, and magnanimity, struggled hard amidst the

clash of arms and the din of war, and their bosoms have beat with trembling anxiety, as from lip to lip the important announcement passed, "Behold, the hour is at hand." But, although we could put together all the interesting anticipations, all the distressing and conflicting hopes and fears, all the important deeds and destinies that were ever suspended upon any hour in the world's history, they would instantly sink into insignificance, compared with the vast and eternal interests of innumerable myriads which were suspended upon the results of that hour which our Saviour here declares to be at hand.

The Son of man is betrayed, &c. Here there is a striking antithesis between the words "Son of man," an epithet by which our Lord so frequently refers to Himself as the Messiah, and "sinners." Although special reference is had to the chief priests, who dispatched the band, with Judas as guide, to apprehend Him, yet the general term "sinners," as opposed to the "Son of man," who "came to save that which was lost" (xviii. 11, Luke, xix. 10), seems designed to include the human race, all of whom virtually shared in the dreadful sin of crucifying the Lord Jesus Christ.

Rise, let us be going, &c. Not to attempt an escape, but rather let us meet them, giving thereby proof that I know their designs, and might have by flight, or otherwise, provided for my own safety, but I go willingly to meet that death which their malice designs for me, and through death provide for the life of the world. *Behold, he is at hand, &c.*—he of whom I have spoken. *Me, He says, not you.* The betrayal of their Lord by one of their own number was an additional reason for wakefulness—the case of Judas was in fulfillment of their Lord's predictions, (Mark xiv. 20), and was full of warning to them all. (Matt. xxvi. 31). Happy he who, through zeal for God's justice, or through charity toward his neighbor, goes forth to meet the cross, and even death itself! but so as not to do anything contrary either to the command of God, or to other duties which regard our neighbor, or to what prudence and humility require of us as to ourselves.

47. ¶ And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.

¶ Mark xiv. 43; Luke xxii. 47; John xviii. 3; Acts i. 16.

One of the twelve. With this name, as with a branding-iron, Judas is designated even unto the end. The higher the station is from whence we fall, the less hope is there of any recovery. *With swords, &c.* They came in force, probably apprehensive of resistance from the disciples, or of some other attempt of rescue by the way. This *multitude* consisted 1. of "the band" of Roman soldiers (John xviii. 3); 2. "The captains of the temple;" 3. Several of the Jewish dignitaries (Luke xxii. 52); 4. Servants of these dignitaries (John xviii. 18.) Our Lord was thus arrested by the Jewish authority, partly using Roman instrumentality.

48. Now he that betrayed him, gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he, hold him fast.

Judas decided to perpetrate his wicked deed under cover of night. This was sagacious for the sake of his enterprise, for had it been undertaken by day, how many swords, like that of Peter, would have leaped from their scabbards in Christ's defense? The Saviour had servants who would not have hesitated a moment to risk their lives in His behalf. It would have been a great advantage to the traitor, to be able, as he hoped, to accomplish his object while Jesus was asleep. But this contrivance miscarries. In the house through which the way to the garden runs, Judas is informed that the eye of the dreaded was awake—that Jesus was with the disciples in the garden. How will he now secure his prey? Cunning must invent some new plan. He gives the armed troop to understand that he will indicate by the symbol of friendship whom they are to arrest, and urges them not to let him go, whatever may be his protestations or attempts to escape. The Church of Christ is but too often betrayed with a kiss of peace, by false appearances of virtue, by calumnies spread abroad in soft language, and under deceitful pretence of peace, and of the interest of the Church.

49. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master, and kissed him.—2 Sam. xx. 9.

Kissed him. This simple fact revealed

the affectionate terms on which the disciples associated with our Lord. It is an universal custom in Eastern countries, when friend meets friend, to salute one another with a kiss. (Ex. xviii. 7; 1 Sam. xx. 41.) *Forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, &c.* Judas, along with the multitude, had reeled back and fallen to the ground. Along with them he speedily regained his standing posture, and was a listener, as the Lord said, "I have told you that I am he," inviting them to do with Him as they wished. There is a pause, a hesitation, for who will be the first to lay hand upon Him? Judas will relieve any lingering fear. He will show them how safe it is to approach this Jesus. Though the stepping forth of Christ, and the questions and answers which followed, have done away with all need of the preconcerted signal, he will yet go through all that he had engaged to do, or, perhaps, it is almost a mechanical impulse upon which he acts, for he had fixed on the thing that he was to do toward accomplishing the arrest, he had conned his part well beforehand, and braced himself up to go through with it. Hence, when the time for action comes, he stops not to reflect, but lets the momentum of his predetermined purpose carry him along. He salutes Jesus with a *kiss*. If ever a righteous indignation might legitimately be felt, surely it was here. And if that burning sense of wrong had gone no further in its expression than simply the refusal of such a salutation, would not Christ have acted with unimpeachable propriety? But it is far above this level that Jesus will now rise. He will give an example of gentleness, of forbearance, of long-suffering kindness without a parallel.

50. And Jesus said unto him, "Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.—Ps. xli. 9 and iv. 13.

Friend, &c. The dreadful inquisitorial interrogatory rolls like terrific thunder through the traitor's heart. Must the Son of man be betrayed by one of His own disciples, as if He had been a hard Master? Must the badge of friendship be the instrument of treachery? The word "*friend*," or, as it might be more correctly rendered, "companion," recalled to his mind the privileged position with which, as having been received into the circle of the Lord's

most intimate associates, he had been favored. This address reminds him also of the many manifestations of unspeakable kindness with which he had been loaded for three whole years, in the immediate society and faithful superintendence of the most amiable among men. And if one unobdurate place had been left in his heart, how would this remembrance have affected and overpowered him! There are some who behave to Jesus *now* that He is in *heaven*, as Judas did when He was upon *earth*. When it seems to be their interest to appear to love Him, they put on the mask of piety; but when they can gain worldly advantages by betraying His servants, they will do it, and yet all the time continue to observe the forms of religion. They do not consider how much their guilt is increased by their acts of apparent devotion. Satan employs such persons to do his darkest deeds.

Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. As soon as the Divine influence, by which the multitude were withheld, was, in a measure, withdrawn, they used their power to apprehend Him. Our Lord made no resistance. "He was led like a lamb to the slaughter." There was no occasion for violence. Yet from the fact that His apprehension was effected by His most bitter enemies, and one of His disciples was aroused to resistance in His behalf, we may well suppose that He was treated in a very rough and unbecoming manner.

51. And behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest, and smote off his ear.
John xviii. 10.

One of them, &c. We might have conjectured that it was Peter who committed this rash deed, but we are not left to uncertainty on this point. John informs us (xviii. 10) that it was Peter. Perhaps, as the other Evangelists wrote their Gospels during the lifetime of the Apostles, they were afraid of exposing him to danger by revealing his name; whereas John, who, it is supposed, wrote his account after Peter's death, had no inducement to conceal it. *Stretched out his hand, &c.* We can understand what was passing in Peter's heart. The words our Lord had uttered

on the road to Gethsemane, respecting his denying his Master, and his own reply, still fermented within him, and he was anxious to show the latter that, in accordance with his own assertion, he would rather die than forsake Him. Full of these ideas, and, doubtless, with a confused remembrance of what the Lord had said respecting the purchase of swords, he blindly attacks the troop with his blade of steel, and smites Malchus (John xviii. 10), one of the high priest's servants, on the right ear, so that it hangs down on his cheek, only by a slender shred. The servant's name was the Greek and Latin form of *Malch*, signifying *king*. A Christian is not a soldier of the world, to defend himself after a worldly manner, but a soldier of Christ, who is to defend himself like his Master, only by suffering with patience, and rendering good for evil. Here, for the first and only time, a human creature suffers that Jesus may be protected. It is much easier to fight a little for Christ, than to endure hardness for Him.

52. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: "for all they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword."—Gen. ix. 6; Rev. xiii. 10.

Put up again thy sword, &c. The sword has its *place*, but its *place* is not the hands of the Apostles. Our Lord does not command the sword to be flung away. As a recognized instrument of governmental authority, the stern asserter of law and peace, it has its place. (Rom. xiii. 4). John adds (xviii 11), "the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" This expresses *both the feelings* which struggled in the Lord's heart during the agony in the garden—*aversion to the cup viewed in itself*, but, *in the light of the Father's will, perfect preparedness to drink it up*. (See on verses 39, 42.)

For all they that take the sword, &c. Those who take the sword must run all risks of human warfare, but mine is a warfare whose weapons, as they are not carnal, are attended with no such hazards, but carry certain victory. Christianity is not to be enforced by bloodshed, and belief in it extorted by force. Happy would it have been for the Church if this sentence had been more frequently remembered. What has been the effect of attempting to change men's religious opinions by compulsion,

penalties, imprisonment and death? The pages of history supply an answer. No wars have been so bloody as those which have arisen out of the collision of religious opinion. Never should it be forgotten that the weapons of the Christian warfare are not carnal, but spiritual. (2 Cor. x. 4.)

53. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?
*2 Kings vi. 17; Dan. vii. 10.

Thinkest thou that I cannot now—even after things have proceeded so far—pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me, rather, place at my disposal, more than twelve legions of angels, with allusion, possibly, to the one angel who had, in His agony, appeared to Him from heaven strengthening Him (Luke xxii. 43; see on chap. xxvi. 44), and in the precise number alluding to the *twelve* who needed the help, Himself and His eleven disciples. The Roman legion consisted of about 6,000 men, which would make the whole number here referred to 72,000 angels. This, however, is put for an indefinitely great number. *Doddridge* remarks: "How dreadfully irresistible would such an army of angels have been, when one of these celestial spirits was able to destroy 185,000 Assyrians at one stroke!"

54. But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?
*Isa. liii. 7, &c.; verse 24; Luke xxiv. 25, 44, 46.

The Scriptures. (Isa. liii.) It was in accordance with the Scriptures that Jesus should be taken by violent hands and be put to death. Hence it would be unsuitable for Him to seek any special means of rescue from the multitude, as the time had now come for Him to be delivered up. (See on Luke xxiv. 25, 44, 46.)

55. In the same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.

The multitudes. (See on verse 47.) *Thief*, rather a robber. *Staves*, literally, *wood*, i. e., all kinds of sticks and cudgels. This was the *manner* in which they would have sought to take a highwayman of desperate character, and armed to defend his life. They knew His purity, His holiness, His mysterious power of rebuke. Yet they would slay Him as a malefactor. He expresses His indignation at this. It adds not a little to the depth of our Lord's

humiliation that He consented to be *hunted down* thus by wicked men, and to be treated as if He had been the worst of mankind. The best of persons are more sensibly affected by the ill usage which wounds their reputation and honor, than they are by any other kind of injustice. It is in order to secure us from that excess to which this sense of human honor is apt to carry us, that Christ was willing to be treated as a thief—even He who had divested Himself of all, and who was now just going to lay down His life.

I sat daily with you, &c.—for many days before the Passover. *Ye laid no hold on me.* They refrained from violence, not through want of an eager desire to take Jesus, but because it was not permitted them of God. This utterance must have reminded them of many a fruitless plot which they had meditated, and many a word of rebuke which they had heard, although our Lord, who was not minded to eulogize Himself, was entirely silent as to the miracles which He had performed before their eyes, and as to the triumphs which He by word or deed had won over their perplexity and weakness.

56. But all this was done, that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him and fled.
*Lam. iv. 20; verse 54. *See John xviii. 15.

All this was done—rather, “All this has been done.” That these are the words of Christ, and not of Matthew, is clear from comparing Mark xiv. 49. (See on verse 54). By *Scriptures of the prophets* is meant the prophetic writings, which speak of the sufferings and death of the Messiah, such as the Psalms, Isaiah, Daniel, Zechariah, &c.

Then all the disciples, &c. This shows us their weakness and depravity. They fled from fear, but their fear was needless. Jesus had stipulated for their safety. (John xviii. 8). They were under great obligations to Him. He had done much for them in calling them by His grace, and dignifying them with the Apostleship. He was now going to bleed and die for them. And they had professed a great attachment to Him. Yet they all forsook Him, and fled! Yet this culpable cowardice was overruled for good. For their very declension made their witness, after His

resurrection, the more unexceptionably credible, and the weakness of their faith has proved the strengthening of ours.

57. ¶ And they that had laid hold on Jesus, led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.
*Mark xiv. 53; Luke xxii. 54, John xviii. 12, 13, 24.

Led him away, &c. John says, to “Annas,” who was father-in-law of Caiaphas. This was done probably as a mark of respect, he having been high priest, and, perhaps, distinguished for prudence, and capable of advising his son-in-law in a difficult case. Here Jesus was subjected to the informal preliminary examination recorded in John xviii. 19–24.

58. But Peter followed him afar off, unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.

Peter followed him afar off. This was better than forsaking Him and fleeing, as the rest did. Here was the working of some degree of principle. Here was some love to the Saviour, or he would not have followed Him at all. But he was overcome by fear. “The fear of man bringeth a snare.” “Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life.” Yet this was very unbelieving in Peter. He had seen his Lord's miracles, and knew what He could do. It was also very ungrateful. The Saviour had done much for him, and was now going to suffer and die for him. And a friend is born for adversity. Then, instead of keeping at a distance from us, we look for his attendance and sympathy. All this, too, was in violation of Peter's own profession and vows, that he was willing to follow his Lord to prison and to death. Many, alas, in this, imitate Peter. They are afraid to follow the Saviour closely. They fear danger, ridicule or persecution.

Palace. The word, thus rendered, properly signifies an “open court enclosed by buildings—a court-yard exposed to the open air.” In Rev. ii. 2, it is translated “court,” and can there bear no other sense. From verse 69, as well as from what we are told in other Gospels, it is evident that Peter was only in the court without; nor was it at all extraordinary that there should be a fire in such a place. (See Mark xiv. 54; Luke xxii. 55.) It is well known that the nights in Palestine, especially in the early year, are often very

cold, particularly at Jerusalem, from its great elevation above the sea.

Sat with the servants—the servants of the high priest, and the servants of those wicked men who were then sitting in judgment upon Jesus. As these servants unquestionably shared with their masters in the utmost hostility to the Messiah, and in rejoicing that He was now their captive, of course they were not proper companions for Peter. While they were warning themselves in the open court, he, assuming as well as he could the appearance of an indifferent observer, took his place in the midst of them, in order to be able to be eye and ear witness, in the immediate vicinity. From his present conduct, we cannot wonder at the sequel. His subsequent course in denying Jesus, and thrice, and swearing with oaths and curses, was only the continuance and the increase of his following Him afar off, and his sitting down with His enemies. The way of error and sin is always down hill, and once in motion, who can tell where a man will stop?

To see the end. His intention appears to have been to ascertain what accusations were brought against Jesus, what defense He would make, and what was the disposition of the judges. And as all the Apostles clung to the belief that their Master would occupy the throne of David—the earthly throne in Jerusalem—so Peter might suppose that now when He was driven to extremity, He would at once avow Himself the King of the Jews, and by the demonstration of some tremendous act of authority, would scatter his accusers and his judges, and stand forth in the midst of them, as the long-promised and undoubted Deliverer of Israel.

59. Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death: 60. But found none: Yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, 61. And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

Ps. xxvii. 12 and xxv. 11; Mark xiv. 55; Acts vi. 13. Deut. xix. 15. Chap. xxvii. 40; John ii. 19.

All the council. By this we have to understand all those members that were the enemies of Jesus. Those few that were His friends—Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea—had, no doubt, for some time ceased to assemble with them. (See John vii. 50, &c., ix. 22; Luke xxiii. 51.)

Sought false witness, &c. There is everywhere testimony for Him without seeking, but *against* Him they found none. Though the council had predetermined on the death of Jesus, they, out of regard to their character, and the customs of the court, which could not easily be dispensed with, felt the necessity of observing some show of legal procedure. The fundamental rule of evidence was, that no man could be capitally convicted but on the evidence of two independent witnesses for every essential fact. Now, although there were plenty of witnesses willing to testify to anything, no two could be found whose testimony could be made to tally in the degree the law required.

62. And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?—Mark xiv. 60.

Aggravated at this imperturbable silence of Jesus, and seeing that there was no evidence on which a conviction could be founded, unless it might be drawn from Himself, the high priest called his attention to the evidence, and asked why He did not answer to it.

63. But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

Isa. liii. 7; chap. xxvii. 12, 14. Lev. v. 1; 1 Sam. xiv. 24, 26.

Jesus held his peace. How eloquent was this silence—more overwhelming for the children of the father of lies than the severest reproofs would have been. And why make many words on this occasion, since His enemies, though against their will, witnessed so powerfully in His favor that He needed no further justification. The essential meaning of His silence, however, lies still deeper. It is the reflection of a more mysterious silence before another and higher than any human tribunal, and regarded from this point of view, it may be considered as a silence of confession and assent. He is silent, not only as a lamb, but also as the Lamb which taketh away the sin of the world. (See on verse 57.) *I adjure thee, &c.* At our Lord's silence Caiaphas became desperate, and adopted a resource which our rules of evidence would declare most infamous, and which was also wholly adverse to the first principles of Mosiac jurisprudence, and the like of which occurs in no

circumstance of Hebrew history. It was that of putting the prisoner upon his oath to answer questions framed for his own crimination. This was the usual form of adjuration among the Jews, and the answer returned to it had the validity of an oath. *Whether thou be, &c.* Dost thou claim, at the same time that thou pretendest to be the Messiah of the country, to be the Son of God?

64. Jesus saith unto him, *Thou hast said*: nevertheless, I say unto you, ¹Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

¹Dan. vii. 13; chap. xvi. 27 and xxiv. 30; Luke xxi. 27 and xxv. 31; John i. 51; Rom. xiv. 10; 1 Thes. iv. 16; Rev. i. 7. ²Ps. cx. 1; Acts vii. 55.

Thou hast said—a Hebrew form of expression, that intimates a strong affirmation. “Ye say rightly that I am.” (See Mark xiv. 62), where the answer is, “I am.” This shows that Caiaphas used the words “Christ” and “Son of God” in their Scriptural sense. Seldom, in the course of His ministry, did our Lord announce Himself as the Messiah. But now, in the great and trying moment, and when solemnly questioned by the Jewish nation, in the person of their high priest, He returns the solemn reply, “I am.”

The incarnation and resurrection of the Son of God being the fundamental mysteries of the Christian religion, which were to make so many martyrs, it was necessary that Jesus Christ, as the Head of them, should be Himself a martyr for those truths. He knew very well that they would cost Him His life, but He knew likewise that life is a debt which all men owe to the truth, and that to sacrifice it to God is not to lose it.

The open confession thus made teaches us a lesson in our profession of Christ. Did He acknowledge and proclaim His character, thus furnishing us a sure ground of trust in His merits and mediation, and shall we shrink from an open and decided confession of the Master we profess to serve? *The Son of man sitting, &c.* “I know the scorn with which you are ready to meet such an avowal. To your eyes, which are but eyes of flesh, there stands at this bar only a mortal like yourselves, and he at the mercy of the ecclesiastical and civil authorities; nevertheless, a day is coming when ye shall see another sight; those eyes, which now gaze on me with proud

disdain, shall see this very prisoner at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then shall the Judged One be revealed as the Judge, and His judges in this chamber appear at His august tribunal; then shall the *unrighteous judges be impartially judged*, and while they are wishing that they had never been born, He for whom they now watch as their victim shall be greeted with the hallelujahs of heaven, and the welcome of Him that sitteth upon the Throne.”

65. ¹Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, *He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.* 66. *What think ye?* They answered and said, ²He is guilty of death.

²Kings xviii. 37, and xix. 1. ³Lev. xxiv. 16; John xix. 7.

One would have thought that the dignified composure with which our Lord bore the insults He met with, that the solemn silence He maintained when His enemies testified against Him—but, above all, that the explicit testimony He bore to the character He assumed, in circumstances of peril and alarm, would have made these men pause in their wicked career.

But the high priest rent his clothes. It was, indeed, a common expression of grief and indignation to which he had now recourse, but even if his grief and indignation had been real, the dignity of his character should have lifted him above such a vulgar expression of his feelings.

What further need have we of witnesses? &c.; literally, “What further need have we of testimony,” for, *now ye*, as opposed to what has been reported from other sources, *have heard his blasphemy.* “In claiming, as He has claimed, to be the Messiah, in asserting that He was the Son of God, and therefore equal in dignity with the Father, and that He would yet sit at His right hand, He has claimed what belongs to no man, and what is therefore an invasion of the Divine prerogative.”

How different is the joy of these men, upon hearing the truth out of the mouth of Christ, from that of His true disciples! These find therein the words of eternal life, but those convert it into words of death, both for Christ and themselves, by the abuse they make of it. The bold confession of our Master on this occasion is intended to be an example to all His believing people. Like Him, we must not

shrink from speaking out when occasion requires our testimony. The fear of man and the presence of a multitude must not make us hold our peace. (Job xxxi. 34).

67. "Then, did they spit in his face, and buffeted him, and others smote him with the palms of their hands, 68. Saying,) Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who he is that smote thee?"
*Is. l. 6, and liii. 3; chap. xxvii. 30. *Luke xxii. 63; John xix. 3. *Mark xiv. 65; Luke xxii. 64.

The most remarkable night that has been known since the beginning of the world, was the night before the crucifixion of the Lord. There was an ingenuity in the torments inflicted on Jesus, worthy of Satan, their author. *They spit in his face.* So literally were the words of the prophet fulfilled (Isa. i. 6), "I hid not my face from shame and spitting." To this monstrous indignity, which was afterward repeated (Matt. xxvii. 30), it will be observed that both Matthew and Mark assign the foremost rank (see Mark xiv. 66), as, indeed, it is found to occupy a distinct place in our Saviour's own predictions of His approaching humiliation (Mark x. 34; Luke xviii. 32; see Deut. xxv. 9; Num. xii. 14.) *And buffeted him*, literally, *struck him with the fist*, in contradistinction to the act, designated in the next clause, by smiting him with the palms of their hands, which in the original answers very well to our word *slap*, as with the open hand. These represent the variety of ways by which they put Him to pain, and expressed their contempt of Him.

Saying, Prophecy unto us, &c. How it required the power of prophecy in Jesus to tell who smote Him, Matthew does not explain, nor, had we this Gospel alone, should we be able to tell. But we learn from other Evangelists (Mark xiv. 65; Luke xxii. 64), that they "covered his face," then smote Him, and then, in ridicule of His title as prophet, bade Him prophesy which was His smiter. On the other hand, Mark omits to tell what was the prophecy demanded. Thus, by a double tally the two Evangelists supplement each other. The truth of the Gospels find much support from such undesigned coincidences as these.

Let it never surprise us, if we have to endure mockery, and ridicule, and false reports, because we belong to Christ. The disciple is not greater than his Master,

nor the servant than his Lord. If lies and insults were heaped upon our Saviour, we need not wonder if the same weapons are constantly used against His people. It is one of Satan's great devices to blacken the character of godly men, and bring them into contempt. The lives of Luther, Cranmer, Calvin and Wesley supply abundant examples of this. If we are ever called upon to suffer in this way, let us bear it patiently. We drink the same cup that was drunk by our beloved Lord. But there is one great difference. At the worst we only drink a few little drops—He drank the cup to the very dregs.

69. ¶ "Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee."

*Mark xiv. 66; Luke xxii. 55; John xviii. 16, 17, 25.

Sat without, i. e., outside of the apartment in which Jesus was examined. *In the palace.* For the meaning of the word *palace*, see on verse 58. The apartment here intended, was at one end open to the air. Peter still remained in that part of the house. Thus he was *without*, that is, outside, or *beneath*, as it is expressed by Mark (xiv. 66), in respect to the interior rooms of the building to which the Sanhedrim, or the high priest, had retired.

A damsel—one of the maid servants of the high priest. (Mark xiv. 66.) It is customary, even at the present day, in the East, for the doors of the wealthy to be superintended by a portress, who receives a fee for her services from the visitors. *With Jesus, i. e.*, one of His party. The damsel expressed her suspicions to others before she addressed Peter. (Luke xxii. 56.)

The disciples of Christ cannot long be concealed among the multitude of the profligate children of this world. Had Peter, like the rest, inveighed against Christ, and ridiculed His doctrines, he would have avoided all suspicion. But as he remained silent, and, possibly, was sometimes unable to suppress his sighs, being under such a violent perturbation of mind, he was soon suspected to be one of the disciples of Jesus. Thus it is still with the children of God, when they mingle with the wicked. They are not long undistinguished from those about them.

70. But he denied before *them* all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

Denied before them all. He spoke openly and boldly, the more effectually to screen himself from all further suspicion of belonging to the party of Jesus. *I know not, &c.*—a method of denying, as much as to say, I am conscious of not being what thou hast said. (See Luke xxii. 57; John xviii. 17.) Perhaps his fellow-disciple, John, heard this denial. (See on verse 69.) The love of life and the fear of death make men forget the best resolutions, when they have not been formed by God, and are not supported by our humble prayer.

71. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. 72. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

The first cock-crowing, which Mark (xiv. 68) alone mentions, immediately after the first denial, is not even noticed by Peter. He appears, meanwhile, to have succeeded in assuming so indifferent a demeanor, that he at first is not further disturbed. The disquiet of his conscience, however, now impels him toward the porch, the entrance to the small apartment between the outer door and the large hall in the centre of the building. He does not venture to seek to have the door opened, that he may not elicit any unfavorable conjectures, and is therefore obliged to return to his former place. This very quiet again excites suspicion.

Another maid saw him, &c. The word “maid,” as the italics indicate, is supplied by the translators. “Another” is masculine, referring, probably, to some male attendant, to whom the maid had communicated her suspicions, and who charged Peter directly with having belonged to the company of Jesus.

This fellow, &c. This was added by way of reproach. (See on verse 69.)

And again he denied, &c. Such an alarming publicity was now given to the charge of his being in the company of Jesus, that Peter felt the necessity of warding off suspicion, by more vehement protestations of his total ignorance of the man. One sin hardens the heart, and disposes it for the commission of another. Some dark spirit then whispers in our ear that the repetition cannot make us more culpable, since

God is wont not to number but to weigh our sins, or else, that by persisting in the commission of any particular sin, we only manifest that we do not exactly regard it as sin, and have, therefore, in some measure, sinned ignorantly. God permits Peter to fall more than once, that he may have no room to excuse his sin as proceeding from surprise, and that he may seek the cause thereof in his own presumption.

The new man, in those who are regenerate, does not attain to such an unlimited superiority over the old as no longer to require, on all occasions, the continuance of Divine influence for the overcoming and restraining of the latter. Hence, the Lord’s pointed admonition to His disciples to watch and pray lest they fall into temptation.

73. And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them, for thy speech bewrayeth thee.—Luke xxii. 59.

After a while. They that stood by. Matthew here expresses himself generally, while Luke (xxii. 59), observes more particularly that “another” affirmed, *Thy speech bewrayeth thee.* As Peter was discovered, by his peculiar manner of speaking, to have come from that part of Israel called Galilee, and as it was well-known that most of Christ’s disciples were Galileans, it was immediately supposed that he was one of them. We know from Jewish authorities that the rough, provincial accent of the Galileans was very distinguishable from that of the metropolis. The space of one hour was allowed Peter to recover himself, and he made no use of it; in vain God gives men time for repentance, if He does not give them likewise a penitent heart.

74. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. ⁵Mark xiv. 71.

On this occasion Peter not only denied his Lord, but *began to curse and to swear.* He was now irritated beyond endurance. He could no longer resist the evidence that he was known. It had been repeatedly charged on him. His language had betrayed him, and there was a positive witness who had seen him. He felt it necessary, therefore, to be still more decided, and he accordingly added to the sin of denying his Lord, the deep aggravation of profane cursing and swearing,

affirming what he must have known was false, that he knew not the man.

And immediately the cock crew, that is, the second crowing, or not far from three in the morning. Let us not be weary of considering the deplorable depravity of the heart of man when left to himself. These three falls are, as it were, three witnesses of human weakness, and show plainly that none but God knows perfectly how great it is. "An awakener of some kind or other," it has well been said, "is appointed to every one. Wherever we may be, there are voices which call us to repentance. Nature, as well as our whole life, is full of them, only our ears are heavy and will not hear. There is an awakening call in the rolling thunder, which is a herald of infinite majesty; in the lightning, which darts down before thee, carrying with it destruction; in the stars, which look down upon thee from such remote regions, as if they would say, 'How far, O man! art thou cast out from thy home?' " &c.

75. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, 'Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.' Verse 34: Mark xiv. 30; Luke xxii. 61, 62; John xiii. 38.

Peter remembered. Probably our Lord cast His glance as He was led from Annas to Caiaphas. The door of the apartment, where Jesus was before the high priest, may have been opened upon the court, and Peter may have painfully found himself denying and swearing under his Lord's glance. It does not appear that Peter came into the examination-room, or was present with his Lord. By a tender and compassionate look (see Luke xxii. 6,) —a single glance of His eye—the injured Saviour brought to remembrance all Peter's promises, His own predictions, and the great guilt of the disciple. He overwhelmed him with the remembrance of his sin, and pierced his heart through with many sorrows.

The consciousness of deep and awful guilt rushed over Peter's soul, he flew from the palace, went alone in the darkness of the night, and *wept bitterly*.

His sin was certainly very aggravated, and, with all his failings, he was a man of very tender affections and great ingenuousness. But sorrow arising from such a source is not peculiar to our Apostle. All

the people of God should feel a penitent disposition at the review of their sin, which furnishes abundant material for self-accusation and contrition.

In Peter's recovery and rising again by repentance, there is observable, 1. The suddenness of his repentance. Sin committed by surprise, and through the prevalence of a temptation that suddenly assaults us, is much sooner repented of than where the sin is presumptuous and deliberate. 2. The means of his repentance: (1) the crowing of the cock. As the voice of the maid occasioned him to sin, so the voice of the cock occasioned him to reflect. (2) Christ's pitiful but piercing look, and Peter's remembering His words. The efficacy of Christ's word, in order to sound repentance, depends not upon the historical remembrance of it, but upon the close application of it to every man's conscience. To these means the Holy Spirit gave efficacy. 3. Peter's repentance was secret. Solitariness is most agreeable to an afflicted spirit. 4. His repentance was deep and thorough. Sin must always be followed with sorrow. 5. His repentance was abiding. Ecclesiastical history reports that ever after, when Peter heard the crowing of the cock, he fell upon his knees and wept. Others say that he was wont to rise at midnight, and spend the time in prayer and humiliation, between cock-crowing and daylight. 6. Peter was pardoned freely and fully (John xx. 21; Mark xvi. 7; John xxi. 15), and having had much forgiven, he loved much. How must these people have been surprised, when they saw—as no doubt some of them did—this timorous disciple, within the compass of a few weeks, when he was brought with John before the council, not only maintaining the honor of Jesus, but charging the murder of "the Prince of life" on the chief men of the nation, and warning them of their guilt and danger in consequence of it.

The story of Peter teaches us, 1. How small and gradual are the steps by which men may go down into great sins. 2. How very far a believer may backslide. 3. The infinite mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. 4. How bitter sin is to believers, when they have fallen into it and discovered their fall. There are moments in the

believer's experience, in which he learns more of his own wickedness, and of his Lord's goodness, than he has learned in years that have gone before. True penitence is a mixture of sorrow and faith. The penitent says with sorrow, "My sin is ever before me," and with faith, "There is

forgiveness with Thee." Such is the broken heart which God will not despise. Let this be our prayer:

"If near the pit I rashly stray,
Before I wholly fall away,
The keen conviction dart:
Recall me by that pitying look,
That kind, upbraiding glance which broke
Unfaithful Peter's heart."

1. What did Jesus say to His disciples? 2. Who assembled to consult for putting Him to death? 3. What occurred in the house of Simon? 4. What objection to this did the disciples make? 5. What did Christ reply? 6. What did Jesus send His disciples to prepare? 7. Where did He send them? 8. What took place at the observance of the Passover? 9. Explain the institution of the Lord's Supper. 10. What do the terms our Saviour there used, mean? 11. What is said about the singing of a hymn? 12. What did Jesus say to His disciples in the Mount of Olives? 13. What did Peter answer? 14. Whom did Christ take with Him to Gethsemane? 15. State what took place there. 16. Where was Jesus then led by His enemies? 17. Mention the particulars of Peter's denial of Him. 18. Also the particulars of His deep repentance.

CHAPTER XXVII.

1 *Christ is delivered bound to Pilate.* 3. *Judas hangeth himself.* 19 *Pilate, admonished of his wife,* 24 *washeth his hands:* 26 *and looseth Barabbas.* 29 *Christ is crowned with thorns,* 34 *crucified,* 40 *reviled,* 50 *dieth, and is buried:* 66 *his sepulchre is sealed, and watched.*

WHEN the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: 2. And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

*Psa. ii. 2; Mark xv. 1; Luke xxii. 66, xxiii. 1; John xviii. 28. *Gen. xxii. 9; Acts ix. 13, 20; 2 Tim. ii. 9. *Chap. xx. 19; Acts iii. 13.

The morning—of Friday, the day of the crucifixion. The meeting must have taken place after six o'clock in the morning. All the chief priests, &c. The Sanhedrim. Took counsel against Jesus, &c. They had previously adjudged him worthy of death for blasphemy. Their purpose in the present consultation was, doubtless, to devise some way of effecting this without exciting a popular commotion. When they had bound him. Jesus had been before bound, for security, by the officers who apprehended Him. (See John xviii. 12.) He was now bound as a common malefactor.

Delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. The usual abode of the Roman governor was at Cæsarea Palæstina, but he usually came over to Jerusalem at the time of the Passover, with a large body of soldiers, to

keep the multitude in awe at that season. In Jerusalem, he held his abode in the palace built by the elder Herod, but was sometimes in the Tower of Antonia, the strong fortress commanding the temple.

It is not certain to which of these places our Lord was taken, but most probably to the former. Pilate, who was at this time the governor or procurator over Judea, was placed in this office by Tiberius, then emperor of Rome. He was noted for his severity, cruelty and despotic will. Many Jews, at different times, were massacred by his order.

3. ¶ Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4. Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. 5. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

*Chap. xxvi. 14, 15. *Job xx. 5, 51, 29; 2 Cor. vii. 10. *Ex. ix. 27; 1 Sam. xv. 24; Rom. iii. 19. *2 Sam. xvii. 23; Acts i. 18.

Then Judas, &c. Matthew now interrupts his narrative of the fate of the Saviour to give his final account of Judas. When he saw that he was condemned. The actual perception of the result, and the clear consciousness of the enormity of the crime, produced in Judas's mind a revulsion.

Repented himself—was filled with remorse and anguish. As the issue too sadly showed,

it was "the sorrow of the world which worketh death." (2 Cor. vii. 10.) Some commentators have thought that Judas did not imagine or expect that Jesus would be condemned to death, but supposed either that He would convey Himself away from His persecutors, or that He would prove His innocence to the satisfaction of His judges, or at the most, some slight punishment would be inflicted upon Him. One would not wish to load even the worst of men with more guilt than really belongs to them; but from considering the character of Judas, and comparing together all the circumstances of the case, it appears to us more probable that the acquittal or condemnation of Jesus never entered into his contemplation.

And brought again the thirty pieces of silver. The way of spurious penitence, in contradistinction to the genuine repentance of Peter. His first disposition is to attempt some outward rectification of his deed in the sight of men, without previous humiliation before God, and seeking of refuge with Him. *I have sinned*, rather, "I have erred." This confession was extorted by remorse alone. There was not connected with it any humiliation before God, any prayer for pardon or desire to return to Christ. A remarkable illustration of the power of an awakened conscience. A short time before, the promise of this sordid pelf was temptation enough to his covetous heart to outweigh the most overwhelming obligations of duty and love; now, the possession of it so lashes him that he cannot use it—cannot even keep it. *Innocent blood.* What an attestation this to the spotlessness of the character of Jesus! Had there been a single impropriety in all the most confidential intercourse of Jesus with His disciples, Judas would at this time have exposed it.

A single sin found out in Christ would have been a great comfort and a sweet solace to the traitor in the tumult which he felt within. But however diligently he sought, however much he exerted his ingenuity, and recalled to mind all the acts of his Master's life, virtues presented themselves in abundance, a luminous sea of holiness shone upon him from it; but not one dark point could he discover, nor did

the slightest spot meet his scrutinizing eye. How annihilating the result. Judas is compelled to justify his conscience, which accuses him as being the betrayer of the Holy One, and condemns him as the murderer of innocence. He finds nothing to assist him in weakening the sentence, and is forced to endure the most horrible curse that ever made a human soul to tremble.

What is that to us? The brevity of the original—literally, *what to us?*—imparts great point to the contemptuous sneer with which they replied to the heart-rending confession of Judas. *See thou to that*, literally, *thou wilt see*. It is your business. We have nothing to do with it. Judas received no sympathy or word of comfort from the chief priests. How many like him find to their sorrow that it was the *treason*, and not the *traitor*, which was loved.

And he cast down, &c. This was done, probably, near the temple door, where the boxes stood to receive the free-will offerings of the people, for the support and repairs of the sacred edifice. In this scene we perceive something dreadfully retributive, when we call to mind the hypocritical words, "Why was not this ointment sold, and the money given to the poor?" with which the unhappy disciple once presumed to deprecate Mary's laudable work of love. He is now compelled, although with other money, to verify, in an awful manner, what he then uttered in dissimulation. *Hanged himself.* "Judas," says one, "may part with his life, but sin does not, on this account, depart from him. He can leave the world, but his impious act follows him across its boundaries."

6. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for us to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.

It is not lawful. Mark their miserable inconsistency and superstition. How often are religious scruples thus found to dwell with men who have sold themselves to work all manner of iniquity. The treasury had probably furnished the very pieces of silver which it is now deemed so sinful to replace there. *The treasury.* The place where the people brought their free-will offerings or gifts for the service of the temple. Judas, by throwing down the thirty shekels in the temple among the priests, meant them to be a gift, and thus

in some measure expiate his atrocity. *Because it is the price of blood.* The law required (Deut. xxiii. 18) that no money procured in a shameful or base manner, should be devoted to the service of God. However glad the chief priests were to have obtained, in any way, possession of Jesus, yet they would readily grant that Judas had obtained his money very dishonorably.

7. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. 8. Wherefore that field was called, *The field of blood*, unto this day.
^bActs i. 19.

The potter's field. This plat of ground, which probably had been the site of a pottery, lay without the wall of the city, on the south-east corner, about a mile from the temple. The price may seem small, but this may be accounted for by supposing that the soil had been so entirely exhausted by the potters, as to render it unfit for the purposes of husbandry. These wicked men thought that the Gentile strangers who happened to die at Jerusalem, would be fitly provided for, if the price of a criminal's blood were bestowed in the purchase of a field where to bury them. But that criminal was CHRIST—the *Saviour* of the Gentiles; so that, as in the case of Abraham of old, *a burial place* (and that bought with Christ's blood) became the first possession of the Gentile Church, and it was theirs at a time when God gave them none inheritance in the land, not even so much as to set their foot on, though He had promised that He would give them the whole earth for a possession. (Consider Gen. xxiii.; Acts vii. 5.) *Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood.* The name stood as a memento of the direful sale and execution. *Unto this day*—unto the time that Matthew writes. This was, perhaps, about eight years of interval. The field of blood, or, *Aceldama* (Acts i. 19), is on the steep face of the southern hill, opposite Mount Zion, which bounds the valley of Ben Hinnom. Tradition points out the spot. "In a corner where some graves or natural caves, in a semi-dilapidated condition, are found," says *Krafft*, in his *Topography of Jerusalem*, "is the *Aceldama*, or field of blood of tradition. In support of the accuracy of this view, I may state that above it there

is a considerable *stratum* of white clay, where I repeatedly observed people."

9. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; 10. And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.
¹Zech. xi. 12, 13. ²Or, *whom they bought of the children of Israel.*

Never was a complicated prophecy, otherwise hopelessly dark, more marvelously fulfilled. Various conjectures have been formed to account for Matthew's ascribing to Jeremiah a prophecy found in the book of Zechariah. But since with this book he was plainly familiar, having quoted one of its most remarkable prophecies of Christ but a few chapters before (chap. xxi. 4, 5,) the question is one of more critical interest than real importance. Perhaps the true explanation is the following, from *Lightfoot*: "Jeremiah of old had the first place among the prophets, and hereby he comes to be mentioned above all the rest in chap. xvi. 14, because he stood first in the volume of the prophets—as he proves from the learned *David Kimchi*—therefore he is first named. When, therefore, Matthew produceth a text of Zechariah under the name of Jeremy, he only cites the words of the volume of the prophets under his name who stood first in the volume of the prophets. Of which sort is that also of our Saviour (Luke xxiv. 44), 'all things must be fulfilled which are written in the Law, and the Prophets, and the Psalms,' or the Book of *Hagiographa*, in which the Psalms were placed first."

11. And Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the king of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.
^kMark xv. 2; Luke xxiii. 3; Johu xviii. 33. ^lJohu xviii. 37; 1 Tim. vi. 13.

Stood before the governor. The Sanhedrim in a body, followed by their partisans, marched with their prisoner from the palace of Caiaphas to Pilate's abode, which probably was at the tower of Antonia, north of the temple. *Art thou the king?* &c. The fullest and most striking account of the colloquy between our Lord and Pilate is given by John, and full notes belong to the commentary upon that Evangelist. *Thou sayest*—an affirmative answer of the question. It is as *thou sayest.*

12. And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.
^mChap. xxvi. 63; Johu xix. 9.

The silence of Jesus before accusers, who adduced nothing new, was a reaffirmation of what He had said before.

13. Then said Pilate unto him, "Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?"
Chap. xxvi. 62; John xix. 10.

Pilate wished to get some further information, on which he could either convict or acquit Jesus. His curiosity also may have been so awakened by the previous words of our Lord, that he hoped to hear something further upon the theme on which he had touched. (John xviii. 17.) But from this time on through the whole trial, except in one instance related by John (xix. 12), he maintained a silence, broken by no question, pain or indignity. (Comp. Isa. liii. 7.)

14. And he answered him to never a word; inasmuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

The governor wondered at the patience and equanimity of Jesus, while His adversaries were expressing so determined a hostility against Him.

15. "Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. 16. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas."
Mark xv. 6; Luke xxiii. 17; John xviii. 30.

At that feast—It is a general statement, applying to the Passover as held from year to year. Of the custom scarcely anything is known. It is remarkable that such sticklers for the law allowed themselves to be participants in sustaining a custom which to them was a violation of the law of Moses. That law said (Ex. xxi. 12), *He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall surely be put to death*; and Barabbas, a notable, noted, prisoner, was guilty of insurrection, robbery, and murder, the first of which crimes was the very one of which they had accused Jesus, and of the last two of which they did not pretend that he was guilty.

17. Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?
18. For he knew that for envy they had delivered him. Prov. xxvii. 4; Isa. xxvii. 11.

Pilate had by this time discovered how matters stood. In his crooked policy, accordingly, he calculates upon certain success, when he should place the notorious or distinguished criminal side by side with Jesus, for the Jews to choose which of the two should be released. For envy. The Evangelist mentions here, in a historical connection, envy as the cause of all the

hostility manifested against Jesus, as if it were something well understood.

19. ¶ When he was set down on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.
20. Zech. ix. 9; 1 John ii. 1.

When he was set. In the very moment of urgent business. In the bustle of such a time, announcements of a strange character ought not to be neglected. The judgment seat. The dream made a strong impression, but the woman understood its meaning better after the fulfillment began. Perhaps she had the dream when Pilate was already engaged in the business. His wife—called Procla, by tradition. Saying. By this warning a great favor was shown to the governor, in preference to the Jews, who had been sufficiently warned from other sources. The warnings which God sends, by various means, to deter men from wickedness, will eventually leave many of them the more inexcusable. Nothing—she says, in one word. So should Pilate have acted in the matter, without delay. Just. So Pilate calls Him also (verse 24), with a feeble regard to these words of his wife.

20. But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.
21. Mark xv. 11; Luke xxiii. 18; John xviii. 40; Acts viii. 14.

Persuaded the multitude. An unstable crowd they might easily influence. Jesus they might contemptuously speak of as a Galilean, as one who had mocked their hopes, and who, instead of being the victorious king they had anticipated, was now a detected impostor and a forlorn captive.

21. The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.

They said, Barabbas. Barabbas was a notable prisoner. He was distinguished for great crimes. He was, perhaps, a leader of a band who had been guilty of sedition, and had committed murder in an insurrection. As he and his adherents probably lived by plunder, he is called a robber. (John xviii. 40.) As a fierce and brave Jewish patriot, he had become famous among the populace. He was, perhaps, like Robin Hood among the old English, hateful to the government, but popular with the masses. What guilt there was

in the few words of the people, "Release unto us Barabbas!" They preferred a robber and a murderer to Him who came to give life unto the world. It was not one man only who made this wicked choice, but a whole multitude! Shame! The world prefers the vilest of the vile before Christ! And yet rejoice. Christ's death is the only hope for the vilest of men! Christ dies, and thus only is any Barabbas set free. (1 Tim. i. 15; Acts iii. 13.) Jesus and the guilty sinner exchange places. The sinner, condemned and awaiting his dreadful death, is now freely released by this wonderful *substitution* of Christ. Not that the sinner has been found innocent, but that Christ has taken his place, and he is set free. Yet Barabbas will, after all, die eternally if he believe not in Jesus. Christ's interposition will do us no saving good, if we see not in Him our glorious and Divine substitute, on whom our sins were laid, and who freely died for us.

22. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? *They* all say unto him, Let him be crucified. 23. And the governor said, *Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. 24. † When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. 25. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.

*Jer. xxvi. 15. †Deut. xxi. 6. ‡Deut. xix. 10; Josh. ii. 19; 2 Sam. i. 16; 1 Kings ii. 32; Acts v. 28.

When informed by his wife of her dream, Pilate seems to have remonstrated again with the people. Finding he could prevail nothing, he took water and washed his hands before the people, saying, *I am innocent*, &c., as if that action and declaration could avail to free him from his own accountableness. What a picture is he of that most unhappy character, a man wavering between the convictions of conscience and the allurements of temptation, "like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed!" How many, in this way, resort to all manner of contrivances to avoid taking that plain line which conscience points to! They consult others, hoping for an opinion favorable to their secret wishes, and thinking to shift the responsibility on their advisers. They propose some half measure, and try to avoid the necessity of acting at all; like Pilate, they try to wash their hands of a question in which they

see the right, but are afraid of following it, so at length they end in violating conscience. May we learn hence a lesson never to be forgotten, that he who tamper with the faithful warnings of conscience, is like one who, having to cross a pathless waste, should blind the eyes of the only guide able to conduct him over it! Let us obey conscience, and all difficulties by degrees will vanish before us. The first step is often the only difficult step. Disobey conscience, and you little know what a web of entanglements you are weaving for yourself, of what a harvest of shame, perplexity, self-reproach, you are sowing the seeds! Conscience may be called "the candle of the Lord" in your heart. Do not put it out.

His blood be on us, &c. This terrible imprecation of wrath upon themselves and offspring, has had a most signal fulfillment. In less than forty years from this exclamation, the proud city of Jerusalem was laid in ashes by the torches of the Romans, and scarcely so much wood could be procured as sufficed to prepare crosses for the children of Abraham; and the nation has ever since been exposed to incessant injuries from man, and left as an anathema from God, as still from age to age, persisting in the sin of their fathers, and justifying it as the deserved punishment of a deceiver.

Let us learn from these verses the desperate wickedness of human nature. There are few things so little believed and realized. Men fancy that if they saw a perfect person they would love and admire him. They flatter themselves that it is the inconsistency of professing Christians which they dislike, and not their religion. They forget that when a really perfect man was on earth, in the person of the Son of God, He was hated and put to death. That single fact goes far to prove the truth of *Edwards'* remark: "Unconverted men would kill God, if they could get at Him."

26. † Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

*Isa. liii. 5; Mark xv. 15; Luke xxiii. 16, 24, 25.

Pilate at length yielded to their importunity. The clamor of the people and chief priests overruled him to act contrary

to his reason and conscience. He had not courage to stem so strong a stream. Here was judgment *turned away backward*, and justice *standing afar off*, for fear of popular fury. Barabbas would thus be hardened in wickedness, and do the more mischief, yet him Pilate released.

Scourged Jesus. (See Luke xviii. 32; Isa. l. 6.) Among the Romans, scourging was always inflicted previously to crucifixion, as appears from several passages in their writings. The scourge was composed of *flagella*, which were extremely sharp, mostly interwoven with sheep bones, sometimes composed of ox-nerves, and hence termed by *Horace*, "horrible." Such scourging preceded the capital punishment of slaves: *rods* were used with the free. The criminal was fastened to a post or pillar, so that both the breast and back were exposed. "Jesus is chastised," says one, "when men tear the crown of deity from His brow, and when they silently brand Him as a deceiver and blasphemer, but then begin to commend His excellences and virtues, and thus release Him after having maltreated Him. They deny that He is the only way to heaven, although He Himself has said so, and in this way He is chastised. But then, again, they applaud Him as the most eminent of teachers, and thus He is let go. Men chastise Him by insulting His members upon earth, and vilifying those who boast of His meritorious sufferings as the sole ground of their salvation, but again release Him by making an outward obeisance at His communion-table, or by confessing that He was more than Socrates or Solon. Alas! we all carry about with us, by nature, a secret scourge for the Lord Jesus, and never omit to use it in one way or other. But if our conscience asks, after such a chastising, why we are so averse and opposed to this Just One, who never injured us, we are wont, instead of feeling penitent, to hide our own naughtiness behind the traitorous kisses we bestow upon Him, and again release the ill-treated Saviour by dubious marks of respect."

Delivered him to be crucified. Pilate seems to have been present when Jesus was scourged, but now he consigns Him to the

soldiers to lead Him forth to execution. This appears from the next verse.

27. *Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.—*Mark xv. 16; John xix. 2.

What is here called *the common hall*, and the Judgment Hall (John xviii. 28, 33, xix. 9), was the "Prætorium!" (Luke xv. 16), a magnificent edifice in the upper part of the city, which had been formerly Herod's palace. This the Roman procurators (whose ordinary residence was at Cæsarea) occupied when at Jerusalem. In front of this edifice was the *tribunal*. Jesus was *first* led to the interior part of the prætorium, namely, the *aula*, an open court. *Whole band.* There were five cohorts of soldiers, comprising each about 600 men, retained by the governor at Cæsarea, and one at Jerusalem. This one whole Roman cohort is therefore now summoned to perform or witness the degradation of the victim.

28. And they stripped him, and *put on him a scarlet robe.—*Luke xxiii. 11.

They stripped him, that is, of his mantle. *A scarlet robe.* Pilate's soldiers, in derision of the claim which they knew Jesus had made to be king of the Jews, placed on Him, instead of His own mantle, an old military robe, called *sagum*. It was, in all probability, the same robe in which Herod had arrayed him (Luke xxiii. 11) and which, having been removed at this time in order that Jesus might be scourged, was now replaced.

The object of the soldiers was to make their derision notorious, and cover Christ with the most flagrant shame. To this end they took from Him what was His own, and gave to Him what did not belong to Him. And how frequently have we done the same, withholding from Him the homage due to His name, and putting Him to shame by our lives. We now execrate the conduct of those who thus mocked the Son of God, but have we not done worse? They put on Him a scarlet robe: our sins baptized Him in His blood. How naked would our souls have been, had not the body of Christ been thus clothed in the garb of apparent infamy and death! He deserved not the shame which they would fain have put upon Him, and had He not robed Himself in

our nature, that He might bring us shining raiment from heaven, the scarlet robe had never been His.

29. † And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! *Y's. xxxv. 15, 16, lxi. 19; Isa. xlix. 7, liii. 3; Heb. xii. 2, 3.*

Had platted, that is, *woven together*, or having made a wreath. *A crown of thorns*, made doubtless of the thorn bush, or some prickly shrub, so as to be the means of pain as well as contempt. *Upon his head*. In the form of a garland or diadem. The whole head was not covered, but it was placed in a circle round the temples. This crown was in mockery of a regal crown, as the purple robe was in mockery of the imperial purple. The perpetrators of this action designed by it nothing beyond the gratification of their wanton cruelty. But when we call to mind that the second Adam was at this very time submitting Himself to the curse of God—and couple with this the recorded fact that the thorn and the thistle were the fruits of that curse, as it took effect upon the ground, it seems to be a natural inference that the cruel device was overruled by God, to the expression of a truth which He would have us discern and ponder. Being the immediate produce of the curse, the thorn was an appropriate decoration for the Man of the curse. But more than this. The endurance of the thorn was the endurance of sin's penalty, as it visited not only the transgressor, but the place of his residence. Now, the endurance of a penalty by Christ, in His vicarious character, involves and must ultimately issue in the cancelling of the penalty. And accordingly the circumstance of our Lord's having worn and suffered from a crown of thorns, would seem to intimate that a revocation of the sentence which was passed upon the soil (Gen. iii. 18), is in God's design—a revocation which may possibly involve the fulfillment, in a literal sense, of the prediction that "*instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree.*" (Isa. lv. 13. Consider in connection, Gen. iii. 19; Luke xxii. 44.)

And a reed in his right hand—in mockery of the regal *sceptre*. It was thus denoted

that our Lord's kingdom, of which He made mention before Pilate, and which Paul terms "a kingdom which cannot be moved" (Heb. xii. 28), was a weak and unstable kingdom, and that for His subjects to expect any protection from Him was to lean on a broken reed. (Isa. xxxvi. 6.) The reed is a plant with a hollow, jointed stalk, growing in wet grounds. It was sometimes used for light walking canes, and one may have been taken from the bystanders for the present purpose. *And bowed the knee before him, &c.*—doing Him derisive homage, in the form used on approaching the emperors. (See on following verse.)

30. And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.—*Y'sa. l. 6; chap. xxvi. 67.*

Their cruelty, and the intoxication of wickedness, keep them from carrying out to the close the caricature exactly. The Satanic mockery changes into brutal maltreatment. *Spit upon him*. This was a token of the deepest contempt and insult, and a repetition of the indignity received before the high priest. (Chap. xxvi. 67.) *Smote him on the head*. John says (xix. 3) that they smote Him with their hands. The reed, therefore, which would have been too light to inflict much pain except on the head, was caught from His hand to smite the thorny crown into His head, which could not have been done with the naked hand. The best comment on these affecting details is to *cover the face*. Just think, for one moment, on whom it was these indignities were heaped. The Lord who made the heavens and the earth, the King of Glory, who had but to speak, and legions of angels would be His cohorts, and all the armies of the skies would obey His behests instantly. Yet He voluntarily submitted to shame that He might expiate our transgressions. He endured the cross that we might wear a blood-purchased, but a glorious and unfading crown. During all this suffering, we read nothing of an expression that Jesus uttered, of a remonstrance that He made. "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth." "Reviled, He reviled not again." Truly, this was the Son of God.

31. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.—*Y'sa. liii. 7.*

After they had mocked him—after the presentation to the people (John xix. 5) had taken place—Pilate's last attempt to deliver Him. After the final decision *they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him.* "The change of garments which took place in the court of the prætorium," says Dr. F. W. Krummacher, "reminds me of an act in our own life. In the days of our blindness we had also divested the Lord Jesus of the glory of His inherent splendor, while presuming to deny one or other particular concerning Him, so as to leave Him little more than the title of a Jewish rabbi, or the Sage of Nazareth. But how did we afterward alter our course, when the Lord stripped us of the garments of our imaginary righteousness, and in the mirror of His law exhibited to us our real form. How hastily did we then put upon Immanuel His own raiment? We first gave thee back thy Messiah's crown, and then thy sacrificial and priestly robes, and, finally, thy diadem as the King of Glory; for the awakened necessities of our hearts had rectified our vision, and sharpened it for thy beauty. Amid many tears of repentance and delight, we again clothed thee in thy original attire. Thou now standest before us in thy full and complete array, and we will never cease to bow the knee before thee, and to rejoice, and say with Jacob, 'Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise.'"

And led him away to crucify him. Our Lord had himself always prophesied, under different forms of expression, that by His countrymen He would be given up to the heathen, and that by their hands He would be crucified, or "lifted up," that is, lifted up on the cross. This was a Roman and not a Jewish punishment, and therefore showed His prescience that His death, although brought about by the Jews, would be inflicted by the Romans, who introduced this form of capital punishment in all their wide dominions, except for those who had the privilege of Roman citizens, who were beheaded. It was essentially the most ignominious form of death, as hanging is with us.

As they came out, that is, from the city. It was customary for punishments of this nature to be inflicted outside of the city. (Compare Num. xv. 35; 1 Kings xxi. 13.) *A man of Cyrene, &c.* Cyrene was a city of Lybya, in Africa, lying west of Egypt, in which, though consisting mostly of Greeks, a Jewish colony was located. Having much intercourse with Jerusalem, they maintained a regular synagogue at that city. Simon appears at this time to have been a resident, at any rate temporarily, either of Jerusalem or its adjacent country, inasmuch as it is from the country he is coming when he is so sadly met by the procession of our Lord's executioners.

Him they compelled to bear his cross. (See on verse 35.) It was a part of the usual punishment of those who were crucified, that they should bear their own cross to the place of execution. It was accordingly laid first on Jesus, and He went forth, bearing it. As Isaac, the illustrious type of the Redeemer, carried the wood for the burnt offering, so Jesus carried His cross. Weak, however, and exhausted by suffering and watchfulness, He probably sank under the heavy burden.

We do not know certainly that Simon was *unwilling* to bear the cross, as he did either entirely in Christ's room, or sharing part of its weight, for the choice was not given to him. The soldiers *commanded* him to do this public service. It is supposed by some, that he had come from Cyrene to the Passover, for, as they say, there seems no reason why he should have been selected, but that his being a stranger marked him out for a task too degrading to be forced upon a native Jew. There were probably disciples in the crowd who would have been glad to volunteer to perform this office for their revered Master, but were deterred by the fear of bringing suspicion upon themselves. Others think that Simon was known to be a favorer of Jesus, and that he was singled out on account of the special marks of interest and sympathy he manifested. This is rendered probable by the fact that a number of the early converts to Christianity were members of the Cyrenian synagogue (see Acts ii. 10, vi. 9, xi. 19, 20.)

32. ^bAnd as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.

^bNum. xv. 35; 1 Kings xxi. 13; Acts vii. 58; Heb. xiii. 12. ^cMark xv. 21; Luke xxiii. 26.

The only difficulty in this view is that a disciple of Jesus should have been away that morning, and coming in just then. But the notice of Mark (xv. 21), that he was "the father of Alexander and Rufus," persons evidently well known to the early Church, suggests that he and his did afterward become eminent disciples, and that as now, literally, so afterward did he spiritually take up his cross and follow Him, finding thus a glorious reward for his labor.

It is a great favor to be chosen of God to accompany an afflicted soul, and to keep it from sinking under the burden of its cross. Jesus, though now in heaven, can never forget that hour on earth in which He bore His cross, and never does He see a weak and fainting sufferer, upon whom fresh trials are accumulating, without calling to mind that heavy cross, the toilsome journey of Mount Calvary, or without stretching forth a hand to help and succor him.

33. [†]And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, 34. [†]They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. [†]Mark xv. 22; Luke xxiii. 33; John xix. 17. [†]Ps. lxi. 21; see verse 45.

Golgotha. A Hebrew word from the Chaldee *Gol-gotha*, signifying a *skull-place*, Latin *Calvaria*, whence this knoll is called in Luke *Calvary*. (xxiii. 33.) There was a hidden reason why God led men to select this polluted place for the Redeemer's execution. He had commanded the high priest, once a year to sprinkle the blood of a bullock and of a goat upon the mercy-seat in the Holiest of holies, to make atonement for sin. The *bodies* of these beasts were taken to a place outside the camp, or city, and burned. Their blood represented the precious blood of Christ, which pleads for us in the presence of God. *Because His blood atones for sin, therefore His body* was taken to a loathsome spot outside the city of Jerusalem. (See Heb. xiii. 11, 12.)

Vinegar to drink mingled with gall. The custom prevailed among the ancients to give criminals that were led to execution a drink that intoxicated and stupefied. For this purpose wine of an inferior quality, mixed with narcotic herbs, was used. This wine was called sharp-wine, vinegar, also wine. (Mark xv. 23.) It

was mixed, according to Mark, with "myrrh;" according to Matthew with "gall," that is, with bitter and stupefying herbs, such as wormwood, poppy, myrrh and the like. By offering Christ this drink, an ancient prophecy of the Messiah was literally fulfilled. (Ps. lxi. 21.) We may observe here how Matthew often adopts in his narrative the very words of prophecy, where one or more of the other Evangelists give the matter of fact detail.

And when he had tasted, &c. Our Lord rejected the medicated draught, as His purpose was to suffer death in all its bitterness—to drink the dregs of the cup which His heavenly Father had given Him. At a subsequent period, Jesus received a little vinegar, which had been soaked into a sponge, and handed to Him on a reed of hyssop. This was not a stupefying drug, but the sour wine, which was the common drink of the Roman soldiers, and a vessel of which was, probably, laid there for the refreshment of the guard. The canes of the hyssop shrub were frequently between three and four feet long, and of course sufficient in a man's hand to reach the highest elevation of the cross.

35. [†]And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, [†]They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. [†]Mark xv. 24; Luke xxiii. 34. [†]John xix. 24.

They crucified him. The cross itself consisted of two large beams placed across each other in the form of the Roman letter T. These, which were carried separately to the place of execution, were there laid and secured together on the ground, and the victim for whom it was prepared, was stripped of all His dress, except a covering about His loins. (See James 256-7, and on Luke xxiii. 33.) Christ crucified is the *centre of Christian union*. Look at the one Church of God. On what platform does it stand? What is its foundation? Where do all believers look for pardon, for acceptance, for sanctifying grace? Where do they wash, day by day, the constant contractions of guilt? Where do they look for present peace and future hope? Are they not all hanging on Christ? Are they not all clinging to Christ? Do not all put on the one righteousness of Christ? Are they

not all living on Christ as their sanctification? Surely, this were enough to make them regard the minor points on which they differ as of little moment in comparison with the grand essential points on which they are agreed, and to unite them in Christian union and fellowship.

Parted his garments, &c. The clothes of criminals were usually given as a perquisite to the guards, and, as the guard was always composed of four soldiers, such a distribution was agreed upon as gave each an equal share of the garments, or where the poverty of the dying man's wardrobe did not admit of a partition among so many, recourse was had to dice to determine which should be the possessor. It was in the former way that all the dress of Jesus was divided among the soldiers, with the exception of the linen tunic, which, made to reach down to the ankles and to fit closely to the body, was without seam, woven from the top throughout, and being probably the elaborate work and gift of some of those pious women who belonged to the company of Jesus, was thought too valuable to be cut down into pieces, and was therefore assigned by the casting of lots.

That it might be fulfilled, &c. (Ps. xxii. 18.) The language of the psalm was literally applicable to the conduct of the soldiers. Though they had no intention of fulfilling anything which had been written concerning Christ, yet the manner in which they conducted toward Him exactly accorded with what inspired men had written. Jesus gave up to His executioners these garments made by the hands of men, but He left us garments far more precious than these, even His righteousness and grace to cover the nakedness of our hearts.

36. ^aAnd sitting down they watched him there: 37. And ^bset up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

^cVerse 34. ^dMark xv. 26; Luke xxiii. 33; John xix. 19.

On such occasions, the soldiers who amused themselves with the division of the criminal's property, were the guard who were appointed to watch at the foot of the cross during the whole progress of the execution, and to prohibit any of the spectators from approaching to the rescue of the prisoner, or from taking away the body till life was totally extinct.

And over his head his accusation written, &c. It was usual for the Romans to put a "title" or inscription on the transverse beam of the cross, to denote the offense of the crucified person, a custom observed also by the Turks, in their analogous punishment of impalement. In the provinces, these inscriptions were in different languages, so that all might be able to understand for what offense the criminal was executed. The title set upon our Lord's cross (John xix. 20), was in Greek, the language most generally spoken in the eastern parts of the Roman empire, in Latin, the language of the Romans, and in the vernacular "Hebrew," or rather Chaldo-Syriac, the language of Judea. John says (xix. 19), that Pilate wrote the title, and put it upon the cross. Probably Pilate wrote it, or caused it to be written, and directed the soldiers to set it up. The difference in the accounts the Evangelists give us of this title may be easily removed. It is not at all improbable that the inscription *varied* in the languages in which it was written. One Evangelist may have translated it from the Hebrew, another from the Greek, a third from the Latin, and a fourth have translated one of the inscriptions a little differently from another. Besides, the Evangelists all agree in the main point of the inscription, viz.: That He was the King of the Jews.

33. ^aThen were there two thieves crucified with him; one on the right hand, and another on the left.

^bIsa. liii. 12; Mark xv. 27; Luke xxiii. 32, 33; John xix. 18.

Two thieves. Pilate did not reside at Jerusalem. When he came there on the great feasts, or at other times, it was, in part, to hold courts for the trial of criminals. These robbers had probably been condemned at that time, and to show greater contempt for Jesus, He was crucified with men of that abandoned character, and on a cross which should have been occupied by their companion and leader, Barabbas. Their names were joined with that of Jesus in the history of the executions of that day. Thus the prophecy was fulfilled: "He was numbered with the transgressors." (Isa. liii. 12.) Nor was the peculiar position of Jesus on the cross alone the fulfillment of prophecy, it was also a visible manifestation of His re-

deeming work. Sinners, the chief were there, and it was necessary that He should take His place among them. He suffered *among* sinners, and *with* them, and *like* them, and *for* them. This place was given Him that all the ends of the earth might have hope when they look to Him for salvation. The work was finished. The lowest depths of humiliation were reached and passed. Into what depths soever sin had brought men, thither had Immanuel gone in their nature, to bear the doom and set the captive free. Jews and Gentiles, though they knew it not, combined to perfect that which concerned the Saviour's work. The malicious hearts of Jewish priests, and the rude hands of the Roman soldiers, became unconsciously the servants of God, in putting Jesus "in the midst" of sinners, when He gave His life a ransom for them—so, holding forth the very ground of hope, that He might become sin for us who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

In the two thieves crucified with Jesus, we see, 1, our common state illustrated. All we, like sheep, have gone astray, all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Whatever difference may exist among men in the development of sin, yet the essential principle of depravity is inherent in the nature of every man, and may be early there discovered by himself to be lively and active in its motions. 2. The proximity to Christ, into which all sinners have been brought. Some are on His right hand, some are on His left. All are sufficiently nigh to receive from Him, if they will, the sense and knowledge of duty, the hopes and fears, the helps and directions which the Gospel affords. 3. The broad line of demarcation which, notwithstanding this identity in points of circumstance, separates men. (See Luke xxiii. 39-43.) While the one of these thieves afforded all the indications of a broken and contrite heart, the other was self-justified and self-sustained. While the one vindicated the innocence of his Saviour, and acknowledged his own demerit, the other united with the multitude in reproach and blasphemy. While the one mortified the pride of his impenitence,

and yielded his heart and mind to the guidance of the Spirit which God had given him, the other, in resistance to the Spirit, braced his impenitence, hazarding every moment the awful issue of eternal death.

39. ¶ And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads. 40. And saying, 'Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. 'If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. 'Ps. xxii. 7, cix. 25; Mark xv. 29; Luke xxiii. 35. 'Chap. xxvi. 61; John ii. 19. =Chap. xxvi. 63.

The impious throng on their way to and from the city, united with the mob in mocking the dying Saviour. This had been predicted by Simeon at Jesus' presentation in the temple (Luke ii. 34), and by Himself to His disciples (Matt. xx. 19; Mark x. 34; Luke xviii. 32.) *Wagging their heads*, shaking their heads by way of derision. (Ps. xxii. 7, lxix. 20.) *Thou that destroyest the temple*, &c. They revive the popular accusation brought against him (Matt. xxvi. 61) by the citizens of Jerusalem, proud of their temple, though the false witnesses upon the trial had contradicted one another; and in challenging our Lord to perform a miracle in proof of His mission, they show the popular expectation that the Messiah, when He came, would work miracles. (See John ii. 19, vii. 31; Matt. iv. 3, 6.) The form which their language assumes, recalls the language addressed to Christ by the tempter. (See on next verse.)

41. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, 42. He saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. 43. 'He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. 'Ps. xxii. 8.

Chief priests . . . scribes and elders—they are all there, and they all have their mock. Instead of addressing the Son of God Himself, they spoke to each other. It is more trying to hear our enemies speak against us to *others*, than to hear them address the same reproaches to *ourselves*. There is more contempt shown in such a way of attack than in a direct assault.

He saved others, &c. They meant that for reproach; it was literal and exact truth. He did save others. The blind, whose eyes He opened; the deaf, whose ears He unstopped; Lazarus, once dead and now living; the raised son of the widow of Nain; men that felt their sins forgiven; chiefest of sinners, who found themselves reinsta-

ted, clustered around him, and acknowledged "He saved not only others, He saved us." The inference, "Himself He cannot save," in the sense in which they used it, was wrong; in its right sense it was perfectly true. Though it appeared to refute His pretensions, it was truly the evidence of His mission. *If he be the king of Israel, &c.* This was ironical, no doubt, and again a wicked conclusion. What malignity and blindness were manifested by them in this hour of their triumph.

He trusted in God. This was said with blasphemous reference to Psalm xxii. 7, 8, 9, and in the godless conclusion, blasphemy against Christ passes unconsciously over into blasphemy against God, for whose honor they pretend to be jealous.

Let him deliver him now, if he will have him. Carnal man cannot comprehend that God loves those whom He permits to suffer; but faith teaches us that the cross is the gift of His love and the foundation of our hope, the mark of His children and the title of an inheritance in heaven.

For he said, &c. (See chap. xxvi. 64.) They may have heard, also, from Judas, that Jesus professed to His disciples to be the Son of God. (See chap. xvi. 16-20.)

44. "The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth."

"Mark xv. 32; Luke xxiii. 39.

The thieves also. Not both of them, however, as some commentators unnaturally think we must understand these words, as if some sudden change came over the penitent one, which turned him from an unfeeling railer into a trembling petitioner. The plural "thieves" need not denote more than the *quarter* or *class* whence came this last and cruelest taunt: "Not only did scoffs proceed from the *passers by*, the *ecclesiastics*, the *soldiery*, but even from His *fellow-sufferers*," a mode of speaking which no one would think necessarily meant both of them.

45. "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour."

"Amos viii. 9; Mark xv. 33; Luke xxiii. 44.

Mark says (xv. 25), "And it was the *third* hour, and they crucified him." The Jews divided their days into twelve hours, beginning to count at sunrise. John says (xix. 14), it was "about the *sixth* hour. The *third* hour was nine

o'clock, the *sixth* hour was twelve o'clock, the *ninth* hour was three o'clock. Evidently Mark describes the commencement of the treatment in the prætorium, which ended in the crucifixion, and John describes the precise moment when Jesus was nailed to the cross. That this must have been the idea of Mark appears from his statement (verse. 33), "And when the *sixth* hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the *ninth* hour" — a statement which John also makes. The concurrence of both the Evangelists as to the time of the supernatural darkness, justifies the reconciliation, already given, of the apparent differences between them.

Darkness over all the land. Not the globe, (for it was night at the antipodes), nor, perhaps, was even all Palestine covered, but the vicinity and adjacent country. This darkness must have been supernatural and miraculous. It could not be an eclipse of the sun, because that cannot happen but in the new moon, whereas this was the Feast of the Passover, which was always celebrated at the full moon. It is taken notice of by several ancient writers, both heathen and Christian, and *Tertullian* expressly declares, that it was mentioned in the Roman archives. (Apol. c. 21.)

46. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?* that is to say, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" 47. Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, *This man calleth for Elias.* 48. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. 49. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

"Heb. v. 7. "Ps. xxii. 1. "Ps. lxxix. 21; Mark xv. 36; Luke xxiii. 36; John xix. 29.

The ninth hour, that is, three o'clock, or between the evenings, when the passover lamb was slain. *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, &c.* This utterance was not in pure Hebrew, but in the Chaldaic tongue. *My God, my God, &c.* This cry was wrung, as it were, from the sufferer's lips, when the severe agony of His soul had reached its last, its culminating, its closing point. It reveals something of the interior of the burdened heart from which it sprang, but leaves still more unrevealed. After we have listened to it, and pondered it, and turned it over and over again in our thoughts, it seems to grow darker instead

of lighter to our eye, and we become at last convinced that it was the simple, spontaneous, irrepressible outcry of a spirit tried to the last limit of endurance; the expression of what must forever remain to us an indescribable, unfathomable, unimaginable woe.

Some of them that stood there, &c. Those that heard Him, deceived by the similitude of the sound, supposed that he meant the proper name Elijah, or, as it should be pronounced, Eliyah; for Elijah is our Anglicising of the word Elijah. *And straightway one of them ran, &c.* This was done when Jesus said, "I thirst" (John xix. 28. See on verses 33, 34.) It was a common opinion among the Jews, that Elijah was personally to appear just before the Messiah, and to assist Him in entering upon His office. They thought that Jesus, in His helplessness, was calling upon Elijah to deliver Him. Therefore, they said, "Let be, &c." This was not spoken to the soldier who was relieving His thirst with the sponge. As appears by Mark, the soldier himself joined in the expression. It means, "wait and let us see if Elijah will come to his rescue." These words plainly show that there was no jest. There was an actual suspense, awakened by the awful darkness, as to whether the Divine interposition would not take place.

50. † Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

Mark xv. 37; Luke xxiii. 46.

Cried again with a loud voice. This shows that there was something peculiar and uncommon about our Lord's death. A dying man's voice is generally not loud, but feeble. This was the expiring cry of nature. Inasmuch as the agony of the cross extorted from Jesus no cry of pain, and His only complaint had been His apparent desertion of God, may we not attribute, in part at least, this last cry to His anguish of spirit, which was so great as to hasten His death much beyond what was usual? There are seven sentences recorded as spoken by Him while on the cross. *Three* were uttered *before* the darkness overspread the land, and *four* near its conclusion. The first three concerned others, not Himself. (Luke xxiii. 34, 43; John xix. 26, 27.) The last four concerned Himself. (Matt. xxvii. 46; Mark xxvii. 46; John xix. 28, 30.)

Yielded up the ghost. The proper meaning is, resigned His spirit, or expired. It is evident that the Lord Jesus did not die because He was obliged, but because He chose voluntarily and of His own free will, to submit to death. Finding Himself in deepest dependence, He yet exhibited and used His true freedom. (John x. 18.) His death was His own act. He "*offered Himself* without spot to God." None of the Evangelists say that Jesus *died*, although that expression is ever after used of His death, when stated as one great fact. Mark, Luke and John, though in different Greek words, say much the same as Matthew: "He gave up the ghost." In all the five Old Testament passages which our translators have rendered "giving up the ghost," the Septuagint Greek translators have not used the expressions applied in the Gospels to our Lord's death, nor anything like them. (Gen. lxi. 33; Job x. 18, xi. 20, xiv. 10; Jer. xv. 9.) The Greek expression about Sapphira, which is rendered, "yielded up the ghost" (Acts v. 10), is totally different from those used about our Lord's death.

How large a field of meditation does every one of the last words of Jesus afford us! How much is there in them to be adored and imitated! How many other duties are we obliged to perform toward a God who died for us such a death and by such a love!

51. And behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, 52. And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, 53. And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

Ex. xxvi. 31; 2 Chron. iii. 14; Mark xv. 38; Luke xxiii. 45.

Rent in twain, &c. This was doubtless the vail, curiously wrought, which separated the holy from the most holy place, in which the Divine presence was supposed to dwell, thus dividing the temple into two apartments. (Ex. xxvi. 31-33.) This vail or curtain was some sixty feet long, and it was impossible for it to be thus rent, as some have imagined, by the force of the earthquake. This miracle must have been as striking and terrible to the priests who ministered in the temple, as the darkness was to the inhabitants of Palestine. It signified the

opening of the way into the holiest by Christ's death—the passing away of the Jewish dispensation, and the revelation of the Gospel way of salvation to all mankind.

The earth did quake, &c. Earthquakes were common in Palestine, and yet it cannot but be regarded as preternatural, that one should happen in connection with the other wonderful occurrence, just at the time of our Lord's death. The fissures in the solid rocks of Mount Sion, which were rent asunder, are still visible to the eye of the traveler, and are of such a form and size as to attest that they must have been produced in an awful convulsion of nature. It is probable that the hand of time, as well as that of man, has dilapidated the rock in many places, and altered its appearance from what it was when the awestruck eyes of the beholders looked on the chasm 1800 years ago. But the cleft is still conspicuous over the whole extent of the mountain, about a span wide at its upper part, and two deep, after which it closes, though it again opens below.

And the graves were opened, &c. (Isa. xxv. 8; 1 Cor. xv. 55.) In the East it is often the case that tombs are broken up by the violence of earthquakes, but this was now the intended effect. The graves are often excavations in a rock, with a stone placed against them for a door, which the shock throws from its place. *Which slept.* Sleep is sometimes applied to those who have died in the Lord. (1 Cor. xv. 51; 1 Thes. iv. 14; John xi. 11.) *After his resurrection.* These words must be referred to "*arose,*" as well as to "*came out of the graves.*" The graves were opened when the earth quaked and the rocks rent; there was a quickening power felt by the bodies of the saints, but they did not come to full life till Christ was risen. It would appear that these saints were disciples who had died but lately, and were of eminent piety, such as Simeon, Anna and Zachariah, for when they went into the city they were known to be saints by the persons who saw them, which could not well have happened had they not been their contemporaries. Whoever they were, they were not raised to a natural life, terminating again in death, but to eternal life, and must, therefore, be

supposed to have ascended with the Saviour to heaven. Christ was the first fruits from the dead, and there is given us a comfortable assurance, that when He comes in glory, His saints will come with Him; a pledge of which was given at our Lord's resurrection. (1 Thes. iv. 14; Isa. xxvi. 19; John v. 25; 1 Cor. xv. 20; Rev. xx. 4-6.)

54. *Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

*Verse 36; Mark xv. 39; Luke xxiii. 47.

The centurion—a captain of a hundred men. He was doubtless the commander of the quaternion of soldiers who watched Jesus' death. *Saw the earthquake, &c.* Saw the supernatural darkness, the trembling of the earth, the rending of the rocks, and the opening of the tombs, and heard the Saviour's dying words. *They feared greatly.* They regarded what they saw and heard as proof of the Divine indignation against what had been done, and against themselves as the agents of the Jews.

Saying, truly this was the Son of God. Mark and Luke represent the centurion alone as speaking. But the soldiers may have caught up the words of the centurion and repeated them, so that Matthew's account does not conflict with that of the other Evangelists. The utterance of the centurion is less the expression of an exactly defined conception of the understanding, than the outgush of a deeply-moved sensibility, and it is as unreasonable to deny the echo of superstition as the voice of sincere faith in his manly words. Christ had a testimony of His innocency and righteousness given by all sorts of persons.

It is not a little remarkable that the contemplation of the very same scene which so forcibly struck the Roman centurion, has extorted a similar confession from one of the most eloquent of modern skeptics, who has never been accused of too much credulity, and who, though he could bring himself to resist the evidence both of prophecy and of miracles, and was therefore certainly no bigot to Christianity, yet was overwhelmed with the evidence arising from the character, the sufferings, and the death of Jesus. We allude to the celebrated comparison between the

death of Socrates and the death of Jesus, drawn by the masterly pen of *Rousseau*. "Where," says he, "is the man, where is the philosopher, who can act, suffer, and die, without weakness and without ostentation? When Plato describes his imaginary just man, covered with all the opprobrium of guilt, yet at the same time meriting the sublimest rewards of virtue, he paints precisely every feature in the character of Jesus Christ. The resemblance is so striking that all the fathers have observed it, and it is impossible to be deceived in it. What prejudice, what blindness must possess the mind of that man who *dares* to compare the son of Sophroniscus with the Son of Mary! What a distance is there between the one and the other. The death of Socrates philosophising calmly with his friends, is the most gentle that can be wished; that of Jesus expiring in torments, insulted, derided, and reviled by all the people, the most horrible that can be imagined. Socrates, taking the poisoned cup, blesses the man who presents it to him, and who, in the very act of presenting it, melts into tears. Jesus, in the midst of the most agonizing tortures, prays for His enraged persecutors. Yes, if the life and death of Socrates are those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a GOD."

55. And many women were there beholding afar off, ^{which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him:} 56. ^{Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.}—^{Mark xv. 40.} Luke viii. 2, 3.

Beholding afar off. They were, probably, not suffered to come near the cross, because it was surrounded by soldiers. Standing at a distance, as near as they could approach, they witnessed with intense feelings, the convulsions of nature and the crucifixion of Jesus. They stood the ground more firmly than the disciples of Christ. Jesus has often curious and inquisitive spectators of His mysteries, who are only present in body; but love and fidelity were the things which kept these pious women there, as they were those which caused them first to follow Jesus. His grace drew them to Him, His grace detained them. *Which followed Jesus, &c.* (See on Luke viii. 2, 3.) *Mary Magdalene.* (See on Luke viii. 3.) *Mary the mother of James and Joses.* This Mary was

sister to our Lord's mother (John xix. 25), and wife of Cleophas. James is the one called *James the Less* (Mark xv. 40), to distinguish him from James the brother of John. This James and Joses are named, in chap. xiii. 55, as relatives of our Lord. *The mother of Zebedee's children*, that is, Salome. (See Mark xv. 40.) Zebedee's children were James and John. (See Matt. x. 2.) Amid all the voices lifted up against Jesus during His lifetime, there is not one female voice expressing itself in recrimination, insult, or reproach. While men forsook the unparalleled sufferer, women, with a love that did not falter at the worst of times, as it had never wavered in the best, stood near the cross and sympathized, if they could not succor.

57. ^{When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple:} 58. He went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.

^{Mark xv. 42; Luke xxiii. 50; John ix. 38.}

Even. The old word for evening. The latter part of the day preceding the Jewish Sabbath, was devoted, to a greater or less extent, in making preparation in the way of food, fuel, and other necessary things for the wants of the day. It was, therefore, known as the *preparation hour*, an appellation given eventually to the whole of the preceding day. On the present occasion, it was of more than ordinary importance, because the Sabbath fell upon the second day of the feast. *A rich man*, thus fulfilling Is. liii. 9. *Of Arimathea*—this was probably Ramathaim Zophim, lying a few miles east of Jerusalem.

Who also himself was Jesus' disciple. He was a believer in Christ, but a timid one, not willing at first to acknowledge his faith. But God called him to a public profession of attachment, and gave him grace to evince it. So men often delay a profession of attachment to Christ. They cherish secret love, they indulge a hope in the mercy of God, but they conceal it for fear of man. Whereas God requires that the attachment should be made known. Those who love the Saviour have no right to hide their light under a bushel. They are bound to profess Him before men. This is the command of God, and this is the way of peace.

He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Joseph probably signified to the soldiers his intention of taking the body of Jesus, and, therefore, as he went directly to Pilate to obtain permission thus to do, they left the body for him to take down. The application of Joseph to Pilate, would have great weight with him. Unless this special application had been made in behalf of Jesus, His body would have been buried *that night* in the common grave with the malefactors, for it was a law of the Jews that the body of an executed man should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath. At this critical juncture, God called forth this secret disciple, this friend of Jesus, though unknown as such to the world, and gave him confidence to go in personally to the Roman governor, and ask permission to take down and inter the body. If this be the first instance, it is not the last, that a seemingly dead Christ has awakened a sympathy which a living one had failed to evoke. The heroism of faith is usually kindled by desperate circumstances, and is not seldom displayed by those who before were the most timid, and scarce known as disciples at all. Jesus has friends of whom little is known. There are some quiet, retiring souls on earth, who know the Lord, and the Lord knows them, and yet they are little known by the Church. There are diversities of gifts among Christ's people. There are some who glorify Him passively, and some who glorify Him actively. There are some whose vocation it is to build the Church, and fill a public place, and there are some who only come forward, like Joseph, in times of special need. But each and all are led by one Spirit, and each and all glorify God in their several ways.

Then Pilate commanded, &c. It was customary to allow the bodies of deceased criminals to be disposed of by friends, though sometimes wicked rulers exacted money from the friends for the privilege. Joseph's begging the body of Jesus shows that he believed our Lord to be dead. Mark says distinctly (xv. 44), that Pilate only granted the request of Joseph on the express assurance of the centurion that Jesus was dead.

59. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60. And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock : and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.—Isai. liii. 9.

Wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. Not a shroud, nor a garment, but winding sheets (John xix. 40.) This *sindon* (so called in the Greek from *Sind* or *Indus*, where it was first fabricated) was of fine linen or muslin. It was probably an entire piece at first, and was afterward divided for the purpose of rolling. This idea occurs to us from the object to be attained: the pieces of linen must be wrapped around the limbs in such a way as to enclose the spices, which had been powdered to be employed for embalming. The head was wrapped separately in a napkin of this material. (John xx. 7.)

And laid it in his own new tomb. It was a great disgrace among the Jews if any one had not a burying-place of his own, and so it came to be considered an act of charity to bury neglected dead bodies. *Which he had hewn out in the rock.* We must figure to ourselves a large room cut horizontally into the solid rock for a vault. In this room we enter, from the open air, by a large door. On entering you would see small, long cells, or niches, cut into the solid, adamantine sides, as depositories of the corpses; or from this main room you may enter one or several smaller apartments, in whose walls the niches for corpses are cut. A person could enter into the first main vault, and then into either of the smaller apartments.

He rolled a great stone, &c. The entrance to sepulchres used to be closed either by stone doors, or by a flat stone placed up against it. This latter act was done to guard the entrance against beasts, or such persons as might be disposed to profane the sepulchre. This circumstance became an important one in Christ's resurrection, for as the tomb had been hewn from a solid rock, and its mouth closed by a huge stone, under charge of a Roman guard, it was impossible for the body to have been removed without the knowledge of the soldiers. The stone was *rolled*, in the sense of working a large stone along, by lifting it up at one end and letting it fall over, so that each time it is passed onward its own length. How wonderful are even

the minutest features of this matchless history of the death and burial of Jesus! A sacred providence watched over His body. Christianity does not condemn the corporeal frame in which the soul resides.

61. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

The other Mary—the one mentioned in verse 56. (See Mark xv. 47; Luke xxiii. 55.) *Sitting over against the sepulchre.* This touching feature is recorded by Matthew alone. The women, who, with the attachment of loving sisters, and the courage of heroes, sit in the dusk, in a lonesome garden, over against the sepulchre of Jesus, in silence, and sunk in deep meditation, form the brightest contrast to the crowds of women who, in the Orient, often assemble in bright daylight about the graves, lamenting the dead with unbecoming noise. With Christ they had died to the world; motionless they sat there till late in the evening, and thus lost the time to procure spices with the others, before the Sabbath, for the embalment. But as soon as the Sabbath was over—six o'clock, Saturday evening—they made a purchase by themselves, assisted by Salome. Thus the apparent discrepancy between Mark (xvi. 1) and Luke (xxiii. 56), with regard to the time when the spices were bought, disappears. It may be added, that if the Greek word (Mark xvi. 1) is translated "*bought*," as it ought to be, instead of "*had bought*," as in our version there is not even an apparent discrepancy.

62. ¶ Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, 63. Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, ^aAfter three days I will rise again. 64. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.

^aPs. ii. 1, 3; Acts iv. 27, 28. ^bChap. xvi. 21, xvii. 23, xx. 19, xxvi. 61; Mark viii. 31, x. 34; Luke ix. 22, xviii. 33; xxiv. 6, 7.

The next day. This was the *seventh*, the Jewish Sabbath, our *Saturday*, and might be what we should term the evening of the *sixth* or *Friday*, because the Jews always ended their day when the sun set, and then began the next. *The day of the preparation.* The victuals, &c. which were to be used on the Sabbath by the Jews, were always *prepared* the preceding evening before the sun set. It is of this *preparation* that the Evangelist speaks

here, and it is the same which is mentioned by Mark, xv. 42, Luke, xxiii. 54, and John, xix. 31. The chief priests and Pharisees had a guard therefore as soon as they possibly could after the body of Christ was deposited in the sepulchre, and one cannot help admiring the wisdom of Providence in so disposing events, that the extreme anxiety of these men, to prevent collusion, should be the means of adding the testimony of sixty unexceptionable witnesses (the number of the Roman soldiers on guard) to the truth of the resurrection, on which everything depended, and of establishing the reality of it beyond all power of contradiction. *And Pharisees.* They had taken no part in the actual trial (chap. xxvi. 3, 57), yet had not been altogether inactive (John xviii. 3.) Perhaps there were also Pharisees among the scribes and elders. Perhaps the Pharisees, from extreme zeal, did much that was not exactly their office. *Sir*, literally, *Lord*. They cringe to Pilate. They had not so addressed him before.

That deceiver. The chiefs of the people seem never to have called Jesus by His name. One of the charges against Him was, that He deceived the people. By this title they still chose to designate Him, thinking that His death had fully confirmed the truth of the charges against Him. "Even in death and after death to be called a 'deceiver,' as if no other description could express Thee! Thy humiliation, and wounds, and shame, are not yet over or exhausted, but flow on still even beyond the grave, to the healing of our sick souls, and the strengthening of our weak faith, teaching us that not even in death are we to seek for a good name for ourselves, but that when reviled we shall have Thy shame to cover us."

After three days, &c. Jesus had never said this in their hearing, on any recorded occasion. But they say, *we remember.* Had they then obtained the statement from Judas, or from some other of the Twelve? Or did they so well understand "the sign of the prophet Jonas" (Matt. xii. 39, 40) as to venture thus boldly to interpret it? Probably they took this from our Lord's saying concerning "this temple." (John ii. 19). If so, they destroyed, by *their*

own words, the false accusation they brought against Him to put Him to death. *Then they perverted the meaning, now they declare it.* Thus the wise are taken in their own craftiness. Neither the devil nor his servants ever speak truth, but when they expect to accomplish some bad purpose by it. *Be made sure*—with guards, seals, &c. *Until the third day.* This is a commentary on the expression, “within three days,” showing that the third day is meant, and not three full days of 24 hours each. *Lest, i. e., lest perhaps.*

Steal him away, i. e., remove His body by stealth from the tomb. Say unto the people, &c. The Pharisees did not apprehend that *they* would believe it. They will take care (as they persuade themselves) for the people. *So the last error*—namely, the triumph of the disciples of Christ in creating a faith in the resurrection. *The first*—the temporary faith produced by Christ’s miracles and preaching in the popular mind that He was the Messiah. The Jews talk as if a previous error or mismanagement had allowed Jesus a temporary triumph while living; they fear that a worse oversight may give a permanent triumph to His cause after His death. How much worse has proved that *error*, and how much greater the triumph, than they could have imagined!

65. Pilate said unto them, ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can.

Ye have a watch. This alludes to the guard of Roman soldiers which was at this time allowed the Jewish rulers, for the purpose of quelling tumults and preserving the public peace. We learn from *Josephus* that the tower of Antonia, which overlooked the temple, was always garrisoned by a legion of Roman soldiers, and that, on the side where it joined to the porticos of the temple, there were *stairs* reaching to each portico, by which a company, band or detachment, descended and kept guard in these porticos, to prevent any tumults at the great festivals. It was a detachment of these soldiers that Pilate gave the Jews leave to employ to watch the tomb. *Make it as sure as ye can*—not “if that is possible,” but, “as ye understand that,” according to your meaning of securing. Though there may be no irony in this

speech, it evidently insinuated that if the event should be contrary to their wish, it would not be for want of sufficient human appliances to prevent it. Pilate, though he had placed the guard at their disposal, yet left the employment of the men, the guardianship or guarantee for Christ’s continuance in death, which they wished him also to undertake, to themselves. In this instance, again, he kept not his conscience pure, and preserved not his civil power unimpaired—giving a guard because of a religious question.

66. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch. — Dan. vi. 17.

Sealing the stone. Probably a rope was passed over it in such a way, that the two ends meeting upon it were fastened, and some public seal—either Pilate’s signet, or the public seal of the Sanhedrim—was attached to them. No one, then, could pass into the sepulchre without resisting the public authority. *Setting a watch*, literally, *with a watch, i. e.,* they sealed the stone, at the same time that they set the guard. The guard was to prevent the duplicity of the disciples, the seal was to secure against the collusion of the guard. (See Dan. vi. 7.) “What more could man do? But while they are trying to prevent the resurrection of the Prince of Life, God makes use of their precautions for His own ends. Their stone-covered, seal-secured sepulchre shall preserve the sleeping body of the Son of God free from all indignities, in undisturbed, sublime repose; while their watch shall be His guard of honor until the angels shall come to take their place.

“How contemptible,” says *Lange*, “are the means by which the modern Pharisees and scribes attempt, like those of old, to shut up the life and spirit of Christ in the grave! Antiquated seals of office and guards of soldiers obtained by begging! Mental blindness goes hand in hand with the malice of the heart.” *Lisco* remarks: “What a great resemblance do the enemies of Christ in our days bear to those Jewish priests! 1. They pretend to be fully satisfied of the worthlessness and insignificance of the Spirit indwelling in the Church. 2. Nevertheless, they are in constant dread that it will break out again, even when

they look upon it as suppressed. 3. All their measures to prevent the spread of the Gospel prove as ineffectual as did the sealing of the grave of Jesus. What did the murderers of Jesus gain by stationing a heathen guard and sealing the tomb of

Jesus? They only became the instruments in the hands of Divine Providence, to place the resurrection of Christ beyond all reasonable doubt. Thus must all the assaults on the cause of Christ at last serve the furtherance of the Gospel."

1. To what governor was Jesus led away? 2. What is said of Judas? 3. What did the chief priests do with the thirty pieces of silver he brought to them? 4. What did the governor ask Jesus? 5. Did Christ answer his question? 6. What did Pilate do in reference to Barabbas and Jesus? 7. What did his wife say to him? 8. What dreadful imprecation did all the people utter? 9. What did the soldiers do to Jesus? 10. Who bore His cross? 11. What was given Christ to drink? 12. What was done with His garments? 13. What was said to Jesus as He hung on the cross? 14. When He "cried with a loud voice," what did He say? 15. What occurred when Christ yielded up the Ghost? 16. Who asked His body for burial? 17. Why was it requested "that the sepulchre be made sure?"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

¹ Christ's resurrection is declared by an angel to the women. ⁹ He himself appeareth unto them. ¹¹ The high priests give the soldiers money to say that he was stolen out of his sepulchre. ¹⁶ Christ appeareth to his disciples. ¹⁹ and sendeth them to baptize and teach all nations.

IN the end of the Sabbath as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene^a and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

^aMark xvi. 1; Luke xxiv. 1; John xx. 1. ^bChap. xxvii. 56.

In the end of the Sabbath denotes at the close of Saturday, the Sabbath of the Jews. The first day of the week was our Sunday. Hence, this day of the week was called the Lord's day. (Rev. i. 9.) It is therefore recognized by inspiration as the sacred day in the Christian week. The day of the Saviour's sepulchral repose was the last of Jewish Sabbaths. The first day of the week has, from that time to this, succeeded to the honors of the fourth commandment.

As it began to dawn, &c. Mark says: "Very early. at the rising of the sun." (xvi. 2.) Luke: "Very early in the morning." (xxiv. 1.) John: "When it was yet dark." (xx. 1.) The visit of the women to the sepulchre may have covered hours, extending from the first start from home until they left the sepulchre. Suppose they started at four o'clock, and after the company gathered proceeded on their way. By some unknown means (perhaps the delay in the opening of the

city gates), they may not have arrived until "the rising of the sun"—a phrase which, as can be easily shown, may indicate not merely the time when the sun has visibly risen above the horizon, but the time when he is sensibly about rising to it.

Came Mary Magdalene, &c. (See on xxvii. 61.) From Mark (xvi. 1) we learn that Salome, the mother of Zebedee's sons, was with them. *To see the sepulchre.* It appears from the other Evangelists that in company with other women, they came to anoint the body with the spices and ointments which they had prepared previous to the Sabbath (Luke xxiii. 56), and also, in part, after the Sabbath was ended. (Mark xvi. 1. See on chap. xxvii. 61.) Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, had, indeed, embalmed the body of Jesus, but as this must necessarily have been hastily and imperfectly executed, these women came with the intention of disposing the body in a more orderly manner for its final rest.

We here perceive what little hope there was of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, for we see that not one of His disciples even expected it. If they had had any expectation of the event, they would have seized upon the smallest indication of it, and have founded their conclusion

upon very slight grounds, but the difficulty was to persuade them that Christ had risen, and they needed nothing short of their own sense of His actual, personal presence, to convince them that He whom they saw crucified and laid in a sepulchre hewn from the rock, had now risen from the dead, had become the first fruits of them that slept. The early visit of these holy women to the sepulchre—which they evidently never dreamed would be found empty, and Christ gone—is a strong proof of their love and affection. It has been said of woman:

"Not she with trait'rous kiss her Master stung,
Not she denied Him with unfaithful tongue:
She, when Apostles fled, could danger brave,
Last at His cross, and earliest at His grave."

A woman was the first to eat the forbidden fruit. It was merciful in God to permit her to be the *first* to visit the sacred tomb.

2. And behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.—See Mark xvi. 3; Luke xxiv. 4; John xx. 12.

As the women went, it occurred to them that they should find an insuperable difficulty in the removal of the great stone that closed the sepulchre. (Mark xvi. 3.) How glad would they have been of the help of all the eleven Apostles. But greater help than theirs was afforded. How often there seems to be a great stone in the way of pious undertakings. How apt are Christians to be discouraged, and to say, "Who shall roll it away?" Let their answer be, "God." When He designs that a work should be performed, He removes every obstacle. *There was a great earthquake*—the proper translation is, "There had been a great earthquake—previous to the visit of the women. *The angel of the Lord descended*, &c. They observed with amazement that the stone had already been removed, and that the mouth of the sepulchre stood open. *Rolled back the stone from the door*. The stone was lying in the hollow, cut deep into the rock, so as to form the door "It was very great" (Mark xvi. 4), and must accordingly be rolled forth from this recess outward.

And sat upon it—upon the conquered thing as upon a triumphant throne. Luke speaks of two angels, and represents them as standing (xxiv. 4), while Matthew

and Mark speak of only one, who was sitting. (Mark xvi. 5.) The apparent discrepancy may be reconciled by either of the following methods. Matthew and Mark speak of the one who acted as spokesman, not denying, however, that there were two, but Luke, not making that distinction between the one who spoke and the one who kept silence, represents two as being present, and speaking. As to their position, the word in Luke translated *stood* has reference to a *sudden appearance*, or, *being suddenly present*, and not at all to the posture or position of the one who makes his appearance. Or thus—The angel who sat upon the stone to appal and stupefy the guards, had entered the sepulchre as the women drew nigh, doubtless to prevent their being deterred from approaching. The women entered the sepulchre and *there* (as is implied in Matt. xxviii. 6), the words of the angel were uttered to them. On their first entrance they saw but one angel, and he sitting, at which they were terrified. A moment after, as Luke adds, two angels *stood* before them (the one being joined by a second, to confirm the truth by two witnesses), so that the words were uttered standing, the first angel, doubtless, having risen and being speaker for both.

3. ⁴His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: 4. And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.—⁴Dan. x. 6.

His countenance was like lightning, that is, of an unearthly and intolerable splendor. *And his raiment*, &c. Mark says (xvi. 5), "they saw a young man," *i. e.*, a man in form but an angel in nature. It would seem that angelic beings can assume different forms, and invest themselves with apparent habiliments, and present or withdraw themselves from sight as they please. So our Lord in His resurrection body could make Himself more or less known, as He chose, to His disciples. The raiment was of dazzling brightness. Celestial beings are usually represented as clothed in white. (Acts i. 10; Dan. vii. 9; Rev. iii. 4, 5, iv. 4, vii. 13, 14). *White*, among the Jews, was a symbol of purity and innocence. It is asked sometimes, Whence did Jesus obtain His resurrection clothes? We might, with the same wisdom, ask, Whence did these angels obtain

their robes of white? Who manufactures the angels' harps, or Gabriel's trumpet? *The keepers did shake, &c.* The guard appointed to the tomb became paralyzed as dead men. God can, by one and the same means, *comfort* His servants, and *terrify* His enemies. The resurrection of Christ is a subject of *terror* to the servants of sin, and a subject of consolation to the sons of God, because it is a proof of the resurrection of both—the one to shame and everlasting contempt, the other to eternal glory.

5. And the angel answered and said unto the women, *Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.* 6. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.
Chap. xii. 40, xvi. 21, xvii. 23 and xx. 19.

At first these pious visitants were afraid. And what wonder, when we consider that they were females—that all their sensibilities were alive—that they were in the garden of another—that they were alone—that the guards were paralyzed with fear—that it was early in the morning, and the remaining darkness rendered more visible and awful the Divine messenger, in whose presence they stood—his countenance as lightning, and his raiment white as snow! But, says the angel, "*You have nothing to apprehend from me. He is my Master as well as your Saviour. I serve Him whom ye seek, and having attended His resurrection, I now announce it to you. He is not here. He is risen, as He said. Step forward—come see the place where the Lord lay.*" (See Matt. xii. 40, xvi. 21, xx. 19.)

Do we feel our need of Christ as once we did not, for all the purposes of salvation? Have we desires after Him—so peculiar that nothing else can satisfy them—so powerful as to make us part with whatever stands in competition with Him? Are we determined to press through all difficulties? Are we found in the use of all the means which He has appointed? Are we submissively asking, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? depending on the aid of His Holy Spirit, and looking for His mercy unto eternal life? If we can answer these questions in the affirmative, we are entitled to the assurance, *I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified.* And we have nothing to *fear*. We need not fear that we have a graceless heart—the

very seeking is a token for good. We need not fear that our search will be unsuccessful, for the aim of Christ in making us sensible of our condition, is not to render us miserable, but to endear Himself, and to draw forth our souls after Him. We shall not be disappointed.

From the vacant sepulchre of Christ we learn, 1. That a stronger than death has invaded the tomb. The spoiler is now spoiled; Death himself is buried, and his dominion gone forever. 2. That Jesus was made sin for His people. Death is not a debt of nature, but the penalty of transgression. As Jesus died, sin must have been His in some way, or how came He to suffer its penalty? The Apostle tells us: "He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 3. That Jesus put away the sins of His people. Sin being imputed to Jesus, death must hold Him its prisoner forever, unless He put it away by the endurance of its penalty. The vacant grave proclaims the penalty was endured, and the transgression of His people forever removed. 4. That His work was accepted. Jesus came to magnify the law, and make it honorable, and to ratify, with His own blood, the covenant made between the Eternal Three, which covenant hath for its object the salvation of His people. He did so; the ratification was complete; justice placed her hand upon the crimson bond, and declared herself satisfied; the Father looked and smiled, and welcomed back the Son. 5. That His people shall live. The law cannot give life, but a living Saviour can. "Because I live ye shall live also."

7. And go quickly, and tell his disciples, that he is risen from the dead, and behold, the goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him; lo, I have told you.—Chap. xxvi. 32; Mark xvi. 7.

Go quickly, &c. Do not tarry, do not take the good news as a monopoly. Spread the good news that He has risen from the dead. Engage in active duty, carry the glad tidings to His disciples "and Peter." (Mark xvi. 7.) What an exquisitely beautiful touch is that! We read in the account of Peter's denial, of Jesus looking upon Peter, and of Peter thinking thereon, and going out and weeping bitterly. How beautiful, that Jesus

should send the first glad tidings of His resurrection to His disciples, and that He should request these women specially to single out Peter, because his heart was sorrowful and cast down under a sense of his sin, and to carry him the consolation which such tidings would give. *He goeth before you into Galilee*—to which those women belonged. This must refer to those more public manifestations of Himself to large numbers of disciples at once, which He vouchsafed only in Galilee, for individually He was seen of some of these very women almost immediately after this. (Verses 9, 10). *Lo, I have told you*. Behold, ye have this word from the world of light.

8. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, and did run to bring his disciples word.

Fear and joy. What a strange mixture! Their joy was *greater* than their fear. They trembled because they had seen angels; they rejoiced because they hoped soon to see their Lord. The *fear* was the consequence of human infirmity; the joy flowed from faith and love. There are many fears now in the hearts of believers, but they shall all pass away, whereas their joy shall increase and endure forever. When they have no sin, they shall have no fear, and when they see Jesus, their joy shall be full. *Did run*, &c. Through fear, they did not say anything to any man by the way. (Mark xvi. 8.) Thus these faithful women proclaim the Gospel to those who were, afterward, to be the *teachers* of the whole human race! Behold what honor God puts upon those who persevere in His truth, and continue to acknowledge Him before men!

9. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

See Mark xvi. 9; John xx. 14.

And as they went, that is, the other women, Mary Magdalene not being with them, for Mark says (xvi. 9), Jesus appeared *first* to Mary Magdalene. It is probable from the statement of John, in his twentieth chapter, that Mary Magdalene, having left the ground before the other women, met with Peter and John, who, after hearing from her, came off without delay to the tomb, and found it empty, and then returned from the tomb. Mary Magdalene arrived later than they, and then Jesus appeared

to her. Shortly after this, Jesus appeared to the other women who were going, by direction of the angel, to inform the disciples. *Jesus met them*. Christ bestows His graces and consolations by *degrees*—first by His angels, and then by Himself. He does not reveal Himself to incredulous and disobedient souls. He appears not even to those women till He has tried their faith and obedience by His ministering angels. *All hail*—the usual salute, but from the lips of Jesus, bearing a higher signification.

And they came and held him, &c. Jesus allowed them to approach and embrace His feet in testimony of their joy and homage. The granting of this privilege is not inconsistent with Christ's prohibition to Mary Magdalene: "Touch me not." (John xx. 17.) In that case, Mary, in the immediate outpouring of her love, seemed to want to hold Him fast (the Greek tense expressing action continued), lest the wonderful appearance should vanish again, and in doing so she betrayed that she did not at the time realize the higher relation in which her risen Lord now stood to her. She wanted to enjoy His communion in a human manner, as she had been wont during His earthly life. From this tone of mind Christ leads her away by giving her to understand that she must no longer reckon upon any such intercourse with Him as she had hitherto enjoyed, that His tarrying on earth was only transitory, and that the time of exalted and Divine relationships had ceased. The act of the women which Matthew records is entirely different. They at once recognize Him with holy awe, not merely as their Teacher, but as their risen Lord, and instinctively pay Him adoration.

10. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.—John xx. 17; Rom. viii. 29, Heb. ii. 11.

Be not afraid. Jesus, with gentle words, quieted their first alarm. What dear associations would these familiar words—now uttered in a higher style, but by the same lips—bring rushing back to their recollection! *Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me*. The brethren here must have been His brethren after the flesh (chap. xiii. 55); for His

brethren in the higher sense (John xx. 17), had several meetings with Him at Jerusalem before He went to Galilee, which they would have missed if they had been the persons ordered to Galilee to meet Him. (See on verse 7.)

The several appearances which Jesus made after His resurrection to various persons, and at different times, are as follows:

The first was to Mary Magdalene alone. (Mark xvi. 9.)

The second, to her in company with several other women. (Matt. xxviii. 9.)

The third to Peter. (1 Cor. xv. 5.)

The fourth, to the two disciples going to Emmaus. (Luke xxiv. 13.)

The fifth, to the Apostles in Jerusalem, when they were assembled with the doors shut, on the first day of the week; at which time He showed them His hands and His feet, pierced with the nails, and did eat before them. (John xx. 19; Luke xxiv. 37-43.)

The sixth, to the Apostles a second time, as they sat at meat, when He satisfied the doubts of the incredulous Thomas, by making him thrust his hand into His side. (John xx. 26.)

The seventh, to Peter and several of His disciples, at the lake of Tiberias, when He also ate with them. (John xxi. 1.)

The eighth, and last, was to above five hundred brethren at once. (1 Cor. xv. 6.)

There are then no less than eight distinct appearances of our Lord to His disciples after his resurrection, recorded by the sacred historians. And can we believe that all those different persons could be deceived in these appearances of one, whose countenance, figure, voice, and manner, they had for so long a time been perfectly well acquainted with; and who now, not merely presented Himself to their view transiently and silently, but ate and drank and conversed with them, and suffered them to touch and examine Him thoroughly, that they might be convinced by all their senses that it was truly their beloved Master, and not a spirit, that conversed with them.

11. † Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. 12. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, 13. Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. 14. And if this come to the Governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

15. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

When they were going, some of the watch, &c. It seems that what induced the guard to take this step was the visit of the women. The soldiers had ascertained that Jesus was departed, whose sepulchre they had been set to watch. They had already seen His female followers make their appearance at "the place where the Lord lay," indeed, the women were even now running toward Jerusalem with the news that Christ had risen from the dead. It was manifest that no time was to be lost; accordingly, while the women were going, some of the guard hastened into the city, to bring thither the unwelcome tidings of what had so recently occurred. Probably the rest of the guards still remained at the tomb, waiting for orders to depart, and had sent these to intimate to their employers the things that had taken place. *Chief priests, i. e.,* Annas and Caiaphas, under whose immediate authority they had acted (see xxvii. 65), and to whom, therefore, they were to make their report. *All the things that were done.* How great must have been the consternation of these men to find that after all the matter was not to die with the crucifixion, and that "the last error," which they had feared as "worse than the first," had truly taken place.

And when they were assembled, &c. As the report filled them with amazement, and as there seemed to be no way of evading the truth of this marvelous event, they had no resource left but to convene the Sanhedrim, and refer the matter to their united wisdom and counsel. *Large money,* a large sum of money. It must have been a very tempting bribe, to induce a Roman guard to confess so capital a delinquency as sleeping on their post. If, as was promised, the chief priests and rulers succeeded in persuading Pilate to pardon them, they would yet be disgraced forever in the estimation of their comrades.

Say ye, His disciples, &c. The very event which the high priests had rendered impossible by setting a guard, they were obliged to bribe the soldiers to declare had actually taken place. (See chap. xxvii. 53.) And why? Because they had

to do with Him who "taketh the wise in their own craftiness" (Job v. 13), and by whose Spirit it had been said prophetically, "They have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. (Ps. lvii. 6.)

Came by night, and stole him away, &c. How utterly absurd such an allegation! For, first, there was a great festival of the Jews; it was bright moonlight, and at that great festival, as the houses of Jerusalem were unable to contain all the visitors who came from a distance to be present, hundreds of thousands were bivouacked upon the streets, living in tents, or wandering about all night unable to find a lodging. In the next place a watch of Roman soldiers was the most exclusive guarantee that no one should prevail to interfere successfully with their charge, except at the sacrifice of their own lives. A Roman soldier was punished with death if he slept on his watch. He would have been punished with death if he had allowed any one to interfere with his charge, whom he could prevent. And, therefore, for the soldiers to come and say that to the scribes and Pharisees, and thus to impute to themselves the highest crime of which a soldier could be guilty, was absurd in itself, and not fitted to make an impression in favor of what they asserted upon any dispassionate and unprejudiced mind. For, first, how could the eleven fishermen of Galilee roll away a gigantic stone from a sepulchre in bright moonlight, in the midst of a watch of twenty-five or thirty Roman soldiers, and then take out the dead body, and exhibit so little haste that the napkin was rolled up and laid neatly aside in the sepulchre, and then carry that dead body along the streets of Jerusalem, lined with thousands who could not get accommodation in the city, and so secrete that dead body, that the most vigilant inspection of all the soldiers and police of Jerusalem should fail to detect it? Is this probable? And again, how could it have happened that all the soldiers slept precisely at the same moment, and that the disciples opened the sepulchre without disturbing the slumbers of a single soldier, and that they carried away the body and left not the least trace of haste

or precipitation behind them? The story manifestly carries its own refutation, and proves nothing against the solemn declaration of the disciples, that their Master was raised by the power of God.

And if this come to the governor's ears, &c. When this rumor shall reach the governor, be repeated unto him for judicial investigation, and the danger becomes imminent. This was undoubtedly an excuse highly dangerous for the soldiers (see Acts xii. 19), and the high priests could by no means be sure of the result, although they might be ready to give Pilate a large bribe. The hierarchical spirit, which here reaches its climax, uses the Roman soldiers merely as tools to effect its own ends, as it had previously employed Judas, and was again fully prepared to let the despised instruments perish, when the work was finished. *So they took the money.* Avarice had more power over them than fear. *And this saying is commonly reported, &c.*—to the date of the publication of this Gospel. The wonder is that so clumsy and incredible a story lasted so long. But those who are resolved *not* to come to the light will catch at straws. *Justin Martyr*, who flourished about A. D. 170, says, in his "Dialogue with Trypho, the Jew," that the Jews dispersed the story by means of special messengers sent to every country.

16. ¶ Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain, where Jesus had appointed them. Chap. xxvi. 32; verse 7.

The eleven. One alone, the "son of perdition," is not among them. He has fallen like a star from heaven, and left his place vacant. The eleven are referred to by way of pre-eminence, although there can be no doubt that the pious women, who had attended Jesus so faithfully through all His trials and sufferings, and others also of the brethren, including Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, accompanied them.

Into Galilee—into which the disciples of Jesus had, immediately after His resurrection, been directed to follow Him. (Mark xvi. 7. See also on Matt. xxviii. 7, 10.) *Into a mountain*—probably the mountain on which He had been transfigured, in coming down from which He had spoken of His resurrection from the dead. (Matt.

xvii. 9.) And also before the transfiguration (Matt. xvi. 21), and after it (Matt. xvii. 23.) They seem to have lingered by the sea of Galilee, before reaching the mountain where they were to meet their Lord. (John xxi. 1-22.) *Had appointed them* (Matt. xxvi. 32; Mark xiv. 28). We have every reason to believe that this was the same memorable convocation to which Paul refers. (1 Cor. xv. 6.)

17. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

The faith in the Divinity of Christ that existed during the time of His sojourn on earth, as it were only as a spark in the breasts of His disciples, was kindled into a blazing flame by the sight of the risen Saviour. *But some doubted.* "We cannot," says *Stier*, "believe that any of the eleven Apostles should have doubted, especially after all that had taken place according to Luke and John. Matthew gives us in this circumstance an intimation that many others were present with the eleven. But *what* did they doubt? We say with *Ebrard*, 'not whether Christ was risen, but whether the person they saw was Christ.' For although they had followed the summons to the mountain, and had been in the company of the Apostles and brethren who had already seen the Lord, they might, when they themselves saw Him first, especially if standing at a distance, distrust their eyes in astonishment, or fail to believe at once, simply through wonder and joy." (See 1 Cor. xv. 6.) There can be no question, however, that at the close of this interview, every one present recognized and identified Jesus who had risen from the dead.

18. ¶ And Jesus came, and spake unto them, saying, ^kAll power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

^kDan. vii. 13, 14; chap. xi. 27 and xvi. 28; Luke i. 32 and x. 22; John iii. 35, v. 22, xiii. 3 and xvii. 2; Acts ii. 36; Rom. xiv. 9; 1 Cor. xv. 27; Eph. i. 10, 21; Phil. ii. 9, 10; Heb. i. 2 and ii. 8; 1 Peter iii. 22; Rev. xvii. 14.

And Jesus came and spake. And as He came and spake in the fullness of His power, all shadow of doubt disappeared from every mind. The *three* recorded assertions of our Lord (verses 18-20), consist of, 1. A parting assurance; 2. A parting commission, and, 3. A parting promise. *All power is given unto me.* The word "power" in our language is *ambiguous*; that is, it may be employed with

different significations. Sometimes it signifies *ability* or *capacity*, and sometimes, also, *rightful authority*. The term is in many passages used in these various ways. (See 1 Cor. xv. 24.) In both these senses it is true of Christ. He has at once the ability to act and the authority to warrant His acting. It is, however, in the latter of these significations the word is here employed. It signifies rightful authority. But it must be remembered that God would never commit all authority into the hands of one who had not *ability* and *capacity* rightly to exercise it. Christ, as a Divine person, has all power *inherent in Himself*. He is God, equal with the Father. The same titles and attributes are ascribed to both. "I," says He, "and my Father are one"—one in substance, one in will, one in operation. This is manifest from the mighty works which Jesus performed in virtue of His essential as well as delegated authority. The Apostles wrought miracles in the Saviour's name, but Christ did so in His own name. He thus bears the names, claims the honors, and exercises the prerogatives of Deity. "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (See Eph. i. 20, 21; Acts ii. 14, 36; Phil. ii. 8.)

19. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

¹Mark xvi. 15. ²Isa. lii. 10; Luke xxiv. 47; Acts ii. 38, 39; Rom. x. 13; Col. i. 23. ³Acts ii. 42.

Go ye, &c. The Apostles had received from the Lord the richest blessings. They had been great receivers of grace, they were, therefore, to be munificent givers. They had been saved themselves freely by His grace; He asks them to go forth and prove themselves active benefactors to all the rest of mankind. No man receives a blessing to be absorbed in himself. God sanctions no monopoly in religion. All we have, we have as stewards, and what we have we are commanded largely and liberally to devote to the glory of God and to the good of all over whom we have any influence. No man liveth unto himself; every man, by being a Christian, becomes necessarily and everywhere a missionary.

It must have been very painful to the

Apostles to leave their homes, their country and their kindred, and to go forth into the wide, wide world, where they must experience all sorts of opposition, and expect rest only in the grave, or rather in the presence of Him that sent them. They had, in those days, no such facilities as we have. The modern missionary has not the difficulties in his way that these ancient ones had. The paddle-wheel had not made traveling easy, as it is now; the iron rails, stretching like a net-work over all the earth, had not made communication so rapid. They went forth upon the rough road many a long and arduous journey, knowing only that bonds and imprisonment awaited them, but caring for nothing except that they should be free from the blood of all men, and fulfil their solemn commission—*Go teach all nations*, &c. It is only to those who are called by God and qualified for His service, that this commission is given. It was the disciples of Christ that were here addressed, and it is only so far as ministers are connected with Him and commissioned by Him, that they are to be obeyed. *Therefore*, that is, *because* all power is given unto me. Being, as I am now, the fountain of all authority, crowned, as I now am, with a rightful dominion, go forth and win the world to a willing subjection by grace. It was as if the first use Jesus would make of His mediatorial rule and sovereignty was to break down the barriers that had so long separated race from race, and make the waters of salvation roll round the globe, and, like its own oceans, touch every shore.

Teach, literally *disciple*, or train into discipleship. Not *subdue*, *subjugate*, as the consequence of His unlimited power, but “bring men to the knowledge of the truth—work on and in their hearts, and lift them up to be partakers of the Divine nature.”

All nations. The Gospel is to be preached to “all the world”—to every creature. (Mark xvi. 15.) Its calls and invitations are free, unfettered, and unlimited. The language in which they uniformly run, is this, “To you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men.” “Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth ;

for I am God, and there is none else.” All adventitious circumstances are disregarded. The shivering Iclander and the sunburnt Moor are included in the call. With Christ Jesus both Greek and Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, male and female, are all one, and He is not ashamed to call them brethren. The rich man in gay clothing, and the poor man in vile raiment, are on the same level. Lazarus in his rags, and in his sores, is equally well pleasing with Solomon on the throne in all his glory. Wherever we find a human being, beneath whatever load of woe he may be bending, we may invite him to the Saviour that he may obtain sympathy and relief. He was manifested to take away sin—His blood cleanseth from all sin—and He taketh away the sin of the world. “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” “Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”

Baptizing them—as an initiatory rite. *In the name*. A literal and better translation would be, *into the name*, which denotes something more than *in* or *by the authority* of the Triune God. The name is *one*, not *names*. The persons, or subsistences, *three*, each of whom is manifestly represented as co-equal, because the common objects of trust, obedience, and worship, and the source of blessing. Thus is the absolute unity and Divine character of that Sacred Three unequivocally marked. *Of the Father*, &c. The three who had borne witness at Jesus’ baptism (chap. iii. 15); the Son presenting Himself as being willing to fulfill all righteousness (verse 15); the Spirit descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him (verse 16); and the Father’s voice being heard from heaven (verse 17.) (See on chap. iii. 16, 17.)

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, that is, during His previous instructions, both before and after His crucifixion. The duty of Christian ministers as here declared is *two-fold*. They are to *preach the word*, or declare the whole counsel of God. And they are to *administer the Sacraments* of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, regulating their conduct in both

matters according to the pattern shown in the mount of God's holy word. How comprehensive is the commission which the ministers of religion thus receive. They must state from the Scriptures the truth of the Divine existence, and the perfections and attributes which are essential to it—they must point out the exercise of these perfections in the works of redemption and providence, and especially in the work of redemption—they must declare the unity of the Deity as subsisting in a trinity of persons to whom the same splendid titles are applied, and by whom the same mighty operations are performed—and they must exhibit, as the grand centre of attraction and foundation of our hope, that salvation which Christ accomplished on the cross, when He suffered, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. The Gospel is a system of mercy to the guilty, of holiness for the impure, and of comfort and consolation under all the afflictions of life. It comprehends our duty to God, to our neighbor, and to ourselves. It embraces practice as well as faith—duty as well as privilege. It is no new law, as some persons foolishly imagine. The terms of salvation are no easier now than under the former dispensation—the standard of morality is not lowered—the wrath of God is still revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men—and the Saviour Himself assures us that it is vain we call Him Lord, Lord, if we do not the things which He requires. The faithful servant of God, then, must keep nothing back that is profitable to the hearers. He must teach publicly and from house to house—he must preach the preaching that God shall bid him—and, taking his stand in the courts of the Lord's house, he must speak unto all the people that come to worship in the Lord's house all the words that He has commanded him to speak unto them; and, while life and vigor last, he must not diminish a word.

And, lo, I am with you always. There is, says an eminent author, a beautiful connection and contrast between the first and the last assertions of this farewell discourse. The assertion by Jesus of His unlimited sovereign dominion was a cheering and gladdening one. It was the

announcement that the garnered riches of the universe were in His possession, and that all these would be used in behalf of His people. He seems in it to take the *telescope* and sweep the boundless firmament of His power, proclaiming His kingdom to be an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion enduring throughout all generations. But now is the telescope laid aside, and the *microscope* is turned to every atom of redeemed dust! He leaves the symbols of His might in the heavens above, His regal sway over "thrones, dominions, principalities, powers," and turning to each one individual member of His Church on earth, the feeblest, the poorest, the lowliest, the most desolate, He says, *Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world!* The splendors of His mediatorial throne were at that moment in view. The harps of heaven were sounding in His ear. But He assures them, when standing on the very threshold of all this glory, that His heart of love would still continue with the pilgrim Church He was to leave in a pilgrim world. "*All power is given to me in heaven;*" YET, "*Lo, I am with you.*" That farewell saying has lost none of its comfort. "You." That little word embraced every one of *us!* You—Jesus looked down the vista of eighteen centuries, His eye, perhaps, was on some lone spirit now reading these pages, who thinks he has been left to the mercy of the storm, and still He says, "O thou of little faith, wherefore art thou cast down? dry thy tears, dispel thy misgivings," "*Lo! I am with you!*" Yes! Blessed assurance amid much that is changing here! Heart and flesh do faint and fail! Often our cisterns are scarcely filled when they break in pieces; our suns have scarce climbed the meridian when they set in weeping clouds; our fondest schemes are blown upon; our most cherished gourds withered. We seat ourselves in our homes, but there are blanks there; vacant seats tell the too truthful tale of severed links, and blighted hopes, and early graves. As age creeps on, we look around us, but the companions of our pilgrimage are gone; noble forest trees, one by one, have bowed to the axe, "the place that once knew them knows

them no more." But there is ONE surviving the wreck and ruin of all sublunary joys, changeless among the changeable—"Lo! I am with you"—and "the wilderness and the solitary place" are by that presence made "*glad*." *Unto the end of the world*—while the world shall stand. (Comp. chap. xiii. 39, 40.) It is here testified that a last day will come. The language shows that Jesus meant this injunction for all who should succeed the Apostles in making known the Gospel. So long as the Gospel is unknown in any part of the world, it is the duty of the ministers and followers of Jesus to labor for its extension. (See Mark xvi. 15, 16.) Jesus will be with His ministers and people wherever they may meet together in His name. When He assumed humanity, arrayed Himself in the dust of our globe, He took a first-fruits of it, and consecrated the whole. Every place, therefore, is suitable for spiritual worship, and where-soever, therefore—in church, in chapel, on the sea-shore, on the hill-side, on the

deck—believers pray in the name of the believer's Lord, there He has promised to be with them, even to the end of the world.

Always—literally "always." Jesus will be with His ministering servants and believing people at all times, by night, by day, in sunshine and under cloud, in sickness and in health, when their success seems very little, and when it is of the most encouraging description. He will be with them to direct, sustain, comfort, bless. No words could teach more distinctly than these that the Lord goes with His servants to the extreme limits of the world. (See 2 Cor. xi. 28; Luke ix. 23; Ps. xxiii. 4.) Christians are encouraged to do in the strength of Christ all that by His authority they are commanded. His sympathy is ever with His followers on earth. His wisdom is able to direct, and His power to uphold them. He is ever with us, even until we "shall ever be with the Lord." There He, who now is really present with us, will be also visibly. AMEN.

1. Explain "the end of the Sabbath." 2. Who then came to the sepulchre? 3. Who rolled the stone from the door of the sepulchre? 4. What else is said of the angel? 5. What did the women do under the direction of the angel? 6. Who met them as they went to the disciples? 7. What did Jesus say to them? 8. What were the soldiers bribed to say? 9. What did the eleven disciples do? 10. What did Jesus say to them? 11. Explain "All power is given unto me," &c. 12. In what name is baptism to be administered? 13. With what precious promise does the chapter close?

POPULAR EXPOSITOR
OF
THE GOSPELS AND ACTS,
FOR
PULPIT, SUNDAY-SCHOOL, AND FAMILY.

MARK.

ALFRED NEVIN, L.B., D.D.



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PREFACE

TO THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

"John, whose surname was Mark" (Acts xii. 12), was the son of Mary, a woman of piety, who lived at Jerusalem, where the disciples occasionally assembled at her house for prayer, and was sister to Barnabas. (Col. iv. 10.) He is also called Marcus. *John* was his Jewish name; *Mark* was his Roman name, by which he chose to be known among the Greeks and Romans, and it became at length his most usual name. Dr. *Whedon* says: "I am of the decided opinion that he was himself the young man described by himself (xiv. 51) as following Jesus, and narrowly escaping apprehension, as His friend, by the soldiery. (Acts xii. 12; Col. iv. 10; Acts xii. 25, xiii. 5-13, xv. 37-39; Phil. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11; 1 Peter v. 23)."

Peter styles Mark his son (1 Peter v. 13), which is generally taken to mean that he was converted by that Apostle. Mark left Jerusalem for Antioch with Paul and Barnabas (Acts xii. 25), and afterward accompanied them on their first missionary journey. (xiii. 5.) He did not, however, attend them long, but, for some reason not fully explained, left them at Perga, and returned to Jerusalem. (13.) This subsequently gave occasion to a dispute between the two Apostles, for, when they were planning a second journey, Barnabas wished for Mark as a companion, and Paul objected; they therefore separated, Mark sailing with his uncle to Cyprus. (xv. 36-39.) At a later period he was again with Paul during his first imprisonment at Rome (Col. iv. 10); and a communication had been made respecting him to the Colossian Church, perhaps to say that he had fully recovered that Apostle's confidence. And this was more plainly expressed when Paul again desired his presence at Rome. (2 Tim. iv. 11.) We find him also with Peter (1 Peter v. 13), with whom he is said to have traveled, and to have been his amanuensis.

GENUINENESS OF THE GOSPEL.

Papias, a contemporary of Justin, mentions the Gospels of Matthew and Mark by name. He was the friend of Polycarp, and, like him, is said to have been a disciple of John. *Irenæus*, writing to his friend Florinus (about A. D. 177), and fondly recalling his intercourse in earlier days with Polycarp, alludes to the four Gospels under the well understood title of Scriptures, and in his book "Against Heresies," he mentions the circumstances under which Matthew, Mark, Luke and John severally wrote their Gospels, mentioning them by name and in the order of our present canon. Reference to the Gospel of Mark is also made by *Clement*, of Alexandria, *Origen*, *Eusebius*, *Jerome*, &c. The universal consent of the ancient Church, indeed, ascribed the second Gospel to John Mark, so that no reasonable doubt can be entertained in regard to the authorship. It has also been said that he wrote under the superintendence of Peter. What, however, we are exactly to understand by this, may admit of question;

especially the testimonies of ancient writers on the point are not altogether consistent. If Mark was, as there is good reason to believe, Peter's companion, and, as he has been called by *Irenæus*, his "interpreter," it is likely that he would derive from him the account of events at which that Apostle was present. The internal evidence is in favor of Peter's superintendence. Scarcely an action or a work of Christ is related, at which Peter was not present, and those events in our Saviour's life are related in detail, which must have made the deepest impression upon Peter. Many things honorable to Peter are omitted by Mark, which are mentioned by the other Evangelists, whilst, on the other hand, the failings of Peter are fully recorded. (Comp. Mark viii. 29 with Matt. xvi. 17. See, also, Mark viii. 33, xiv. 31-71.)

WHEN WRITTEN.

On this point nothing positive can be asserted. The traditions are contradictory. *Irenæus* says that the Gospel was written after the death of the Apostle Peter, but in other passages it is supposed to be written during Peter's lifetime. In the Bible there is nothing to decide the question. It is not likely that it dates before the reference to Mark in the Epistle to the Colossians (Col. iv. 10), where he is only introduced as a relative of Barnabas, as if this was his greatest distinction; and this Epistle was written about A. D. 62. On the other hand it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. (Mark xiii. 13, 24, 30, 33, &c.) Probably, therefore, it was written between A. D. 63 and 70.

WHERE WRITTEN.

The place is as uncertain as the time. Clement, Eusebius, Jerome and Epiphanius pronounce for Rome, and many moderns take the same view. Chrysostom thinks Alexandria, but this is not confirmed by other testimony.

FOR WHOM WRITTEN.

The Evangelist scarcely refers to the Old Testament in his own person. The word Law does not once occur. The genealogy of our Lord is not set forth. Other matters, interesting chiefly to the Jews, are likewise omitted; such as the references to the Old Testament and Law, in Matt. xii. 5-7; the reflections on the request of the scribes and Pharisees for a sign, Matt. xii. 38-45; the parable of the king's son, Matt. xxii. 1-14; and the awful denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees, in Matt. xxiii. Explanations are given in some places which Jews could not require: thus, Jordan is a "river" (i. 5); the Pharisees, &c. "used to fast" (ii. 18), and other customs of theirs are described (vii. 1-4); "the time of figs was not yet," *i. e.* at the season of the Passover (xi. 13); the Sadducees' worst tenet is mentioned (xii. 18); the Mount of Olives is "over against the temple (xiii. 3); at the Passover men eat "unleavened bread (xiv. 1-12); and the explanations are given which Jews would not need (xv. 6, 16, 42). From the general testimony of these and other places, whatever may be objected to an inference from one or other amongst them, there is little doubt but that the Gospel was meant for use in the first instance among Gentiles.

STYLE AND DICTION.

The style of Mark may be characterized as vigorous and abrupt. His terms of connection and transition are terse and lively; he is fond of employing the direct for the indirect (iv. 39, v. 8, 9, 12, vi. 23, 31, 37, ix. 25, 33, xii. 6), the present for the past (i. 23, 40, 44, ii. 3, 4, 5, iii. 4, 5, 13, 20, 31, 34, iv. 37, &c., &c.), and the substantive instead of the pronoun; he employs the cognate accusative (iii. 28, vii. 13, xiii. 19, iv. 41, v. 42), accumulates negatives (vii. 12, ix. 8, xii. 34, xv. 5, xiv. 25, xi. 14), and for sake of emphasis repeats what he has said in other words, or appends the opposite (i. 22, 45, ii. 27, iii. 26, 27, 29, iv. 17, 33, 34), and piles up synonyms (iv. 6, 8, 39, v. 12, 23, viii. 15, xiii. 33, xiv. 68), combining this forcible style with a conciseness and economy of expressions consistent with the elaboration of every detail. Mark's diction is nearer to that of Matthew than to that of Luke. It is more Hebraistic than

the latter, though rather in general coloring than in special phrases. According to *Davidson* (*Introd.* i. 154), there are forty-five words peculiar to him and Matthew, and only eighteen common to him and Luke.

NOT AN ABBREVIATION.

Mark's Gospel is far from being, as some have alleged, a mere abbreviation of Matthew's. There are incidents in our Lord's ministry that we know from Mark, and Mark only—the intervention of His family (iii. 20, 21), the parable of the seed growing secretly (iv. 26–29), the healing of the deaf man of Decapolis (vii. 31–37), and of the blind man of Bethsaida (viii. 22–26), the name of Bartimeus (x. 46), and of Simon of Cyrene's sons (xv. 21), the young man's flight at Gethsemane (xiv. 51, 52). Besides this we have many vivid touches in the narrative, clearly due to an eye-witness, wanting in Matthew, as in the account of the Gadarene demoniac, and of the Transfiguration. Four times he alone of the Evangelists notices our Lord's look. (iii. 34. viii. 33, x. 21, 23.)

"The Gospel of St. Mark," says *Westcott*, "offers a great contrast to that of St. Matthew in its general effect. The peculiarities of language and minuteness of detail, which are least observable in St. Matthew, are most obvious in St. Mark, and, conversely, St. Mark offers nothing which answers to the long expositions of the Lord's teaching in St. Matthew. This fundamental difference is seen at once in the relative proportion in which the records of miracles and parables stand to one another in St. Mark. The number of miracles which he gives is scarcely less than that in the other synoptic Gospels, while he relates only four parables. Like St. Peter, he is contented to lay the foundation of the Christian faith, and leave the superstructure to others. It is enough that Christ should be presented in the most vivid light, unfolding the truth in acts rather than in words, for faith will translate the passing deed into an abiding lesson. Everything centers in the immediate facts to be noticed. Without drawing a complete history, St. Mark frames a series of perfect pictures. But each is the representation of the outward features of the scene. For this reason the Evangelist (as already stated) avoids all reference to the Old Testament. The quotations which occur in the Lord's discourses remain, but after the introduction he adds none in his own person. The living portraiture of Christ is offered in the clearness of His present energy, not as the fulfillment of the past, nor even as the foundation of the future. His acts prove that He is both; but this is a deduction from the narrative, and not the subject of it."

DIVISIONS.

The Gospel of Mark may be divided into three parts.

(1). The occurrences previous to the commencement of the public ministry of our Lord, including the preaching and baptism of John, our Lord's baptism and temptation (i. 1–13).

(2). Our Lord's ministry in Galilee, including that in Eastern Galilee (i. 14, vii. 23), that in Northern Galilee (vii. 24, ix. 37), that in Peræa, and the journeyings toward Jerusalem (ix. 38, x. 52).

(3). His triumphant entry, passion, death, resurrection and ascension (xi. 1–xvi. 8, [20]).

PARABLES.

The following parables are recorded by Mark. That which is peculiar to him is marked by italics.

1. The sower (iv. 4–8).
2. *The seed growing secretly* (iv. 26–29).
3. The mustard seed (iv. 30–32).

The unity and completeness of the lesson which these convey must be obvious without comment.

MIRACLES.

The miracles recorded by Mark are both numerous and characteristic of his Gospel. Peculiar narratives are marked by italics.

1. The unclean spirit cast out (i. 21-28).
2. The fever healed (i. 29-34.)
3. The leper cleansed (i. 40-45).
4. The palsy healed (ii. 1-12).
5. The withered hand restored (iii. 1-5) [iii. 10, 11, Many healed; unclean spirits cast out].
6. The tempest stilled (iv. 35-41).
7. The legion cast out (v. 1-17).
8. The woman with issue healed (v. 25-34).
9. Jairus' daughter raised (v. 22 ff.).
10. The five thousand fed (vi. 35-44).
11. The walking on the water (vi. 48, 49) [vi. 54 ff., all that touched Christ made whole].
12. The Syro-Phœnician's daughter healed (vii. 24-30).
13. *The deaf and dumb healed* (vii. 31-37).
14. The four thousand fed (viii. 1-10).
15. *The blind man healed* (viii. 22-26).
16. The deaf and dumb spirit cast out (ix. 14 ff.).
17. Bartimeus healed (x. 26-52).
18. The fig tree cursed (xi. 20 ff.).

FUTURE HISTORY OF MARK.

Tradition says he preached the Gospel in Egypt, and the Coptic or Egyptian Church at this day claims him as its founder. He is supposed to have suffered martyrdom at Alexandria about the eighth year of Nero's reign.

TABLES OF SCRIPTURAL COINS AND MONEY TERMS,

WITH THEIR VALUE EXPRESSED IN THE MONEY OF THE UNITED STATES,

BY JAMES ROSS SNOWDEN.

AUTHOR OF THE COINS OF THE BIBLE, COINS OF ALL NATIONS, THE MEDALLION
MEMORIALS OF WASHINGTON, ETC., ETC.

PUBLISHED BY PERMISSION OF THE AUTHOR.

TABLES OF SCRIPTURAL COINS AND MONEY TERMS.

I.

JEWISH COINS AND MONEY TERMS, WITH THEIR VALUE EXPRESSED IN THE MONEY OF THE
UNITED STATES.

	Dollars.	Cents.	Mills.
Gerah, one-twentieth of a shekel, - - - - -		2	9
Zuzah, one-fourth of a shekel, - - - - -		14	5
Bekah, half-shekel, or shekel of the king, - - - - -		29	
Shekel of the sanctuary (silver), - - - - -		58	
Shekel of gold, - - - - -	5	80	
Maneh of silver (60 shekels), - - - - -	34	80	
Maneh of gold " " - - - - -	348	00	
Talent of silver (3000 shekels), - - - - -	1,740	00	
Talent of gold " " - - - - -	17,400	00	

II.

A TABLE OF THE WEIGHT OF JEWISH COINS AND MONEY TERMS EXPRESSED—

1. *In Troy ounces and decimals of the ounce,*

2. *In Avoirdupois weight.*

2. The Shekel as a weight.										Ozs.	Decimals.		
1. Shekel, 217 grains, equal to	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		.452		
Maneh, 13,020 grains, equal to	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	27	.125		
Talent, 651,000 grains, equal to	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1356	.458		
										Lbs.	Ozs.	Dwt.	Grains.
2. Shekel, -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			9	1
Maneh, -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	5	20
Talent, -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	93	0	0	0

I.

A TABLE OF GREEK COINS (ATTIC) AND MONEY TERMS; WITH THEIR VALUE EXPRESSED IN
MONEY OF THE UNITED STATES.

	Dollars.	Cents.	Mills.
Lepton (mite), - - - - -			2
Obolus, - - - - -		2	6
Drachm, - - - - -		16	
Didrachm, - - - - -		32	
Stater or Tetradrachm, - - - - -		64	
Mina of silver, - - - - -	16	00	
Mina of gold, - - - - -	160	00	
Talent of silver, - - - - -	960	00	
Talent of gold, - - - - -	9,600	00	

II.

A TABLE OF THE WEIGHT OF GREEK COINS AND MONEY TERMS.

1. *In Troy ounces* ; 2. *In Avoirdupois weight.*

										Ozs.	Decimals		
1.	Drachm,	60	grains,	equal	to	-	-	-	-	-	0	.125	
	Mina,	6,000	grains,	equal	to	-	-	-	-	-	12	5	
	Talent,	360,000	grains,	equal	to	-	-	-	-	-	750		
										Lbs.	Ozs	Dwt.	Grains.
2.	Drachm,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
	Mina,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	10	
	Talent,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	51	6	

A TABLE OF ROMAN COINS EXPRESSED IN THE MONEY TERMS OF THE UNITED STATES.

		Dollars.	Cents.	Mills.
Assarius, one-tenth of a denarius,	- - - - -		1	5
Quadrans (or sestertius) one-fourth of the <i>ÆS</i> , about	- - - - -			4
Quinarius, one-half of a denarius,	- - - - -		7	5
Denarius ("penny"),	- - - - -		15	

The Romans usually reckoned money by sestertii, advancing from 1 to 1,000.

Thus:		Dollars.	Cents.	Mills.
1 Sestertius. (Quadrans),	- - - - -			4
10 Sestertii,	- - - - -		4	
100 "	- - - - -		40	
1000 " denominated Sestertium,	- - - - -	4	00	

Their use of the word *talent*, as a money term, was not very exact. The talent, however, as a weight, was equal to 60 libræ or pounds; the pound being divided into 12 ounces. According to the rate and proportion herein adopted, the Roman talent of silver may be valued at \$931.00; the talent of gold at \$9,310.00. The weight of the denarius, during the time of the Commonwealth, is generally put at 60 grains, the same as the Greek drachma, but it was of diminished weight during the Empire.



DENARIUS—VESPASIAN. ("JUDEA DEVICTA.") ABOUT A. D. 70.



DENARIUS—VESPASIAN. ("JUDEA.") ABOUT A. D. 71-79.



DENARIUS OF TIBERIUS—"PENNY." A. D. 14-37.

A general statement of the coins and money terms of the Bible, referring to the above Tables.

The general custom, in Europe as well as in America, is to use the Troy ounce of 480 grains, as the unit in weighing and valuing gold and silver. In the tables herein

presented, the weights are expressed in the Troy ounce and its decimal fractions, carrying it to the third figure, namely, thousandths of an ounce. And, for the reason that readers are most accustomed to estimate and calculate weights by the avoirdupois pound and its subdivisions, the weight is also stated according to that system.

In calculating the value of the coins and money terms, we use the Troy ounce. Silver is valued at \$1.225, the Mint price per ounce of standard fineness. This standard is so calculated, that of 1000 parts by weight, 900 are of pure silver, and 100 of copper. This valuation accords very nearly with the price of silver at London and Paris, by whose markets the value of silver throughout the world is regulated. Writers usually arrive at the value of gold as compared with silver, by adopting the proportion between these metals of modern times. This proportion is about one to sixteen; that is to say, one ounce of gold is worth about sixteen ounces of silver: and the tables of the values of ancient coins in our Bibles and commentaries are fixed upon that ratio. But that proportion overstates the value of gold among the Jews and the neighboring nations. From a careful examination of the various authorities on the subject, we have reason to believe that for several centuries, before and after the Christian era, the proportion between the value of gold and silver was as *one to ten*. It is upon this ratio that these tables have been prepared.

A further notice of some of the coins and money terms of the Bible.

I. THE JEWS.



SHEKEL—(MACCABEES.) ABOUT 145 B. C.

1. The SHEKEL was originally only a weight. The first form in which money was used by the Jews, and by other nations also, was that of pieces of metal without any marks or devices upon them. The precious metals, namely, gold and silver, passed by weight. Abraham *weighed* the four hundred shekels of silver which he paid to Ephron for the field of Machpelah. (Gen. xxiii. 16.) The prophet Jeremiah *weighed* the price of the field of Hanameel, namely, seventeen shekels of silver, in the balance. (Jer. xxxii. 9, 10.) And it may be here noted, that where the term “piece of silver” is used in the Old Testament, it is equivalent to, and is to be understood, in general, to stand for SHEKEL, and “pieces of silver” as shekels. The weight of a shekel was about one-half an ounce avoirdupois; that ounce being composed of four hundred and thirty-seven and a half grains. We adopt the Troy ounce, of four hundred and eighty grains, in our calculations.

It is to be noted that the shekel was not a coin during the entire period embraced in the Old Testament. It first appears as a coin about 160 B. C., and was issued by Simon Maccabeus. The amount of silver in the coin was the same as was contained in the “piece of silver,” which was of the weight of a shekel; and the coin took the same name. The Maccabees were rigid adherents of the old constitution, and there can be no doubt that the coin struck by them exactly corresponded, in weight and fineness, to the former standard. Many of these coins are now extant. There is one in the cabinet of the United States Mint, in a fine state of preservation. It weighs 217 grains, and is of the fineness of 950 thousandths. Other specimens of this coin noticed by various authorities, make the weight and fineness about the same. The silver coins of the United States are composed of 900 parts of pure silver in every 1000 parts used in coinage. Reducing the shekel to this standard, the weight may be stated as equal to 229 grains. The Mint price of silver, herein stated, was fixed in

conformity with the market price of silver in Europe and in America, and affords a proper basis to calculate the value of the shekel. At this rate, the value of the shekel of silver is 58 cents. The term Shekel is from *Shakal*, to weigh, and is, pre-eminently, "the weight."

We are thus particular in stating the value of the shekel—and by this we mean the sacred shekel, or the Shekel of the Sanctuary—because by it we obtain the unit, or standard, from which we can, with reasonable certainty, state the value of the other money terms of the Jewish system, referred to in the Sacred Scriptures.

2. The BEKAH, or half-shekel. This piece of money, or coin, is sometimes denominated the royal or profane shekel. The poll-tax paid by the Jews for the support of the tabernacle, and of the temple, was paid in this denomination. We put the value of the beka at 29 cents.

3. The ZAZAH. Although this piece is not named in the Scriptures, it is referred to in 1 Samuel ix. 8, and finds a place in most of the Jewish tables. Value, 14 cents and 5 mills.

4. The GERAH. This piece being the twentieth part of a shekel, its value consequently is 2 cents and 9 mills.

5. The MANEH. This term was used for silver, and also for gold. The weight of it was sixty shekels; hence the *maneh of silver* was of the value of \$34.80, and the *maneh of gold*, by the proportion herein indicated, namely, as ten to one, was \$348.00

6. The TALENT. The weight of the Jewish talent was 3,000 sacred shekels, or 6,000 royal or half shekels. (See Exod. xxx. 13, and xxxviii. 25.) The shekel we have shown to be of the value of 58 cents. Assuming the silver to be of the fineness of the shekel, and thus being "current with the merchant," the value of the *talent of silver* may be put at the sum of \$1,740. The *talent of gold* was consequently worth \$17,400.

II. Money and money terms of the Greeks. (Attic).



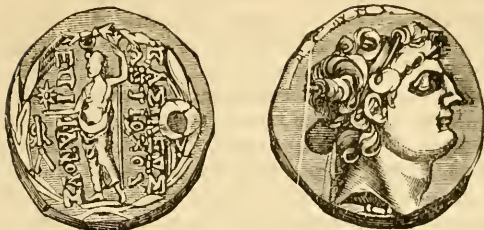
LEPTON. "MITE."—FOUND NEAR THE TEMPLE; CURRENT IN TIME OF CHRIST.

1. The LEPTON or MITE. This coin is the lowest denomination of money mentioned in the Sacred Scriptures. It was composed of a mixture of copper and tin, and was coined by the numerous Greek cities and colonies around the Mediterranean. The precise value is a matter of question; but it may be with sufficient accuracy stated to be 2 mills, or one-fifth of a cent. The text in Mark xii. 42, makes two *Lepta* ("mites") equal to one *kodrantes* (rendered "farthing").

2. OBOLUS. Was originally a silver coin, and as such was the sixth part of the drachm. It subsequently was struck in copper, and was in common use before and after the Christian era. We put its value at 2 cents and 6 mills.

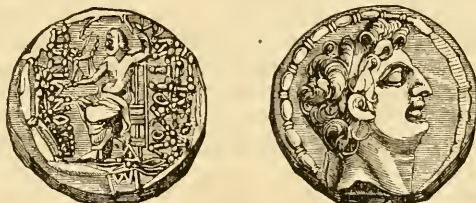
3. DRACHM. The drachm was the principal silver coin of the Greeks, and was current in Judea at and before the period of the New Testament. It is named several times in the second book of Maccabees. In Luke xv. 8, *drachmas deka* is translated "ten pieces of silver." We put the value of the drachm at 16 cents.

4. DIDRACHM. A coin equal to two drachmæ. It was nearly equal to the royal or half-shekel of the Jewish system, the price required to be paid by each male to defray the expenses of the Sanctuary. (Ex. xxx. 13-16. and xxxviii. 26). In Matthew xxii. 24, the term *didrachma* is translated "tribute." The value of this coin we put at 32 cents.



STATER—ANTIOCHUS VI. (EPIPHANES.) B. C. 146-143.

5. **STATER, or TETRADRACHM.** This piece was of the value of four drachmæ. The word *stater* which is used in Matthew xvii. 27, is rendered "piece of money" in the A. V. The "tribute," mentioned in the previous text, was the didrachm, and this was about equal to the half-shekel, which each Jew, above the age of twenty years, was required to pay toward maintaining the expenses of the Sanctuary. It will thus be seen that the stater miraculously obtained from the fish's mouth, being more than equal to two half-shekels, was sufficient to pay for Peter as well as Christ. It is also probable that at that time the stater and the shekel, being of approximate value, were taken interchangeably. The value of the stater we put in the tables at 64 cents.



STATER—ANTIOCHUS. (GRYPUS.) B. C. 124-97.

6. **MINA.** The mina represented 100 drachms in the Attic system of money terms and weights. It weighed 12 ounces and a half, as stated in the tables. In Luke xix. 13, the term is rendered "pound;" *Deka Mnai*—ten pounds. The mina of silver is of the value of \$16.00, the mina of gold, \$160.00.

7. **THE ATTIC TALENT.** This talent was of the weight of 6,000 drachms. We put the weight of the drachm at 60 grains, equal to the eighth part of the ounce of 480 grains. The talent, therefore, weighed 750 Troy ounces, or 51 lbs. 6 ozs. 5 dwt. avoirdupois. The drachm of silver being worth 16 cents, the value of the Attic talent, in *silver*, may be put at \$960. And, adopting the proportion herein stated, the same talent, in *gold*, was worth \$9,600.

A talent was two-fold, namely, to express a weight, or a sum of money. The value of it differed according to the different ages and countries in which it was used. In the Old Testament, the talent referred to, with one or two exceptions, which will be noticed, is the Jewish talent of 3,000 shekels.

Thus the golden candlestick, with the tongs and the snuff-dishes, for the tabernacle, was to be made of a talent of gold; this was of the weight of 93 pounds, and of the value of \$17,400. (Ex. xxv. 39.) The amount of gold employed in the tabernacle was 29 talents and 730 shekels, equal to \$508,834; of silver, there were used 100 talents and 1,775 shekels, equal to \$175,029.50. (Ex. xxxviii. 24, 25.)

The silver above named was contributed by 603,550 persons, who each paid a half-shekel, as required in Exodus, xxx. 13, 14. And it is from the enumeration and statement in Exodus xxxviii. 24-26, that we ascertain that the talent contained 3 000 shekels. King Hiram sent to King Solomon 120 talents (\$2,088,000). (1 Kings ix. 14.) The

queen of Sheba gave Solomon a similar amount. (1 Kings x. 10.) Solomon brought from Ophir 420 talents (\$7,308,000.) (1 Kings ix. 28.) The weight of the gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents (\$11,588,400.) (1 Kings x. 14.)

The temple of Solomon was overlaid with gold amounting to 600 talents (\$10,440,000.)

We need not multiply examples; the reader can readily, by the data given, convert the term talent into the money of the United States.

There was another talent of great antiquity, which some authorities call the *Homerical talent*. It was used by the Phœnicians, and is referred to by ancient writers in such a manner as to show that it was of greatly inferior value to the talent we have herein been considering. From data gathered from several authorities, this talent was probably of the weight of 24 drachmas, equal to three ounces Troy. It is highly probable that it is this inferior talent that is referred to in 1 Chron. xxii. 14, where it is said that David had "provided for the temple, 100,000 talents of gold, and one thousand thousand (one million) talents of silver." It is evident that the Jewish talent of 3,000 shekels is not here intended, because the amount would be so enormous as to be utterly incredible, namely, \$2,480,000,000. Adopting the Homermal or Phœnician talent, as being the one here intended, the sum that David gathered together "in his trouble," was \$7,760,000. The same talent is doubtless referred to in 1 Chron. xxix. 4-7. The donation by David, and the contributions of the people, therein recorded, were made after the principal sum above mentioned had been provided for the building of the temple. The total contributions in gold and silver were to the amount of \$406,425.

Dr. Arbuthnot, a learned writer on ancient coin, corroborates the views herein expressed. Writing on the same text, he says: "David reigned in Judea after the siege of Troy, so that it is no ways improbable that Homer and he might use the same talent."

Dr. Anthon, speaking of a small talent, which was probably the same to which we refer, says: "It was called the Sicilian talent, from being much used by the Greeks of Italy and Sicily," and adds, "This small talent explains the use of the term 'great talent' (*magnum talentum*) which we find in Latin authors; for the Attic talent was great in comparison with this."

We have cited these authorities—and many others, to the same effect, might be added—because most writers have supposed that the ordinary Jewish talent was intended in these passages; or that some error had crept into the sacred text. It is quite apparent that an inferior talent was intended, and it is reasonable to suppose that it was the Phœnician talent, as there was a constant intercourse and commerce between that people and the Jews, and most friendly relations existed between these nations at that period.

The weight of the Homermal or Phœnician talent we put at 3 ounces, Troy. Its value was consequently as follows:

Homermal talent of gold,	-	-	-	-	-	\$38.80
" " " silver,	-	-	-	-	-	3.88

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK.

CHAPTER I.

¹ *The office of John the Baptist.* ⁹ *Jesus is baptized.* ¹² *tempted.* ¹⁴ *he calleth Peter, Andrew, James and John.* ²³ *healeth one that had a devil.* ²⁹ *Peter's mother in law.* ³² *many diseased persons.* ⁴¹ *and cleanseth the leper.*

THE beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ; ^athe Son of God; ^aMatt. xiv. 33; Luke i. 35; John i. 34; Heb. i. 1-2.

On verses 1-8: see on Matt. iii. 1-12; Luke iii. 1-18.

Mark, writing after Matthew, passed over the birth of Jesus and began with John's ministry. This was *the beginning of the gospel*, the introduction of the new dispensation of glad tidings relating to Jesus Christ, the anointed Saviour, as foretold by the prophets. The *end* of the *Old Testament* is the *beginning* of the *New*. "Now the Gospel began to dawn, and John was like the morning-star, or the blushings which spring from the windows of the East, foretelling the approach of the Sun of Righteousness." He preached repentance as the preparation to receive the Gospel, and faith in the Messiah as the subject of it. (Luke xvi. 16.) It will be observed that he not only commences in the very midst of the Gospel events, but introduces the names of Jesus and of John as familiar to his readers.

The name of *Jesus* is so often added to the name of *Christ* in the New Testament not only that Christ might be thereby pointed out as the *Saviour*, but also that Jesus might be pointed out as the true *Christ*, or *Messiah*, against the unbelief of the Jews. Mark styles Christ *the Son of God*, as Matthew had styled Him before "the Son of David" (Matt. i. 1); the one sets forth the verity of His human nature, the other the reality of His Divine nature, signifying to us, that the true and

promised Messiah was both God and man, in two distinct natures, and one Person forever. He is true and real God, as well as the Father and the Holy Ghost, not a mere man, but God as well as man. It is very interesting that that Gospel which tells us how deep Jesus sank in the miry clay, when the weight and pressure of our iniquities was upon Him, should begin with a declaration of His majesty and glory, that we might never lose sight of the God in His deepest sorrows, or forget that He was the equal of the Father, when He endured the cross for us and our salvation.

² As it is written in the prophets, *Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.*—^aMal. iii. 1; Matt. xi. 10; Luke vii. 27.

Every Evangelist has his proper *exordium*. Matthew and John begin with Christ—Matthew with His human generation, John with the Divine generation; Mark and Luke begin with John the Baptist—Luke with his nativity, Mark with his preaching.

As it is written in the prophets. (Mal. iii. 11, and Isa. xl.) *Behold, I send my messenger, &c.* (See on Matt. xi. 10.) The quotation here is exactly in the words which Matthew uses, and except the change in the pronoun *my* for *thy*, is literal from the Hebrew. This *I* in the prophet is spoken by Jehovah. But this Jehovah is the Messiah. So that we have here a true Jehovah-Jesus. *Prepare thy way, &c.* When a man of rank has to pass through a town or village, a messenger is despatched to tell the people to *prepare* the way, and to await his orders. Some then sweep the road, others spread garments, others form arches and festoons on the way. Note, 1. The dignity and authority of the ministers of Christ; they are His messen-

gers, sent by Him to deliver His mind and will unto His people. 2. Their work and office—to prepare people to receive Jesus Christ, offered to them in the Gospel.

3. *“The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”* Isa. xl. 3; Matt. iii. 3; Luke iii. 4; John i. 15, 23.

Voice. A preacher should, if possible, be nothing but a voice, which should be always heard and never seen. *Crying*—preaching with such force as is worthy of the truth. *In the wilderness.* (See on Matt. iii. 3.) Repentance is preached in the wilderness because it is difficult to hear this voice, except in retirement, and out of the noise and hurry of worldly affairs. *Prepare ye, &c.* (See on verse 4, and Matt. iii. 3, Luke iii. 4.) The advent of the Redeemer was but the visible appearance of the Divine light, with which the radiant cloud of prophecy had long been ready to break forth. (Isa. lx. 1-3; Luke i. 76-8.) Not only knowledge, but every other gift, which we call the gifts of fortune, has power to puff up earth. Afflictions only level these mole hills of pride, plow the heart, and make it fit for wisdom to sow her seed, and for grace to bring forth her increase.

4 *“John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins.”* Matt. iii. 1; Luke iii. 3; John iii. 23.

The wilderness. A region was thus called if it was thinly inhabited and consisted of pasturage instead of tillage. The wilderness of Judea lay between Jerusalem and the Jordan, and along the western side of the Dead Sea. *Preach.* Not in the methodical style of later times. What he preached is infinitely more important than how he preached. *For the remission, i. e.* the remission of sin being the object or purpose of the baptismal rite. John's preaching and baptism did not of itself procure the remission of sin, which could be effected only by the death of Christ. It however prepared the way for this result. Those who repented and reformed their lives under his ministry, received the pardon of their sins, although the great atoning sacrifice had not actually been offered.

5 *“And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.”* Matt. iii. 5.

All the land, &c. All sorts of the inhabi-

tants. *Confessing their sins.* One part of repentance is to bear the shame and confusion of our sins in confessing them. It is not grievous to any to show this shame and confusion before men, except only those who have none at all for their sins before God. (See on Matt. iii. 5, 6.)

6. And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins, and he did eat locusts and wild honey.

“Matt. iii. 4, on which see notes. †Elev. xi. 22.”

John's coat was wrought of the long and stiff bristles of the camel. His belt was nothing better than a strap of untanned hide. His diet, indicative of the temperance and austerity of his life, was derived from the spontaneous production of the desert—

“His food was locusts, and what there did spring, Wild honey that from virgin hives distilled.”

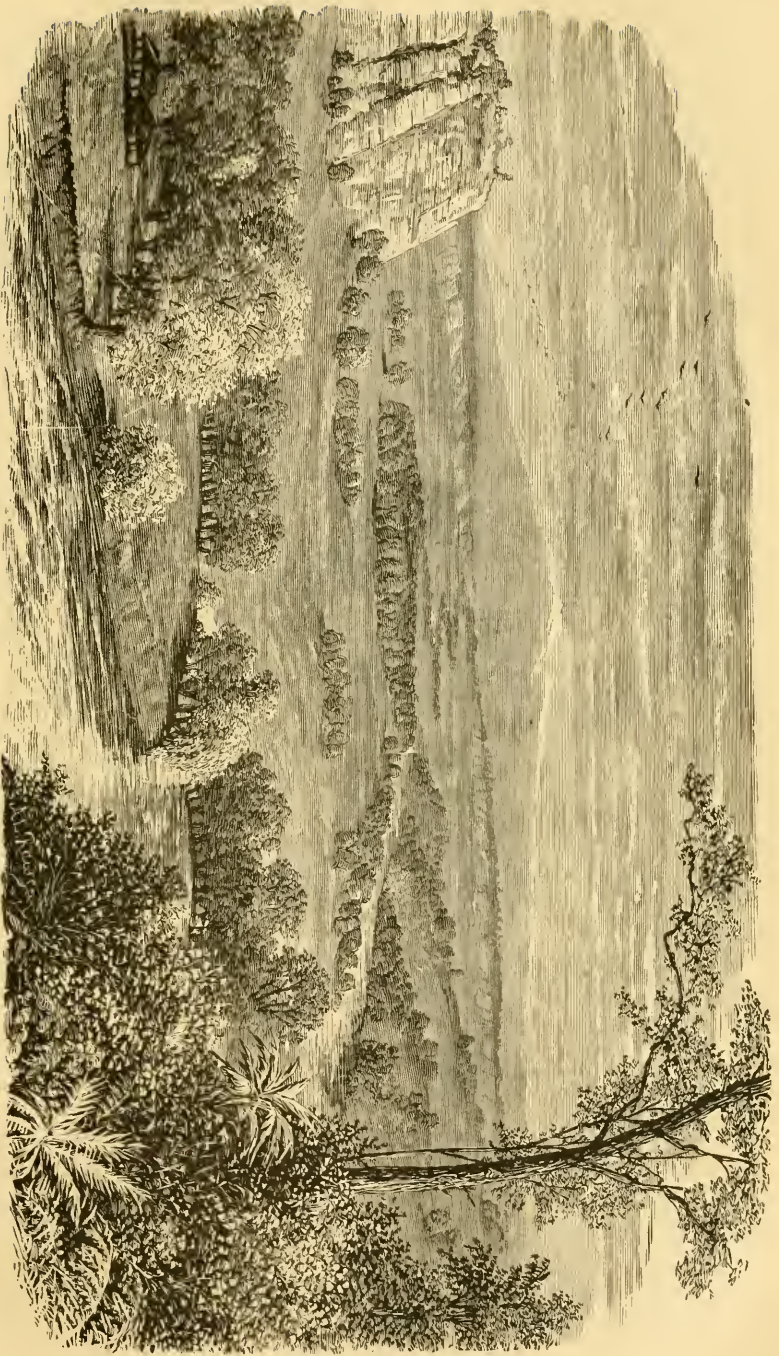
7. And preached, saying, *“There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. 8. I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.”*

†Matt. iii. 11, and Luke iii. 16, on which see notes; John i. 27; Acts xiii. 25. †Acts i. 5, xi. 16, xix. 4. †Isa. xlii. 3; Joel ii. 28; Acts ii. 4, x. 45, xi. 15, 16; 1 Cor. xii. 13.

One mightier than I, &c. John was great, but what was he to the Lord? Loud was that “voice,” but what was it to “the Word?” Most glorious was the herald, but what to the King? Glorious was he who baptized with water, but what to Him who baptizeth with the Holy Ghost and with fire? (John iii. 26-36.) “Above all,” says one, “have a care of vain and proud thoughts of your own virtues. For, as soon as ever people live different from the common way of the world and despise its vanities, the devil represents to their minds the height of their own perfections, and he is content they should excel in good works, provided he can make them proud of them. Therefore, watch over your own virtues with a jealous eye, and reject every vain thought as you would reject the most wicked imaginations, and think what a loss it would be to you to have the fruit of all your good works devoured by the vanity of your own minds.” (Ezek. xviii. 24; Luke i. 51, 53, xviii. 11, 12; 2 Cor. xii. 7.)

9. *“And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. 10. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: 11. And there came a voice from heaven, saying, ‘Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’”*

†Matt. iii. 13; Luke iii. 21. †Matt. iii. 16; John i. 32. †Ps. ii. 7; Matt. iii. 17; chap. ix. 7.



VALLEY OF JORDAN.

See on Matt. iii. 13, 16; Luke iii. 21, 22.

The heavens opened, &c. The firmament seemed to be disparted, so as to reveal a visible communication between heaven and earth. *He saw.* This evidently refers to Jesus, although John also witnessed the descent of the Spirit. (John i. 32.) *Like a dove.* A fit emblem of the pure and peaceful Spirit, whose influences rested so abundantly on Jesus, and which were to be so conspicuously manifested in the Messiah's dispensation. (See Isa. lxi. 1-3.) This dove-like manifestation of the Holy Spirit may well suggest to us the inquiry, whether we possess the pure and peaceful temper of mind, which the Gospel enjoins and the Holy Spirit produces.

Thou art my beloved Son, &c. (See on Matt. iii. 17.) "The Father cannot look upon His well-beloved Son, but graciously and pleasingly. God looks on us out of Christ, sees us rebels, and fit to be condemned; we look on God as being just and powerful to punish us; but when Christ is between, God looks on us in Him as justified, and we look on God in Him as pacified, and see the smiles of His favorable countenance. (Ps. lxxxiv. 9; John xiv. 6; Eph. i. 3, &c.)"

12. "And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. 13. And he was there in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan, and was with the wild beasts, and the angels ministered unto him."

^aMatt. iv. 1; Luke iv. 1. ^bMatt. iv. 11.

Immediately—after His baptism. *Driveth him, i. e.,* hurried Him on with a strong impulse. The Spirit *impelled* him to go where inclination would not have induced Him. (See on Matt. iv. 1-11; Luke iv. 1-13.) *And was with the wild beasts.* "This notice is certainly not introduced," says *Trench*, "as many interpreters would have us to believe, merely to enhance the waste, desolation and savage solitude of that scene, but at once throws us back, as it was intended to throw us back, on the Paradisiacal state, which, in the second Adam, had bloomed anew. He *'was with the wild beasts'*—which owned Him for their rightful Lord—He was with them, as Adam had been before he sinned. In Him, the second Adam, the ideal man of the eighth Psalm, the Adamic prerogatives, lost and suspended so long after the deluge, only partially recovered (Gen. ix. 2)—fully reappeared (comp. Gen. i. 26, 28, with Ps.

viii.) This was one of the tokens He gave of the intimate connection between the restoration of man, and the restoration of the outward world." (See Matt. xix. 28; Mark xvi. 18; Luke x. 19; Acts xviii. 5.)

14. "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15. And saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.'

^aMatt. iv. 12. ^bMatt. iv. 23. ^cDan. ix. 25; Gal. iv. 4; Eph. i. 10. ^dMatt. iii. 2, iv. 17.

See on Matt. iv. 12, 23, iii. 2, iv. 17.

Put in prison, &c. Mark writes as of a fact known to the reader, either from Matthew or some other source. We are not to understand from this verse that Jesus *began* his ministry when John had *finished* his, for it is evident that the Saviour had preached, and baptized by the hands of His disciples for a considerable time before John was imprisoned.

The time is fulfilled, i. e., the time appointed for sending the Messiah, and particularly the time specified by Daniel, chap. ix. 24-27. In regard to the preaching of the Son of God, note, 1. That everything that is done is according to a plan laid by the Divine wisdom, and never performed till the appointed time was *filled up*. (Gal. iv. 4). 2. That the kingdom and reign of sin are to be destroyed, and the kingdom of grace and heaven established in their place. 3. That the kingdom of God and His reign by grace begins with repentance for past sins, confiding in the joyful intelligence of the Gospel, and the reception of the instructions connected with it. Faith is inseparably joined to true repentance. 4. That this reign of grace is *at hand*, and that nothing but an obstinate perseverance in sin and impenitence can keep any soul out of it, and that *now* is the accepted time to enter in. It will be observed that our Lord commences His preaching with the same words which the forerunner had already used. (Matt. iii. 2). By his prophetic office He prepares Himself the way to His mediatorial and kingly office.

16. "Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. 17. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. 18. And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him. 19. And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. 20. And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him."

^aMatt. iv. 13, Luke v. 4. ^bMatt. xix. 27; Luke v. 11.
^cMatt. iv. 21.

See on Matt. iv. 18-22.

He saw Simon and Andrew, &c. The actual constant consideration of God's presence would be the readiest way in the world to make sin to cease from among the children of men, and for men to approach the blessed state of the saints in heaven, who cannot sin; for they always walk in the presence and "behold the face of God." (Gen. xvi. 13; Ps. xvi. 9, ciii. 20; John i. 48.) *A net.* The original word signifies a double net of considerable size. *Casting a net into the sea, &c.* These fishermen, though previously enrolled among the disciples of Jesus, had not, on that account, forsaken their honest callings, as if discipleship and daily work were incongruous. Saul was seeking his father's asses, and David keeping his father's sheep, when called to the kingdom. The shepherds were feeding their flocks when they had their glorious revelation. Matthew was called from the receipt of custom; Amos from among the herdsmen of Tekoah; Moses from keeping Jethro's sheep, and Gideon from the threshing-floor. What does all this tell us, but that Christ honors and consecrates daily industry. (Gen. ii. 15, iii. 19; Acts ix. 43, xvi. 14, 15; 1 Cor. vii. 21; 1 Thes. iv. 11.)

Come ye after me, &c. Jesus gradually prepares His people for service and trial. As in mental training, so in spiritual, there is an education—a gradual progressive discipline; "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." These fishermen may have received the first hallowed impressions from casual meetings with the young Nazareth Pilgrim in their journeys to the city of solemnities, or the earliest seed of the kingdom might have been more recently planted by the teachings of the Baptist. This had been still further nurtured by a solemn personal interview with their Lord. Months had elapsed to allow all these to take root. They had been left to themselves during this intervening period to a secret work of faith and prayer. And now, when love has been deepened and faith strengthened, He demands loftier services, imposes heavier responsibilities.

Fishers of men. The Lord clothes His promise in the language of that art which was familiar to these men. The fisherman is to catch men, as David, the shepherd, taken from amid the sheepfolds, is to feed them. What tremendous responsibilities and results does this title involve! Death and life are confided to ministers of the Gospel. Their aim is here represented to be, not a mere external varnishing over with new habits, new tastes, new virtues, but to effect a *change of being*. The faithful preaching of the Gospel ought to have for its object a bringing up and out from the deep, dead sea of nature, elevating to a new heaven-born atmosphere. As Christ in promising to make these disciples "fishers of men," addressed them in such a way as was most likely to work upon them, so were the astronomers addressed, to whom was given a star to guide them to the Saviour's birth-place (Matt. ii.), and those who followed Jesus for meat, to whom He preached of spiritual food, and the Samaritan woman at the well, to whom He preached of the water of life. (John iv.) Heaven, likewise, is so represented as, if possible, to "gain" all. To the cheerful man it is represented as all joy, to the ambitious man, as all glory, to the merchant it is a pearl, and to the husbandman, a rich field.

Mending their nets. This is explained by reference to Luke v. 6. *And they left their father Zebedee in the ship, &c.* It is a solemn lesson of self-denial we are here taught at the feet of Galilean fishermen. It was, it must have been, for them a trying hour. At a moment's warning their worldly *all* was to be left to attach themselves to the person and fortune of the reputed son of a carpenter, who was often unable to tell of so secure a shelter as had the fox of the mountain or the bird of the forest. Yet they *straightway*, without deliberating, without conferring with flesh and blood, without reasoning on maxims of expediency, willingly surrendered their all, and cast in their lot with the despised and rejected One! What an example of prompt and unreserved obedience! The mention of the *hired servants* shows that Christ in calling these men, and they in obeying the call, did not leave their father desti-

tute of assistance to carry on his business. (vii. 10-12; Eph. vi. 2, 3).

21. ¶ And they went into Capernaum, and straightway on the Sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught. 22. *And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes. 23. *And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out. 24. Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. 25. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. 26. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. 27. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him. 28. And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

*Matt. iv. 13; Luke iv. 31, on which see notes. *Matt. vii. 28. *Luke iv. 33. *Matt. viii. 29. 4 Verse 31. *Chap. ix. 20.

An unclean spirit. It was befitting, since death first entered into the world through the devil's envy, that the healing medicine of salvation should first operate against him. (xvi. 17; Gen. iii. 15.) *To destroy us.* Our Lord had not uttered a word respecting judgment or punishment. But guilt accuses and condemns itself. Fear of destruction is the spontaneous offspring of sin, and, whether the Lord reproaches or keeps silence, "there is no peace unto the wicked." (Compare the case of Herod: vi. 14, 16; Gen. iv. 23; Matt. xiv. 1, 2; Acts xxiv. 25.) *Rebuked him.* Jesus silenced the devils, even when they spake the truth, lest He should seem to approve of witnessers, who were liars by nature. (John viii. 44; Rom. xiv. 16; Eph. v. 15.)

Had torn him, &c. Though obliged to obey the Lord of all, with what reluctance the unclean spirit quitted his victim! He made him feel his malice before he left him. It is to the malice of such devils that the wicked are to be forever given up. If we "are taken captive by the devil at his will," Jesus can command the devil to let us go, and He will do so, if we implore His help. But the devil will not let go his captives unless he is compelled; he diligently watches over them lest they should believe and be saved—accompanies them to church and follows them home.

29. †And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30. But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her. 31. And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

†Matt. viii. 14; Luke iv. 38. §1 Cor. ix. 5. †James v. 14, 15.

Forthwith—Jesus avoided the din of a crowd. *Simon James and John.*

This occasion is peculiarly interesting as being the first on which the sacred triumvirate of Peter and James and John were selected from among the rest, to be a three-fold cord of testimony to certain events in their Lord's life—*Andrew* being present on this occasion, as the occurrence took place in his own house. *Fever.* A disease consisting in a fermentation of the blood, accompanied with a quick pulse. *Took her by the hand, &c.* The miracle here recorded did not, as in some other cases, consist in the cure of an incurable disorder, but in the mode of cure, instantly, and by a touch (See Matt. viii. 15.)

The fever left her, &c. This was the doing of one that is Almighty. There is no escape from the conclusion. This was "the finger of God." (Exod. viii. 19.) Our great High Priest is very gracious. He can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." No heart can feel for us so much as the heart of Christ. It was a fine saying of an old saint, "My faith can sleep sound on no other pillow than Christ's omnipotence." He can give power to the weak. He can "increase strength to them that have no might." Let us trust Him, and not be afraid. The world is full of snares. Our hearts are weak. But with Jesus nothing is impossible.

See on Matt. viii. 14-15; Luke v. 38-9.

32. ¶ And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. 33. And all the city was gathered together at the door. 34. And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils, and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.

†Matt. viii. 16; Luke iv. 40. †Chap. iii. 12; Luke iv. 41. See Acts xvi. 17, 18.

See on Matt. viii. 16, 17; Luke v. 40, 41.

When the sun did set. When the Sabbath was ended, for the Jewish Sabbath began on Friday evening, and ended on Saturday evening. *And all the city, &c.* A very common hyperbole, meaning that a great many of the people of the city were thus assembled. *At the door, of Peter's house.* Suffered not the devils to speak, &c. Jesus made no concealment, so far as His own testimony was concerned, of His being the Messiah, but He might have had very wise objections to being publicly called the Messiah by certain sorts of persons, and at certain times. Had no caution been exercised, His appearing as the Messiah might have been greatly abused.

The healing of this multitude was a painful and laborious service. Could Jesus behold, unmoved, the diseased creatures that were brought to Him? Could He hear the ravings of those possessed with devils, and the cries of those in pain, without anguish of spirit? Impossible; for His heart was full of compassion. Some persons turn away from the view of misery, because it gives them uneasiness, but such conduct is selfish. Our blessed Saviour felt far more at the sight of suffering than we can feel, yet he was willing to bear the pangs of sympathy. (See Isa. lvi. 3; Matt. viii. 17.)

35. ¶ And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. 36. And Simon and they that were with him followed after him. 37. And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee. 38. And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for thenceforth came I forth. 39. And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils. ⁴⁰Luke iv. 42. ⁴¹Luke iv. 43. ⁴²Isa. lxi. 1. John xvi. 28, xvii. 4. ⁴³Matt. iv. 23; Luke iv. 44.

See on Luke iv. 42-44.

In the morning, &c. The original means, not literally a great while before day, but very early, or while there was yet much appearance of night. *Departed into a solitary place*, &c. He would there be less liable to interruption. We have here the example of our Lord to make prayer the first duty of the day, and to secure a place of as much privacy as possible, in order that freedom and fervor of devotion may not be checked through fear of being overheard or interrupted.

And there prayed. We cannot hesitate to believe that this retiring of Christ to a solitary place for the purpose of praying was in accordance with a real want of His nature, since the Lord did nothing for mere appearance sake. On the contrary, according to the Scriptures, Jesus was made like unto His brethren in all things, sin alone excepted (Heb. ii. 17), and to contemplate Him in His true humanity is a never-failing fountain of consolation, and enables us to set Him before us as our pattern. If we view Jesus in His human development, His prayers, which, though He prayed always, as He commands us (Luke xviii. 1), nevertheless had their culminating points in certain hours of sacred devotion—were even to Him the times of heavenly refreshing and strengthening from above, amid the constant as-

saults of the powers of darkness from without. They were at the same time the hours which he especially devoted to the deepest meditations on the Father's counsel concerning Him and the purposes of Divine mercy, to consecrate Himself to the accomplishment of His work.

Followed after him. The Saviour's retirement was interrupted by His disciples, who said, "All men seek for thee." Was this addressed to Him who was despised and rejected of men? But how few of those who sought Him truly loved Him. Thus it is now. Multitudes will flock to hear an earnest, interesting preacher, but only a few receive into their hearts the blessed Gospel he proclaims. *Let us go into the next towns*, &c. The Greek word here rendered towns, designates places larger than villages, but unwallled, and less than ordinary cities. *That I may preach there also*. This was part of His office for which he came into the world, to proclaim the mercy of God, and direct men in the way of everlasting life. *For therefore came I forth*, that is, came forth from God, or was sent by God. (See Luke iv. 43; John xi. 14, xvi. 27-30.) Jesus ever remembered the purpose for which He came into the world; not His own pleasure, but the glory of God in the salvation of sinners. How many persons, alas, live as if they were born to live in pleasure or amusement, and then to die like the beasts. A young lady was once converted by meditating on the first answer in the Assembly's catechism. The first question is, "What is the chief end of man?" The answer, "To glorify God, and enjoy Him forever." She felt that she was not fulfilling this end while spending her time in vain and worldly pleasures. By the grace of God she gave them up, and became an eminent Christian. *Throughout all Galilee*. Notice (I), how the succession of events marks the development of Christ's work: 1. The synagogue at home. 2. The house of Peter, as the hearth of the new community of the disciples at its outset. 3. The whole town of Capernaum. 4. The entire land of Galilee. (II) The progression of the influence of our Lord's preaching. 1. His fame goes out through all

Galilee. 2. The whole town of Capernaum presses for help and healing at His door, yea, into His doors. 3. All seek Him after He had withdrawn. 4. Even in the wilderness they come to Him from all parts.

40. *And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. 41. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth *his* hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will, be thou clean. 42. And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. 43. And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away; 44. And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

*Matt. viii. 2; Luke v. 12. *Heb. ii. 17, iv. 15. *Psa. xxxiii. 9; Matt. xv. 28. *Lev. xiv. 3, iv. 10; Luke v. 14.

A leper. The Jews considered leprosy as a punishment from God; and Moses gives particular directions concerning the treatment of lepers. (See Lev. xiii. 45). The Rev. T. C. Ewald, in his "*Missionary Labors in Jerusalem*," says, "Beyond the walls of the Armenian convent, near the Zion gate, is the wretched village of the miserable lepers. This unfortunate and pitiable race consists of about one hundred. They are compelled to live separate from all, intermarry "lepers," and are thus allowed to propagate their miseries from one generation to another. The malady appears generally when they are about twelve or fourteen years old, and increases every year till they lose literally one limb after the other; as they grow older their sight fails, then throat and lungs become infected, till death ends their protracted sufferings. They live upon charity, which they receive from the pilgrims and others." *Kneeling down to him.* Mark alone describes this attitude of the leper. *If thou wilt, &c.* His speech is a very touching one. It *implies* a prayer, yet, in reality, nothing is *asked*. It is rather a profession of strong faith, and an humble "*Thy will be done.*"

Jesus, moved with compassion, &c. Our Evangelist is very assiduous in observing the holy movement of feelings, and hence even the gestures of Jesus. Whoever will carefully attend to this in reading his Gospel, will derive from it no little delight. *Put forth his hand, &c.* The Saviour's working by means in healing diseases was His most ordinary way, and is most adapted to the weakness of our faith and the dimness of our understanding. Yet it

is as easy for Him to work *without means*, and even *against means*, as with them. We ought never so to depend upon His will and power hidden, as to neglect His declared pleasure. He that neglects what he finds commanded, has little reason to expect what he finds not promised. Upon means it is fit we should depend, without means we may hope, against means we should not despair. (John ix. 39; Acts xii. 8, xxvii. 31).

I will, &c. Here Christ asserted that diseases are subject to His will. His power, of course, must be Divine. The leper acknowledged this, and Christ here claims that His will and command are all that is needed to make the incurable leper clean. And so the result showed. How readily does Christ grant every humble request. This is symbolical of His power over sin, and of His readiness to deliver from its curse. *He was cleansed*, by his being brought into contact with Him who was absolute purity. *He straitly, i. e., forthwith, charged him, &c.* This was done lest Jesus should seem to ignore the law. The man, when healed, was ready to remain with Christ, and away from his relatives. Adversity tends to transfer our affections from natural objects to the Saviour. *For a testimony unto them*—a palpable witness that the Great Healer had indeed come, and that "God had visited His people." (See on verse 45). How loathsome and inveterate soever the leprosy of our sins may be, let us not be ashamed to go to Christ.

See on Matt. viii. 1-4; Luke v. 12-14.

45. *But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.—*Luke v. 15. *Chap. ii. 13.

See on Luke v. 15.

He went out, &c. He was so full of his blessedness that he could not keep it a secret. Other persons whom our Saviour had in like manner cured, and commanded to keep silence, seem to have found it, in like manner, impossible to retain themselves. (See on Matt. ix. 30, 31.) *Inasmuch that Jesus, &c.* Here we see one reason why our Lord may have enjoined silence on the leper, for it appears that, in consequence of his disobedience, the Son of Man could no longer appear openly in the city. Doubtless, He wished that men

should come to Him rather as an act of individual faith, than troop to Him in crowds, as to a physician with the reputation of more than human skill, whose very touch was health, and who had never been known to lay hands on any one in vain. "Our Lord's injunction," says one, "does, indeed, for the time appear to have been spoken in vain, yet His word shall

not return to Him void, but perform its purpose (Isa. iv. 11), and if in nothing else, yet in this, that even to this day it remains a witness to us, teaching us to avoid all vain-glory in acts of charity, although indeed it may be true that glory and honor will ever pursue those who flee from them, and flee from those who anxiously pursue them."

1. How is this Gospel introduced? 2. What is said of "the voice?" 3. Where did John baptize? 4. What did he preach? 5. What was the effect of his preaching? 6. What did he say of Jesus? 7. Explain the temptation of our Saviour. 8. What is said of Simon and Andrew? 9. What of James and John? 10. What did Christ do in Capernaum? 11. State the particulars of the cure of Simon's wife's mother. 12. What other miracle followed this?

CHAPTER II.

1 *Christ healeth one sick of the palsy, 14 calleth Matthew from the receipt of custom, 15 eateth with publicans and sinners, 18 excuseth his disciples for not fasting, 23 and for plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath day.*

AND again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house. 2. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door, and he preached the word unto them.—^aMatt. ix. 1; Luke v. 18.

Again he entered into Capernaum—after leaving Capernaum, as mentioned in the last chapter, on account of the crowds. *It was noised.* Although He came in a private and unostentatious manner, such was the general interest excited by His miracles and teaching, that His coming was soon known throughout the city. *In the house.* This means the house which Jesus occupied with His mother and His brethren, after His settlement there. (Chap. iii. 31.) His adopted sisters probably remained, as married, in Nazareth (see chap. vi. 3), when the family of Joseph passed over with Him to Capernaum.

And straightway. This is a favorite expression of Mark, the original Greek adverb occurring in the first chapter no less than ten times. *Insomuch that there was no room, &c.* The sense of the passage is, "So that there was no longer place for them in the vestibule—much less in the house itself." *And he preached the word unto them,* that is, the doctrine or instruc-

tion pertaining to the new dispensation. Jesus thus taught His ministers by His example, to embrace all opportunities, in season and out of season, on the Lord's day and on the week day, to edify their people by their ministry, by their public exhortations, by their private instructions, prudent admonitions, and holy examples.

3. And they came unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. 4. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was; and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. 5. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. 6. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts. 7. Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? 8. And immediately, when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? 9. Whether is it easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*, or to say, *Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk*? 10. But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy), 11. I say unto thee, *Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.* 12. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all, insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion. ^aJob xiv. 4; Isa. xliii. 25. ^cMatt. ix. 5.

See on Matt. ix. 1-8; Luke v. 18-26.

Borne of four. He was therefore full grown, though not old. Each held a corner of the litter. *For the press,* on account of the crowd. *Uncovered the roof.* The roofs of the houses in the East were flat, surrounded with a battlement (Deut. xxii. 8), and had a trap-door, for the convenience of persons who wished to walk on the

roof, or retire there for private devotion. (Matt. xxiv. 17.) This door, when shut, would of course be well fastened, to secure the house from thieves. The bearers of the paralytic were therefore obliged to break it open before they could get entrance; and they took off the tiles which covered the door as well as roof, and, forcing open the door, had nothing then to interrupt them from accomplishing their purpose. Difficulty of achievement stupefies the sluggard, advises the prudent, terrifies the fearful, animates the courageous. (x. 48, xvi. 2, 3.) Let us come to Christ, says an old writer, through the door or through the roof, that is, in a regular or irregular way.

Saw their faith. Faith is not idle; it works and is forcible; it breaks out like fire; it is always fruitful through love. Faith without works is no faith, it is dead and bringeth death. We should encourage ourselves from this and similar passages, to plead with the Saviour in behalf of those friends, neighbors, or relatives, who, from any cause, are yet strangers to His truth. *Son.* By thus addressing him, Jesus manifested His disposition to help the afflicted, even as a "father pitieth his own children." (Ps. ciii. 13; 1 John iii. 1.) *Perceived in his spirit,* &c. The scribes probably supposed that no one knew what was going on in their minds. But their malicious thought was publicly exposed. They were put to an open shame. Here is an important lesson for us. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." (Heb. iv. 13). Nothing can be concealed from Christ. He knows, sees, records, even what we think, and will one day call us to give account. (Rom. ii. 16; Ps. xix. 14.)

So reasoned. We ought not to find fault with the use of human reason, in matters of Divine revelation, but rather with the abuse of it, when it becomes human reasoning. (Luke xxiv. 15, 25; 2 Cor. x. 5.) *Whether is it easier,* &c. It is impossible not to be struck with this narrative. Jesus not only shows His power here, but He shows an unrivalled, an infinite ease in the exertion of it. For He lets His enemies themselves, as it were,

choose the way, in which it should be manifested, signifying that with Him it made no difference. (Deut. xxxii. 31.) *But that ye may know,* &c. The propitiation for our sins was the great work for which He came; as Isaiah speaks (xxvii. 9): "This is all the fruit, to take away sin." That was His errand, on which He came; this He published and made known to the world. It was the end of all His miracles to seal up this truth to us. (Heb. ix. 26.) Though all the persons in the Trinity forgive sins, yet not in the same manner. The Father bestows, the Son merits, the Holy Ghost seals up and applies, remission of sins.

13. "And he went forth again by the sea-side, and all the multitudes resorted unto him, and he taught them." 14. "And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him." *Matt. ix. 9. †Matt. ix. 9; Luke v. 27.

See on Matt. ix. 9; Luke v. 27, 28.

By the sea-side, the sea of Galilee. (Comp. Matt. ix. 9.) *All the multitudes,* who had gathered in and around the house where the paralytic was healed. *And he taught them.* How perpetually was the blessed Saviour employed in the labors of His calling, in the service of His Father, and for the good of mankind! He went about doing good, setting an example of laborious diligence for all His ministers to follow. *Levi the son of Alphaeus,* &c. We learn from the parallel passage in Matthew (ix. 9) that this Levi was Matthew himself. The Jews gave several names to the same person. If the Alphaeus here mentioned was the same Alphaeus as in Matt. x. 3, then Matthew was the cousin of Jesus, being brother of James the Less.

Sitting at the receipt of custom, as a publican, which Luke (v. 27) calls him. It means the place of receipt, the toll-house or booth in which the collector sat. Being, in this case, by the sea-side, it might be the ferry tax, for the transit of persons and goods across the lake, which he collected. *Follow me.* Witching words these, from the lips of Him who never employed them without giving them resistless efficacy in the hearts of those they were spoken to. *And he arose,* &c. Luke says (v. 28) he left all, rose up, and followed Him. "Christ found him, as he was *Levi*, the publican," says an old writer, "but

looked on him as he was *Matthew*, the Apostle. He called him to an office much more gainful. where he should still be a receiver, and a gainer, too, but not, as here, 10 or 15 per centum, but where one should bring forth thirty, one sixty, one an hundred fold." (i. 17; *Hab.* ii. 6; *Job* xx. 15-23; 1 *Tim.* ii. 6.)

15. "And it came to pass, that as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many, and they followed him. 16. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? 17. When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, 'They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.'"
 18. *Matt.* ix. 10. *Matt.* ix. 12, 13; *Luke* v. 31, 32; 1 *Tim.* i. 15.

See on *Matt.* ix. 10-12; *Luke* v. 29-32.

In his house, i. e., Levi's house. The pronoun can be easily referred to him from the preceding verse, and we have also the direct testimony of *Luke* (v. 29). Is the dining of Jesus with publicans and sinners, a precedent for us to go and dine with those to whom we entertain the strongest religious objection? We answer, when Jesus dined with these, He went not as a companion to share in their mere conviviality, but as an instructor of the ignorant, a physician for the sick, a Saviour to the sinful; and if we go with the same motive, and with the same design, we are warranted in going also; that is to say, if we go deliberately to do good, designedly to benefit those who are about us, and with whom we are associated, then we are warranted in doing so; but if we go where we have no call in Providence to be, but only to gratify our own passions, our own mere carnal appetites and desires, it is a question that will be very soon settled when looked at in the light of the sanctuary, whether we have any right to be there.

What can we hope to do, or say, that shall escape the censure and misinterpretation of man, when we see the Son of God could not avoid it?

They that are whole, &c.—think they are whole. The disease of sin is of a lethargic nature, and stupefies the unhappy creatures, so that they are not sensible of it. It renders them delirious, so that they think themselves well, when the symptoms of death are strong upon them. . . . We can weep and lament over the sick bed

of a dying friend, and we even drop our tears after him into the grave; but shall we drop no tears over dying souls? (*Ps.* cxix. 53; *Hos.* vii. 9; *Jer.* ix. 1, xiii. 17; *Luke* xix. 41.)

18. "And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come, and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? 19. And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. 20. But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. 21. No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment; else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse. 22. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles."
 19. *Matt.* ix. 14; *Luke* v. 33.

See on *Matt.* ix. 14-17; *Luke* v. 33-39.

Used to fast. They were doubtless then in the act of fasting. It may be easily supposed that the imprisonment of John would give occasion to his disciples, and with them to many of the Pharisees, for an extraordinary fast. *And they come.* Of course only some, as representing the mind of all. *Why do the disciples of John, &c.* It has well been said, that the envious are more busied in censuring the conduct of others than in rectifying their own. This is one vice belonging to a Pharisee, and which is very common. It is another, to desire that every one should regulate his piety by ours, and embrace our particular customs and devotions. It is a third, to speak of others only that we may have an opportunity to speak of and to distinguish ourselves. It is very dangerous for a man to make himself remarkable by such devout practices as are external and singular, when he is not firmly settled and rooted in internal virtues, and, above all, in humility. *The bridegroom.* What the bridegroom is to the bride, the Lord Jesus is to the souls of all who believe in Him. He loves them with a deep and everlasting love; takes them into union with Himself, pays all their debts to God; supplies all their daily need; sympathizes with them in all their troubles; bears with them in their infirmities; regards those that persecute and injure them as persecuting Him, and will one day share with them the glory that He has received from His Father. They are the Lamb's wife. (*Rev.* xix. 7.)

Can the children of the bridegroom fast?

&c. The question amounts to this: Can

you expect there will be mourning on a nuptial occasion? Would mourning be congruous at a wedding? *The bridegroom shall be taken away, &c.* Continuing the language of the illustration drawn from the bridegroom, instead of adopting plain language, Jesus said, the bridegroom, that is, Himself, would be removed, and then, through sorrow of heart, in their changed circumstances, the friends of the bridegroom, His disciples, would fast. The *incongruities* mentioned in verses 21-2, were intended to illustrate the difference between the *genius* of the old and the new economies, and the danger of *mixing up* the one with the other. As, in the one case supposed, "the rent is made worse," and in the other, "the new wine is spoiled," so by a mongrel mixture of the ascetic ritualism of the old with the spiritual freedom of the new economy, both are disfigured and destroyed. Here note the course of the true followers of Christ, with regard to old and new forms: 1. They do not, in the bondage of formality, cling to what is old, merely because it is old. 2. Nor do they prematurely adopt the new, simply because it is new. But, 3. Free from slavish conservatism and radical liberalism, they are led by the Spirit of Christ to prepare new bottles for new wine.

23. ¶ And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day, and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. 24. And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful? 25. And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungered, he, and they that were with him? 26. How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shew bread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him? 27. And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: 28. Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

*Matt. xii. 1; Luke vi. 1. †Deut. xxiv. 25. ‡1 Sam. xxi. 6. §Ex. xxix. 32, 33; Lev. xxiv. 9. ¶Matt. xii. 8.

See on Matt. xii. 1-8; Luke vi. 1-5; Mark ii. 27, 28.

His disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. "I walk many times in the pleasant fields of the Holy Scriptures, where I pluck up the goodly herbs of sentences by pruning, eat them by reading, digest them by musing, and lay them up at length in the high seat of memory by gathering them together, that so, having tasted their sweetness, I may less perceive the bitterness of life. (Jer. xv. 10; Ps.

exix. 103)."—*Q. Elizabeth.* "If one single promise of the Gospel, like an ear of corn, rubbed in the hand of faith, and applied by the Spirit of Christ, can give such a full satisfying meal of joy to the hunger-bitten, pining soul, oh, what price can we set upon the whole field of Scripture, which 'stands so thick' with promises, every way as cordial as this? (Jer. xv. 16; Ps. lxxv. 14; 2 Peter i. 4)."—*Gurnall.*

Abiathar the high priest. It is found that Abiathar was not the high priest at this time. Abimelech was the high priest. Abiathar was his son, and Mark calls him the high priest by anticipation. Napoleon was called the first consul once, but historians would speak of him as the emperor. Thus Abiathar is called the high priest by one of those anticipatory expressions, which are common to all historians. It is not, therefore, a contradiction of fact, but one of the indirect and latent proofs of the genuineness of the narrative.

The Sabbath was made for man, &c. This is a most important lesson. The Sabbath was not made first, and man created in order to fit it, but man was made first, and the Sabbath was instituted in order to fit man. In other words, we are not for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath is for us, and any one who can comprehend this great truth in its length and its breadth, will not be likely to have a scrupulous conscience in reference to the Sabbath, which is bad one way, nor will he have a latitudinarian conscience, or tendency to profane it, which is as bad in the opposite direction.

This passage, beautiful, comforting, and instructive as it is, is often quoted by men who have no reverence for the Sabbath; or rather it is misquoted, for if their interpretation of it prevailed, the Sabbath would be displaced from its pure and lofty position, and degraded to be the slave of the passions, and to pander to the prejudices of mankind. The registers of eternity alone, it has truthfully been remarked, will show what a benefactress to mankind, what an ambassadress from heaven, the holy Christian Sabbath has been. Even *Sir Walter Scott* has said: "If we believe the Divine commandment, the Sabbath was instituted for the express purpose of religion alone; the time set apart as the

Sabbath of the Lord ; a day on which not to work our own works, nor to think our own thoughts. The precept is positive, the purpose is clear. For our eternal benefit, a certain space of every week is appointed, which is sacred from all other avocations, save those imposed by necessity and mercy, and is to be employed in religious duties and privileges alone."

We do not see the connection of the good with the Sabbath; but because unseen it is no less real. An influence goes forth from every Sabbath that tells upon the tone of our Congressional debates, that influences our judicial decisions, and that imparts to all classes of men—the exchange, the counting-house, the transactions of the world—a sublimer, holier, and loftier tone. It cannot be doubted that our national prosperity, with all its fruits, has a connection with the Sabbath. The great tree seems to stand alone, but its roots below the ground stretch within the jurisdiction of the Sabbath, and are refreshed and invigorated there. There is a public conscience as well as public opinion; and how much of all that is purest, and holiest, and best in public opinion, may be traced to the influence of the Sabbath and the exercises of the sanctuary, eternity, not time, will be able to unfold.

"There is one weapon (says Mr. *Barnes*) which the enemy has employed to destroy Christianity, and to drive it from the

world, which has never been employed but with signal success. It is the attempt to corrupt the Christian Sabbath; to make it a day of festivity; to cause Christians to feel that its sacred and rigid obligation has ceased; to induce them on that day to mingle in the scenes of pleasure, or the exciting plans of ambition; to make them feel that they may pursue their journeys by land and water, by the steamboat and the car, regardless of the command of God; and this has done, and will continue to do, what no argument, no sophistry, no imperial power has been able to accomplish. The 'Book of Sports' did more to destroy Christianity than all the ten persecutions of the Roman emperors; and the views of the second Charles and his court about the Lord's Day, tended more to drive religion from the British nation than all the fires that were enkindled by Mary. Paris has no Sabbath, and that fact has done more to banish Christianity than all the writing of Voltaire; and Vienna has no Sabbath, and that fact does more to annihilate religion than ever did the skepticism of Frederick. Turn the Sabbath into a day of sports and pastime, of military reviews, and of pantomines and theatrical exhibitions, and not an infidel anywhere would care a farthing about the tomes of Volney or Voltaire, about the skepticism of Hume, the sneers of Gibbon, or the scurrility of Paine."

1. What miracle was wrought in Capernaum? 2. Explain verse 9. 3. How did Christ call Levi? 4. What was the result of this call? 5. In whose house did Jesus sit at meat? 6. By whom was this objected to? 7. On what ground? 8. How did Jesus reply to the objection? 9. How are we to understand verses 21 and 22? 10. What fault was found by the Pharisees with the disciples? 11. How did Jesus defend them? 12. What is said of the Sabbath?

CHAPTER III.

1 *Christ healeth the withered hand, 10 and many other infirmities: 11 rebuketh the unclean spirits; 13 chooseth his twelve apostles: 22 convinceth the blasphemy of casting out devils by Beelzebub: 31 and sheweth who are his brother, sister, and mother.*

AND *he entered again into the synagogue, and there was a man there which had a withered hand. 2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day, that they might accuse him. 3 And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. 4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. 5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.*

^aMatt. xii. 9; Luke vi. 6. ^bPs. xxxvii. 32; Isa. xxix. 20, 21; Jer. xx. 10; Dan. vi. 4. ^cHos. vi. 6.

On verses 1-5 see on Matt. xii. 9-13; Luke vi. 6-10.

And he entered, &c. He had now returned again to Galilee from Jerusalem, whither he had gone to keep the second passover after His entrance upon His public ministry. *The withered hand* is properly found *in the synagogue*; for where the gifts of Divine knowledge abound, there the greater danger attends the blame, which is without excuse. (Amos iii. 2; Matt. xi. 20-23; Luke xii. 48, xiii. 7; John ix. 41.)

Watched him, &c. They were now come to the length of dogging His steps to collect material for a charge of impiety against Him. There is no public action when the world is not ready to scan. *Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil?* &c. A similar manner of expression occurs in Mal. i. 2, 3, quoted in Rom. ix. 13: "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated," that is, Esau have I not loved, comparatively speaking. The form of the questions was such, also, as might very naturally suggest to the minds of our Lord's opponents a comparison between themselves and Him. *He was bestowing blessings on the afflicted, they were plotting His destruction.* To their consciences, He might have intended to appeal, by presenting the inquiry whether He was pursuing a justifiable course on the Sabbath, or they. Not to "do good" is the same as to do evil. "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

Looked round about on them with anger. It is not necessary here to discuss, with commentators, the question, whether our Lord really felt anger or not, or what is

the true definition of anger, for the original word here does not denote *anger*, but (as sometimes in the classical writers) *indignation*, a view established by the phrase following, "being grieved," &c., which was, no doubt, meant to qualify the word rendered "anger," intimating that with the *indignation* was mingled *concern* and *grief* at the fate reserved for His adversaries. Such anger is not unlawful. (Eph. iv. 26.) Parents, masters and magistrates may sin in not expressing just displeasure; and anger is only sinful when it springs from selfishness and malevolence, when causeless, or above the cause, and when expressed by unhallowed words or actions. Even that anger which is lawful should, as in the present case, be tempered with grief or compassion for those who have offended. *Being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.* Sorrow and pity for their wilfulness and their ruin mingles with the stern recognition that they deserve the ruin they incur. A Christian should sorrow not only for his own sins, but also be grieved for those of others. The expression, "hardness of their hearts," is metaphorically put for spiritual stupidity and dullness. The word literally signifies *a petrifying, a becoming hard like stone*, and then the state of hardness or petrification.

Stretch forth thine hand. "God willeth not that we should be supine, inasmuch as He worketh not the whole Himself, nor is it His will that we should be proud, inasmuch as He commits not the whole to us, but, subtracting from each the injurious tendency, He bestows on us what is for our advantage." (xvi. 20; John vi. 27; Phil. ii. 12, 13.)"—*Chrysostom.*

His hand was restored whole as the other. This was one of the cases in which our Lord may be said to have wrought a miracle of healing *without a word*. Unlike those occasions when the eyes of the blind were anointed by Him (John ix. 6, 14), and His hands were laid upon the sufferer, the present miracle followed upon the exercise of a mere act of Almighty will. Our Saviour only directed the man to assume a posture which should bring his withered limb under the distinct

observation of all present, and thus make the miracle which followed, a plain and palpable thing. How must the anger of His watchful enemies have been thereby aroused and inflamed! The man was healed; yet our Lord had *done* nothing; *less*, certainly, than each one of themselves was forced to do at every hour, throughout the Sabbath. (See on Luke vi. 11.)

6. ^aAnd the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.—^aMatt. xii. 14. ^cMatt. xxii. 16.

See on Matt. xii. 14; Luke vi. 11.

Straightway. Their hatred increased. (Comp. verse 2, at the end.) *Herodians.* The Pharisee, who was the great traditionalist of the age, and the Herodian, the great skeptic of the age, coalesced, when the Lord of glory was to be put down. How sad it is that skepticism does not so hate superstition, nor superstition so hate skepticism, as they both hate the truth as it is in Christ Jesus! This consultation with a view to the destruction of our Lord, demonstrates the desperate wickedness of the human heart. He had done no evil. Neither could any charge be brought against His teaching. He had proved it to be agreeable to Scripture and reason, and no reply had been made to His proofs. But it mattered little how perfectly He lived or taught, He was hated. This is human nature appearing in its true colors. The unconverted heart hates God, and will show its hatred whenever it dares, and has a favorable opportunity. It will persecute God's witnesses. It will dislike all who have anything of God's mind and are renewed after His image. (1 John iii. 13.)

7. But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea; and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea, 8. And from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

^aLuke vi. 17.

To the sea—to some distance, no doubt, from the scene of the miracle, the madness, and the plotting just recorded. The life on the sea, in the ship, which was now His chief place of instruction in opposition to the synagogue, and which more than once served Him for a transient retreat to the opposite bank, here had its commencement. *And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, &c.* There were

two multitudes; one followed Him from Galilee, the other, from most remote quarters, then for the first time came to Jesus. The former, in the Greek order, is a *great multitude*, the latter, a *multitude great*; force being added by the transposition of the noun. *Galilee. . . . Judea. . . . Jerusalem.* Jerusalem was in Judea. It is mentioned particularly, to show that not only the people of the surrounding country came, but also many from the capital, the place of wealth, honor, power. *Idumea.* This was the ancient Edom. *Beyond Jordan, i. e., Perea*—literally, *that beyond or the other side*—the name given to the region beyond Jordan. *They about Tyre and Sidon.* The persons here referred to were not the Tyrians and Sidonians, but the Jews who lived on the confines of those places. *When they had heard what great things he did, &c.* So, if Christ be persecuted and abandoned by the wicked, there are a multitude of pious souls who earnestly seek and follow Him. He who labors for God, will always *find* more than he *loses*, in the midst of all his contradictions and persecutions.

9. And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him. 10. For he had healed many, insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues. 11. ^aAnd unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, ^bThou art the Son of God. 12. And he straitly charged them that they should not make him known. 13. ^cChap. i. 23, 24; Luke iv. 41. ^bMatt. xiv. 33; chap. i. 1. ^aMatt. xii. 16; chap. i. 25, 34.

A small ship. The vessels in use on the sea of Tiberias were all much smaller than what we now call ships. *Wait on him*—not merely at that time. *Lest.* He cares for due convenience. He who “measures the waters in the hollow of His hand,” and “commands” them, is ferried over in some boat or small vessel. Was it not richly laden with this inestimable Pearl, “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” “all fullness” dwelling in Him? (Matt. viii. 26; Ps. lxxvii. 19.) *Pressed upon*—illustrating the wonderful patience and benignity of our Lord. *Plagues, sicknesses, called plagues, or scourges,* as being sent in the righteous providence of God, in consequence of sin.

Unclean spirits. One reason why Providence may have suffered evil spirits to exert their malignant powers so much at that time, might be to give a check to Sadduceeism among the Jews, and to Epi-

curean atheism among the Gentiles, and to remove, in some measure, these two great impediments to the reception of the Gospel. (i. 24; Acts xix. 15, xxiii. 8.)

Thou art the Son of God. The "Son of God" implies the *Messiah*—the long promised Deliverer of the nation, foretold in prophecy, foreshadowed in history. The Jews had learned—probably from Ps. ii. 7, 12 (comp. Acts xiii. 33; Heb. i. 5, v. 5), by that name to speak of *Christ*, as we learn from Matt. xiv. 33, xvi. 16, xxvi. 63, xxvii. 54; Luke xxii. 70; John i. 49, ix. 35, xi. 27, &c. The very fallen angels knew Messiah by that name. (See Matt. viii. 29; Luke iv. 41, &c.)

It is a very solemn thought that all the ends of the earth shall yet acknowledge Jesus in this character, that all the lost in misery and the saved in glory shall equally admit that He is Lord of all. The one class shall admit it as a free-will offering joyously given; the other shall express it as a great and awful sacrifice irresistibly exacted. Heaven shall praise Him joyfully and with delight; hell shall praise Him reluctantly, but really. From height and depth, from east and west, from north and south, God shall be glorified, either in the joyful songs of the saved, or in the reluctant acknowledgments of those who would not be saved, and who have perished entirely because they rejected Him, the only Saviour.

And he straitly charged them, &c. Our Lord accepted not devils for preachers. They so mingled falsehood with their truth, that he who listens to them for the truth's sake will be led away by their lies. All the testimony Jesus would have from them was given by their disclosing their infernal presence and disappearing at His command.

13. ^f And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would; and they came unto him. 14. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, 15. And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils: 16. And Simon the surnamed Peter; 17. And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James, and he surnamed them *Boanerges*, which is, The sons of thunder: 18. And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddæus, and Simon the Canaanite, 19. And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went into a house. ^g Matt. x. 1; Luke vi. 12, ix. 1. ^h John i. 42. ⁱ Isa. lviii. 1; Jer. xxiii. 9; Heb. liii. 12.

On verses 13-19 see on Matt. x. 1-4; Luke vi. 12-16.

Into a mountain. Luke says that He went to this mountain to pray, and that He continued all night in prayer. The Christian, like his Divine pattern, will have special seasons of retirement and prayer for his own good and also for the good of others. *And he calleth unto him whom he would.* No one was allowed to follow Him to the mountain without being especially called. Those whom He appointed Apostles had been His disciples before. We may learn from this that no one should take upon himself the office of the Evangelical ministry without a Divine call, and that before receiving such a call a man must be already a disciple of Christ. *And he ordained, or set apart; literally, made, appointed,* as the representatives of the spiritual Israel. (See Rev. xxi. 14.) This setting apart for the Apostolic office had been preceded by several calls extended to the men individually by our Lord to become His followers, and even the act here mentioned seems to have been only a preparatory setting apart (comp. Luke vi. 12), in order to prepare and fit them for their future real mission, recorded by Matthew (x. 5), Mark (vi. 7) and Luke (ix. 1).

Twelve. (See Ex. xv. 27; Josh. iv. 3.) *That they should be with him.* Constant attendance upon Christ's ministry was not required of the other disciples, but the Apostles were to be fitted for their office, by remaining with Him and enjoying private as well as public instruction. *And that he might send them forth to preach, &c.* The business of a minister of Christ is, 1. To preach the Gospel. 2. To be the physician of souls; and, 3. To wage war with the devil, and destroy his kingdom. *Matthew.* (See *Preface* to the Gospel of Matthew.) *Boanerges.* He who is enrolled among "the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God," must be a man "sound in the faith," "fervent in spirit," and also "a son of consolation." In this sense he must combine what is found in a *Cephas*, a *Boanerges*, and a *Barnabas*. (John i. 42; Acts iv. 36.) For the history of the "twelve" see *Historical Index*.

And they went into a house. This clause properly belongs to the next verse, and

opens the next paragraph. It is to this house that "the multitude cometh together." In this record of the first ordination which ever took place in the Church of Christ, three lessons stand out prominently.

1. All ministers are not necessarily good men. Judas Iscariot was one of the Apostles. Ordained men are not necessarily converted. We are not to regard them as infallible, either in doctrine or in practice. We are not to make popes or idols of them, and insensibly put them in Christ's place. 2. The great work of a minister of Christ is to do good. He is to proclaim glad tidings, to relieve those who are suffering, to diminish sorrow, and to increase joy. 3. It is a most dangerous thing to neglect the offers of the Gospel. It shall prove "more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah" in the judgment day, than for those who have heard Christ's truth, and not received it. (John xvi. 9.)

20. † And the multitude cometh together again, ^{so} that they could not so much as eat bread. 21. And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: ^{for} they said, He is beside himself.

¹Chap. vi. 31. ²John vii. 5, x. 20.

And the multitude, &c. Wherever Jesus went, so anxious were the people to hear Him, that they came together in great numbers. It appears from what follows, that the multitude at this time was unusually great. *Could not so much as eat bread.* Had neither room nor opportunity to get food. Their time and attention were so occupied, that they were obliged to forego their regular meals. *His friends*—evidently His relatives according to the flesh. *Heard of it.* The words "of it," are not in the original, and the reference is therefore in general to His acts and doings, His preaching, calling the Apostles, denunciations of the Pharisees, miraculous powers, &c. *They went out, &c.*—went from their homes, to lay hold on him, not violently, but in a suitable manner, to rescue Him from the danger that might result from the excitement He was producing. *Beside Himself.* They thus attributed to Him excess of zeal overpowering judgment, but falsely, as Festus to Paul. (Acts xxvi. 24.) Only in this way could they explain the fact, that He, who, in all probability, when under thirty years of age, made no

pretensions to teach or preach, was now going forth preaching and teaching, and doing many wonderful works.

Note, 1. Those who show much zeal and diligence in the service of God, must expect to be misunderstood and censured by the world. Let a man show that he is in earnest about his soul, that he is in earnest in teaching others the way to heaven, and in speaking that blessed Gospel, that is the savour of life unto life in all that believe it, and many will say, "much religion has made him mad." But he may say with the Apostle, "If we be beside ourselves it is to God." (2 Cor. v. 13.) Note, 2. That often the servants of God meet with the strongest temptations from, and are most discouraged and molested by, such as are their nearest relations by blood or alliance. It is a great trial to find our kinsmen hindering, instead of helping us forward in the ways of religion; but we must bear it patiently, knowing that not only others of God's children, but Jesus Christ His own and only Son experienced this trial.

22. † And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils. 23. † And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? 24. And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. 27. No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his house.

¹Matt. ix. 34, x. 25, xii. 24; Luke xi. 15; John vii. 20, viii. 48, 52, x. 20. ²Matt. xii. 25. ³Judges xii. 1; 2 Sam. xx. 1, 6. ⁴Gen. xiii. 7, 8, xxxvii. 4; Gal. v. 15. ⁵Isa. xlix. 24; Matt. xii. 29.

And the scribes said, &c. What could they say? Not that He never performed any miracles. Not that His miracles were ever contrary to mercy, benevolence, peace, and every divine virtue. And yet they ascribed the whole system of miraculous works to Satan, as if they did not know that all devilish manifestations are ever malignant, base, and sensual. Consummate malice! Envy makes those whose hearts are possessed of this vice, speak the language of the devil. Calumny is but at a little distance from envy. *How can Satan cast out Satan?* Can we suppose these wicked and malignant spirits, whose business it is to seduce men to ruin, would be willing to exert their power to work miracles, to confirm so holy a religion—a religion so contrary to their design,

and so subversive of their kingdom and interest? This would be wretched policy indeed. Or, if we should suppose them willing, yet, can we think that God, who has them all at His control, would suffer them to counterfeit the great seal of heaven, and annex it to an imposture? (Ex. viii. 18, 19; 2 Thes. ii. 7-12; Rev. xx. 2, 3.)

On verses 22-27 see on Matt. xii. 24-29; Luke xi. 21, 22.

28. "Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewithsoever they shall blaspheme: 29. But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: 30. Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit." Matt. xii. 31; Luke xii. 10; Heb. x. 26; 1 John v. 16. *John x. 20.

See on Matt. xii. 31, 32; Luke xii. 10.

As there is but one Godhead, so there is no sin against God—and all sin is so—but it is also against the whole Trinity. But, as there are certain attributes proper to every person of the Trinity, so there are certain sins, more directly against the several properties and attributes of those persons, and consequently against the persons themselves. Sins against the Holy Spirit are eminently against goodness and love. (Luke xxii. 69; Col. ii. 3; Rom. xv. 30.) *Is in danger, &c.* This does not imply uncertainty. A better translation would be, *is exposed to, or under sentence of eternal condemnation*, to be pronounced by Christ the Judge, at the last day. (See Matt. xxiii. 33.) "Dreadful truths," says *Bishop Wilson*, "are not to be forborne, for fear of casting men into despair. They are rather to be often inculcated to force sinners, by the sight of their dangers, to throw themselves into His arms, who is the only refuge of all sinners." (Jer. vi. 14; 2 Cor. v. 11; Phil.

iii. 18, 19.) *An unclean spirit.* Characterization of Beelzebub, in opposition to the Holy Spirit.

31. "There came then his brethren and his mother, and standing without, sent unto him, calling him. 32. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. 33. And he answered them, saying, "Who is my mother, or my brethren? 34. And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! 35. For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother." Matt. xii. 46; Luke viii. 19. *2 Cor. v. 16. *Matt. vii. 21; John vii. 17; James i. 25; 1 John ii. 17.

On verses 31-35 see on Matt. xii. 46-50; Luke viii. 19-21.

His friends had now arrived, and perhaps were listeners to the remarks just made. *Seek for thee.* As we learn by Matt. xiii. 54, that He soon visited Nazareth, it is very probable that the object of this visit was to prevail on Him to come to the home of His childhood. *And he looked round about.* Mark often gives prominence to the Lord's glance around. Here it is in contrast with the indignant looking around of iii. 5.

Behold my mother and my brethren—those toward whom I cherish affection similar to that which is usually cherished toward parents and brothers. *The same is my brother, &c.*—is regarded by me with peculiar affection, an affection similar, as to the interest which it leads me to feel in him, to that which one feels for the nearest relatives. "There stand here the members of a family transcending and surviving this of earth. Filial subjection to the will of my Father in heaven is the indissoluble bond of union between me and all its members, and whosoever enters this hallowed circle becomes to me brother, and sister, and mother."

1. What man was found by Jesus in the synagogue? 2. What did He say to him? 3. What did He say to them that watched Him? 4. How was He affected by the hardness of their hearts? 5. How was the withered hand restored? 6. Where did Jesus go? 7. What did He say to His disciples? 8. What is said of the unclean spirits? 9. How many disciples did He ordain? 10. For what purpose? 11. Name them. 12. What did the scribes say about our Saviour? 13. How did He answer them? 14. Explain verses 28 and 29. 15. How are we to understand the words, "Behold my mother and my brethren!"

CHAPTER IV.

¹ *The parable of the sower, 14 and the meaning thereof.*
²¹ *We must communicate the light of our knowledge to others.* ²⁶ *The parable of the seed growing secretly,*
³⁰ *and of the mustard seed.* ³³ *Christ stilleth the tempest on the sea.*

AND he began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea, and the whole multitude was by the sea, on the land. ² And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine,

^aMatt. xiii. 1: Luke viii. 4. ^bChap. xii. 33.

And he began again to teach by the sea side.

Another emphatic reference to the contrast of this with His customary course of teaching, and as an expression of His decided breach with the Pharisees. *A great multitude*; or, according to another well-supported reading, "a mighty," or "immense multitude." *So that he entered into a ship*—rather, "into the ship," meaning the one mentioned in iii. 9. *Sat in the sea*, that is, He sat in the boat, and the boat was in the sea. Here is a representation of those peculiar tossings and trials to which ministers are exposed, while it is the more easy lot of others to sit, comparatively at ease, on the shore. (Matt. xxvi. 36; 1 Cor. iv. 9.)

By parables. The word *parable* is derived from a Greek word signifying "to compare together," and denotes a similitude taken from a natural object, to illustrate a spiritual or moral subject. The parabolical, enigmatical, figurative and sententious way of speaking, was the language of the Eastern sages and learned men. The *origin* of parables, so far as can be traced, appears to have been with the Hebrews. *In his doctrine, i. e.*, in His teaching.

³ *Hearken*: Behold, there went out a sower to sow. ⁴ And it came to pass as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up: ⁵ And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth, and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: ⁶ But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. ⁷ And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. ⁸ And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased, and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some a hundred. ⁹ And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

^aJohn xv. 5; Col. i. 6.

Verses 3-9: see on Matt. xiii. 1-9, and Luke viii. 4-8, 15.

Hearken. Pronounced loudly to show the importance of what He was about to say, and to quiet the people, so that the very beginning of His discourse might not

be lost. *A sower*—the Divine speaker Himself. The soil "by the way-side" is hard and unbroken, wholly unfit, therefore, to receive the seed. The plow must first open the furrows. And yet, observe, that this is not all the evil. There is danger from without also. "The fowls of the air" are on the watch to carry away the seed as soon as it has fallen. *Stony ground.* Not a hard, hopeless surface, on which it would have been mere mockery to cast the seed. There is earth, but it has no *depth*, and consequently no *moisture*. (Luke viii. 6.) *Some fell among thorns, &c.*, for in this fallen world weeds grow faster than wheat, and wicked things prosper more, unfortunately we may say, than holy, pure and just things, and the result was, that the nettles, thorns and thistles overshadowed and choked the good seed. *Other fell on good ground, &c.* Observe the gradation. The seed sown in the highway comes not up at all; the seed sown upon stony ground comes up, but increaseth not; the seed sown among thorns increaseth, but bears no fruit; the seed sown on good ground brings forth fruit, *in some thirty, &c.* Here only the last of the four sorts of ground on which the seed was sown proved faithful, but among the servants two improved their talents or pounds, and one only buried them (Matt. xxv. 18; Luke xix. 20), and of the virgins, the wise and the foolish were equal. (Matt. xxv. 2.) So that nothing certain can be inferred from the relative proportions.

This version of the parable of the sower slightly differs, in some of the details, from Matthew's, but those deviations teach us that the Evangelists did not copy from each other. We find that people's education, business, station in life, and habits of thought, will all very much give tone, shape, peculiarity and distinctiveness to their respective narratives of any particular event. Matthew was a publican, Luke was a learned physician, John was an illiterate Hebrew, and Mark is supposed to have been a more learned man. Each, therefore, gives a varied verbal narrative of the same great transaction, but all were

guided and inspired by the overruling Spirit to record, in all their fullness, the wonderful words of Him who spake as never man spake.

10. ¶ And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. 11. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: 12. That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand, lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them. 13. And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?

¶ Matt. xiii. 10. ¶ 1 Cor. v. 12: Col. iv. 5: 1 Thes. iv. 12: 1 Tim. iii. 7. ¶ Isa. vi. 9: Matt. xiii. 14: Acts xxviii. 26: Rom. xi. 8. ¶ Matt. xiii. 19.

When he was alone, in respect to the multitude whom He had been teaching. His disciples were with Him. *Asked of him the parable*—the explanation of the parable. *Asked him of the parable*. Parables were used for a double, and even an opposite, purpose. They serve as a cloak and covering, and they moreover serve as a light and illustration. (Ex. xiv. 20; Hos. xiv. 9.) *Unto you it is given*, &c. (See on Matt. xiii. 11.) *Them that are without*, form the natural contrast to those that were with Christ, His disciples who had addressed the question to Him. In 1 Cor. v. 12, and Rev. xxii. 15, it is the designation for unbelievers, for all that are not Christians.

That seeing they may see, &c. (See on Matt. xiii. 14, 15.) The conjunction *that*, must be taken in its proper acceptation: "in order that." For the leading idea is that parabolic instruction is made use of in order that those who are determined to harden their hearts may remain in blindness. To see and not to perceive, to hear and not to understand, can evidently only take place in consequence of a determination on the part of men not to perceive or to understand. They are bent on preventing their conversion, and avoid for this very purpose every contact with truth. On such men God does not force His truth, but presents the truth to them in parables, which only the sincere inquirer after truth can understand. *Lest*. This *lest* depends upon their active ignoring of the truth. They ignore *lest* they should be converted. *Know ye not this parable?* The first parable of the kingdom is the basis of all the rest. If they understood not this, they could not understand any that followed. If they had the explanation of this, they had the key for the

understanding of all others. There is evidently here an intimation of the connection of all the parables in the idea of the kingdom of heaven, so that with the explanation of this one, all were explained.

14. ¶ The sower soweth the word. 15. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. 16. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground: who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness: 17. And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. 18. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, 19. And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. 20. And these are they which are sown on good ground: such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirty fold, some sixty, and some a hundred.

Verses 14–20: see on Matt. xiii. 18–23; Luke viii. 4, 8, 15.

By the way side. They who walk by the way side, must needs suffer from a multitude of distractions. Their minds must wander in proportion to the numerous and various objects which pass before them. The marked antithesis between the *immediate* reception and the *immediate* rejection is to be much observed. Grace, in almost every case, is slow and progressive; for, in the human heart it has much to contend against. *Deceitfulness of riches*. Consider avarice in itself, and nothing appears more base and contemptible, yet dragging along with it the ideas of power, place and security, it changes its nature, and becomes a provident provision. . . . This is one species of that *deceit*, which sin obtrudes upon its votaries, in which it is assisted by the very nature of sin itself. (See xiv. 4.) Every *care* must be considered as *worldly*, which has not some tendency to piety and the worship of God, even though it be not mixed up with what is positively prohibited. (Luke xiv. 19, 20, 30.)

Sown on good ground. "Now, that you may be fruitful," says *Leighton*, "examine well your own hearts. Pluck up, weed out, for there are still thorns. Some will grow, but he is the happiest man who hath the sharpest eye and the busiest hand, spying them out, and plucking them up. And above all, pray, pray before, after, and in hearing. Dart up desires to God. He is the Lord of the harvest, whose influence doeth all. The difference of the soil

makes, indeed, the difference of success; but the Lord hath the privilege of bettering the soil. He who framed the heart, changes it when and how He will. There is a curse on all grounds, naturally, which fell on the earth for man's sake, but fell more on the ground of man's own heart within him. 'Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth.' (Gen. iii. 18.) Now it is He that denounceth that curse, who alone hath power to remove it. He is both the sovereign owner of the seed, and the changer of the soil; He turns a wilderness into Carmel by His Spirit, and no ground, no heart, can be good, till He changes it."

21. ¶ And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick? 22. ¶ For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested, neither was anything kept secret, but that it should come abroad. 23. ¶ If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. 24. And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear. ¶ With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you, and unto you that hear shall more be given. 25. ¶ For he that hath, to him shall be given, and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath. ¹Matt. v. 15; Luke viii. 16, xi. 32. ²Matt. x. 26; Luke xii. 2. ³Matt. xi. 15, verse 9. ⁴Matt. vii. 2; Luke vi. 38. ⁵Matt. xiii. 12, xxv. 29; Luke viii. 18, xix. 26. See notes on all these verses.

Is a candle, &c. The general connection is this: I explain to you these parables, and give you instruction in all things pertaining to the Gospel of salvation. You are to consider yourselves depositaries of truth; and as men do not light a candle or lamp to conceal its rays by placing it under a bushel, neither are you to withhold from others the knowledge of the truths, which I am now imparting to you. *Under a bed.* This is referred by some to a sort of couch or sofa, having a cavity beneath it, in which a candlestick might be placed. Others, more correctly, refer it to the couch or triclinium, on which they reclined at meals, the idea being that a lighted candle is not placed *under*, but *upon* the table. Compare vii. 4, where the word has this meaning. *Manifested.* No part of the Saviour's instructions was intended to be always kept in obscurity; His design was, that in due time the truths which He was communicating should be distinctly and fully apprehended. When that time should arrive, His disciples were to be employed in the work of announcing and explaining His doctrines to the world. *If any man have ears to hear, &c.* For this reason we have two ears, and one tongue, that we should hear much, and speak little. (James i. 19.)

Take heed what ye hear. Sight, the nobler sense, governs hearing; the eye, not the ear, moves. *What—ye hear the Word of God, value this highly.* *More be given,* that ye may be not merely hearers, but more and more partakers. *For he that hath, &c.* (See on Matt. xiii. 12, xxv. 29; Luke viii. 18, xix. 26.) "God therefore gives, because He has given, making His former favors arguments for more. Man, therefore, shuts his hand, because He hath opened it. There is no such way to procure more from God, as to urge Him with what He hath done. All God's blessings are profitable and excellent, not so much in themselves as that they are inducements to greater."—*Bishop Hall.*

26. ¶ And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; 27. And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. 28. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. 29. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come. ¹Matt. xiii. 24. ²Rev. xiv. 15.

And he said, &c. This parable is peculiar to Mark. The position which it occupies throws some light upon its design. The impression which the parable of the sower produced upon the hearts of the hearers, and especially of the Apostles, could scarcely be otherwise than sad and discouraging, for if a sower, with all diligence and fidelity, had yet to find that so much seed should fail to bring forth fruit to perfection, therefore his labor had been in vain, he was bound to a heartless task. But in order to prevent such an effect, and strengthen His Apostles, as well as all teachers of the Gospel, with joyful hopes, stimulate them to continued fidelity, and direct their eye to the happy result in which their labors were certain to issue, the Lord delivered this parable.

So is the kingdom of God, &c. In the parable of the sower, it is said that the sower sows *his seed*, but here the word is only named *seed*, in general; we must, therefore, by the *sower* understand Christ, Himself, the author and proprietor of the word, while here Christ cannot be represented under the *man* spoken of; what is said of Him can only be understood of the human teachers of the Divine word. It cannot be said of the Lord, that He knows not how the seed sown in the

hearts of His people springs and grows up, since it is only His continual presence, by His Spirit, in their hearts, which causes it to grow at all. Neither can He fitly be compared to a sower who, having scattered his seed, goes his way and occupies himself in other business, feeling that it lies henceforth beyond the sphere of his power to further the prosperity of the seed, but that it must be left to itself and its own indwelling powers. This is no fit description of Him who is not merely the author and finisher of our faith, but who also conducts it through all its intermediate stages, and without whose blessing and active co-operation it would be totally unable to make any, even the slightest progress.

As if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, &c. At this point the likeness between the natural and the spiritual is exact and obvious. When we have made the Gospel of Christ known to some in whom we are interested, we are precisely in the condition of the agriculturist who has committed his seed to the ground. If we think of the matter when we lie down, or when we awake, we discover, perhaps with pain, that we do not know whether the seed is swelling and springing or not; and that though we knew its condition we could not reach it to stimulate the process. It is out of our hands and out of our sight. It is not, however, out of mind when it is out of sight, and our own helplessness may draw forth a more eager prayer to the Almighty Helper. In this way it is when we are weak that we become strong; it is when we are made most keenly sensible of our own weakness, that we cast our care most fully on the Lord. The law that shuts the sown seed out from us, shuts it in with God. One door closes, but the closing which hides the seed in its seed-bed from our eyes and separates it from our hands, leaves it open to His sight, and pliant to His power. The moment that the seed is sown, He takes it out of our sight, but then and thereby He brings it into His own. It is away from us and with God. *For the earth, &c.* This explains and illustrates the closing remark of the preceding verse. *Of herself, i. e., self-moved, spon-*

aneously. Man's agency is limited to the preparation of the soil and sowing of the seed. The quickening and energizing power resides in the earth itself according to the great and immutable laws of the Author of nature.

First the blade, &c. How beautiful does the green blade appear in the midst of the melting snow, and after the winter's storms are hushed into quiet and repose! And how beautiful does the green blade of godly fear appear as it springs forth in the life of one whose whole life has been one continued storm of reckless pride and passion! How silently does the green blade come forth from the bosom of the earth! And with what noiseless steps does Divine mercy come to the sinner's heart to make way for the sinner's Friend! How gradually does the green blade show itself! Though the eye were fixed upon the earth both night and day, the exact moment when it appeared could not be ascertained. And how hard is it for the Christian to tell the precise hour when the Omnipotent finger of God's Spirit first touched his heart, the first dew drop of heaven's mercy distilled upon his spirit! With what a mysterious yet invincible power does the green blade force its way through the heavy clods which cover it and hide it from view! So the plants of righteousness, though they may be heavily weighed by a body of sin and death, by manifold sorrows, temptations and fears, will nevertheless grow upward toward the great Source of eternal day.

Then the ear. After the blade, comes the ear pregnant with hope. On the first appearance of the blade, its true character might have been doubted by the uneducated eye, but now the rounded bulbs at once declare its worth to man, and wherever the green blade of earnest prayer shows itself with sorrow for sin, there, sooner or later, the other Christian graces will come forth, the knowledge imparted will become clearer, the character will become consolidated, and the man in Christ will appear strong to bear and do the will of God. *After that the full corn in the ear.* The process of development in the kingdom of grace is one and the same with the kingdom of nature—slow, gradual

and progressive; hence in knowledge, holiness, humility, and all the graces of the Christian life, there are many degrees. (1 John ii. 13, 14; Rom. xv. 1; Eph. iv. 13.) Consider the lovely picture of progressive growth in goodness which Peter supplies in his second epistle, i. 5-8, where it will be observed, Faith is the root, and charity the full corn in the ear.

But when the fruit is brought forth, &c.—literally, *yields or presents itself* for the harvest, *i. e.*, is ripe for the sickle. *He putteth in the sickle, &c.* In some cases the harvest and the reaping point to the end of the world and the awards of the judgment, as for example, in Matt. xiii. 39. But in other cases, the reaping of the ripened grain is employed to represent that success in the winning of souls, which human ministers of the word may obtain and enjoy. (See Ps. cxxvi. 6; John iv. 35, 36; Matt. ix. 37, 38.)

The harvest is come. It is not the end of the world, it is not even the close of a Christian life in the world. There is a ripening and a fruit-bearing while life in the body lasts. There is also a reaping and an enjoying of the harvest by those who sow the seed, or their successors. The announcement, "One soweth and another reapeth," clearly implies that the same one who sows may also, to some extent, reap. There is part of both: a sower gathers some of the fruit of his labor in his own life-time, and some of it is gathered by others after he has departed. Here is a lesson for ministers and teachers. The Lord, who sends them out to sow, expects that they will look and long for fruit, and be disappointed if it does not appear.

30. ¶ And he said, "Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? 31. *It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: 32. But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches, so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.*

¶ Matt. xiii. 31; Luke xiii. 18; Acts ii. 41, iv. 4, v. 14, xix. 20.

It is like a grain of mustard seed, &c. In the parable of the sower, the seed scattered yielded a return to the husbandman in only one of the four kinds of soil on which it fell. This itself might have left an impression on the minds of Christ's hearers, that His Gospel must be deficient in

power, if it proved successful in only one out of four classes of mankind. Our Lord, therefore, in this parable, sets before the people the inherent power of "the kingdom of God." It may seem at first to find little acceptance with man, but it will finally prevail throughout the earth. The words *less than all the seeds, &c.*, have often perplexed interpreters, as there are many seeds, as of poppy, or rue, that are smaller, yet difficulties of this kind are not worth making—it is sufficient to know that "small as a grain of mustard seed," was a proverbial expression among the Jews for something exceedingly minute. The Lord, in His popular teaching, adhered to the popular language. The train of thought in the parable is, the progressive development of Christianity: 1. In it is a small beginning, (the birth of the Son of man in Bethlehem.) 2. Gradual in its progress. 3. Great and glorious in its termination. Great—at last one flock, the earth full of the knowledge of the Lord, no people any more in darkness and the shadow of death, the unbelieving Israel converted, and the vain idols, with their altars connected therewith, completely and forever cast away.

Verses 30-32: see on Matt. xiii. 31, 32; Luke xiii. 18, 19.

33. ¶ And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it.

¶ Matt. xiii. 34; John xvi. 12.

Had this been said in the corresponding passage of Matthew (on which see Notes), we should have concluded that what that Evangelist recorded, was but a specimen of other parables spoken on the same occasion. But Matthew (xiii. 34) says, "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables," and as Mark records only some of the parables which Matthew gives, we are warranted to infer that the "many such parables" alluded to here, mean no more than the full complement of them which we find in Matthew.

As they were able to hear it. Jesus accommodated Himself in His teaching, to the ability of the people. He knew their ignorance and their prepossessions, and like a wise, affectionate teacher, He adapted His instructions to their necessities and their capacities. This remark of the Evangelist confirms the view presented in verse

12, and shows that the Saviour was not harsh, and did not deal in vengeance with the ignorant, misjudging multitude, but in a patient and condescending manner sought to gain a lodgment in their hearts for the great principles of His religion. How worthy an example for ministers of the Gospel, for parents, and for all who are engaged in the work of religious instruction!

34. But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

He expounded all things to his disciples. That they might be capable of instructing others. *Outside hearers*, those who do not come into *close fellowship* with the true disciples of Christ, have seldom more than a *superficial* knowledge of Divine things. In the fellowship of the saints, where Jesus the teacher is always to be found, everything is made *plain*, for the secret of the Lord is with them who fear Him.

35. "And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. 36. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. 37. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. 38. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? 39. And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? 41. And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

¹Matt. viii. 18, 23; Luke viii. 22. ²Jonah i. 6. ³Psa. xlv. 1, 3; Isa. xliii. 2.

Verses 35-41: see on Matt. viii. 23-27; Luke viii. 22-5.

The same day, &c. This was the evening of the day in which He spake the preceding parables. *Let us pass over, &c.* When Jesus passes over the sea, the Psalm is fulfilled, "The Lord is upon many waters." (Psa. xxix. 3.) When He scatters the waves before Him, Habakkuk is accomplished: "Thou didst walk through the sea, through the heap of great waters." (Hab. iii. 15.) When the sea is cut off at His threatening voice, Nahum also is found true: "He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry." (Nah. i. 4.) *They took him even as he was in the ship*, just as He then was, without waiting to make any particular preparation for the tour, and without any intermission of His labors. *With him—with Jesus. Little ships*—and in them men. *A great storm of wind*, a tempest of wind.

So that it was now full, rather, "so that it was already filling."

If the Lord were always to indulge us with prosperity and abundance of the good things of this life, and if we were, in this mortal state, to suffer no tribulations, no straits and difficulties, would we not be ready to pronounce temporal advantages our chief good, so as to desire nothing better at the hands of God? Wherefore God infuses the bitterness of afflictions into this life, the joys of which are intermixed with evil, that He might put us upon seeking after another life, which has joys free from all danger. (Deut. xxxii. 11; Job ii. 10; Eccl. vii. 14; 2 Thes. i. 5-7.)

The hinder part, where the helm is. *A pillow*, probably a part of the ship. *Carest thou not, &c.* Unbelief and fear made them sadly forget their place, to speak so. When those accustomed to fish upon that deep thus spake, the danger must have been imminent. They say nothing of what would become of *Him*, if they perished, nor think whether, if He could not perish, it was likely He would let this happen to them; but they hardly knew what they said.

And he arose, and rebuked the wind, &c. "Creation's Sealord, and creation's Landlord," says an eminent divine, "was there, and the winds and waves recognized the voice that said, 'Let them be,' and they that became being at His bidding, now became calm when He so willed it. And this He did, not as a mere fact, but as an earnest of that day when nature shall be restored to her pristine peace, order and harmony; when the groans and travails of creation shall cease, and that which is nature's normal condition—a condition of quiet and calm—shall be nature's enjoyment again, and we shall not only recognize Him as One who rebukes the winds and waves, and both obeying Him, but we shall recognize Him who has made and remade the sea and the dry land, and restored all nature by a genesis more glorious than its first genesis, to that order, beauty and harmony which it lost by sin. I believe that this earth is not to be given up to Satan. It is a deranged world, it is grievously disturbed, there is fever in its organ-

ization, because sin has smitten it, but the great Lord who made it will come to it again, and He will expunge from it all its ills, its poison and its fever, and make this orb, which has so many magnificent traces of its primeval grandeur, one of the brightest and most beautiful in the whole celestial firmament, reflecting not only as other orbs do the God who made it, but the

Christ that also redeemed it." *What manner of man is this*, &c. We may exclaim of an inner work, "What manner of man is this, that the winds of human prejudice and the waves of human passion obey Him?" Whosoever is able to change the course of nature is the Lord of nature, and He that is so made it, and He that created it is God. (See Ps. lxxii. 18, civ. 6-9.)

1. Where did Christ again teach? 2. What parable did He speak to the multitude by the sea-side? 3. Repeat this parable. 4. Explain verses 11 and 12. 5. Who is the "sower?" 6. State the various kinds of hearers of the Word which are described. 7. What direction is given in reference to hearing? 8. What parable was next spoken? 9. To what is "the kingdom of God" compared? 10. When and where did the storm occur? 11. What course did the disciples pursue? 12. What did Jesus do and say?

CHAPTER V.

1 *Christ delivering the possessed of the legion of devils, 13 they enter into the swine. 25 He healeth the woman of the bloody issue, 35 and raiseth from death Jairus' daughter.*

AND they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.
*Matt. viii. 26; Luke viii. 26.

Gadarenes. Gadara was the principal city of the district. *Josephus*, in his Wars of the Jews, calls Gadara the metropolis of Perea; by this name well known to the Gentiles.

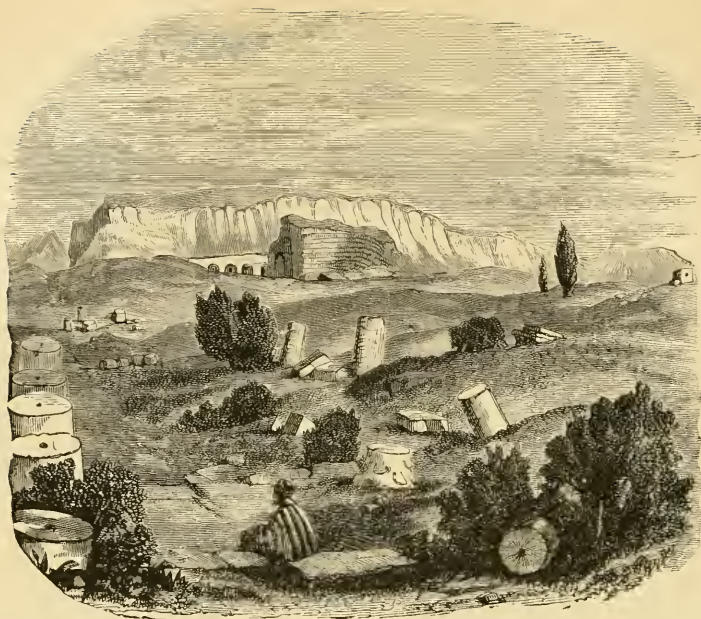
2. And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3. Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: 4. Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. 5. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

With an unclean spirit. Before the fall the unclean spirit was incorporated with the serpent, but now with man himself. He seizes on the external organs and internal faculties, and rules them at his pleasure. *Dwelling among the tombs.* In the East, the receptacles of the dead are always situated at some distance from the abodes of the living. *Captain Light*, who traveled over the scene of our Lord's interview with the two demoniacs, describes the tombs as still existing in the form of caverns cut in the live rock, like those at Petra—as wild and sequestered

solitudes, divided into a number of bare and open niches, well suited to be places of refuge to those unhappy lunatics, for whom the benevolence of antiquity had not provided a better asylum. An inveterate habit of uncleanness frequently extinguishes all the principles of the Christian life, and an unchaste soul dwells in its body as in a loathsome sepulchre, where there is nothing but the remains of worms and corruption. This is but too often literally true. *Fetters*, for the hands; *chains*, for the feet or ankles. *Tame him*, overpower or subdue him, so as to prevent his inflicting injuries upon himself and others. *Crying, and cutting himself*, &c. Fearful picture of a demoniac terror—having reached the extreme point of madness, down to rending his own flesh. After all, nothing can work us mischief except ourselves. The harm that we sustain, we carry about with us, and never are real sufferers but by our own fault. (Acts xvi. 28.)

6. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him. 7. And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. 8. (For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.) 9. And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: For we are many. 10. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.

Saw Jesus . . . ran. A traveler not far



GADARA.



JACOB'S WELL.

from this region describes a similar scene near Lebanon: "The silence of night was now broken by fierce yells and howlings, which I discovered proceeded from a naked maniac, who was fighting with some wild dogs for a bone. The moment he perceived me he left his canine comrades, and, bounding along with rapid strides, seized my horse's bridle, and almost forced him backward over the cliff."—*Warburton's Crescent and the Cross. Worshipped Him.* The spirit recognized with a supernatural discernment our Lord's superior nature, and did him a reverence.

Jesus, thou Son, &c. The truth which had only been testified in Matthew's Gospel by the Father from heaven (iii. 17), and which Satan had in vain endeavored to assail, viz.: that Jesus, the virgin's son, Emmanuel, is truly the *Son of the most high God*—the devils have since understood, earlier and better than men. But while they know it they tremble before Him! *I adjure thee, &c.*—a strong expression of entreaty or adjuration. *Torment me not.* Behold the *tormentor* anticipating, dreading, and entreating exemption from *torment!* (*For he said unto him, i. e., before the unclean spirit cried out, Come out of the man, unclean spirit!*) Ordinarily, the obedience to a command of this nature was immediate. But here a certain delay is permitted, the more signally to manifest the power of Christ, and accomplish His purposes.

What is thy name? This is the only instance in which the Lord asked an unclean spirit concerning his distinctive name. The object of this question was to extort an acknowledgment of the virulence of demoniacal power, by which this victim was enthralled. *My name, &c. My name* (not *our* name). *Legion* was the name of a division in the Roman armies, comprising a few thousands of men. Hence the word came to be used indefinitely for a *multitude*. They are *many*, and yet *one* spirit of wickedness among them all. Every man may find in himself sin wrapped up in sin, "a body of sin." (Rom. vi. 6, vii. 8.) As the Apostle says of the natural body, "there are many members, but one body" (1 Cor. xii. 20), so we may say of our sin, it has a wanton eye, a

gripping hand, an itching ear, an insatiable heart, and feet swift to shed blood, and yet it is but "one body" of sin. (vii. 20-23; Gal. v. 19-22.)

"These Gadarenes or Gergesenes (says *Stier*) disclose to us a dark and awful province of humanity, as lying under the ravages of the devil, the counterpart of which, at least in moral life, if not in such horrible manifestations of bodily possession, may be found in Christendom to the present day—to say nothing of its full analogies in heathenism. But over this region, also, *Jesus* rules, *the Son of God!* To believe and to understand this is the main concern, and we would not bury or obscure this fundamental truth by any irrelevant discussions!"

11. Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. 12. And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. 13. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand,) and were choked in the sea. 14. And they that fed the swine fled and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. 15. And they came to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind; and they were afraid. 16. And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine. 17. And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts. 18. And when he was come into the ship, the that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. 19. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. 20. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.

^aMatt. viii. 34; Acts xvi. 39. ^cLuke viii. 33.

On verses 1-20: see on Matt. viii. 28-34; Luke viii. 26, &c.

And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. Such ingenious reasons as the following have been assigned for this: That the Lord would hereby give the most convincing evidence of the entire dependence of all spirits upon His word, and with this give palpable assurance to all Sadducees of the existence of such spirits, so also punish the probably Jewish owners of these swine; further, test the Gadarenes, how they would receive the destruction of their property; finally, teach the value of the spirit of man, his healing being well worth some two thousand swine. We have no need, however, of any of these reasons, true or otherwise, of this sublime transaction. The deed itself is its own justification. They did not then sue our Lord for any loss they suffered in the de-

struction of the swine, no more will we; we will not, indeed, dare to speak boldly concerning it. Far more fearful than the hearing of this devilish request, is the Lord granting to the Gergesenes *their* supplication.

And they began to pray him to depart, &c. The devil would seem to have entered into the hearts of the Gadarenes, as well as into the bodies of the swine. (John xiii. 27.) The Gadarenes, moreover, now take the place of the demoniac, only with this wretched aggravation of their misery, that, whereas he avoided the company of man, they shun and deprecate the presence of the Lord. Oh! the accursed power of covetousness, in making men mad! (Job xxi. 14; Matt. xiii. 58; John iii. 18-22; 1 Tim. vi. 1-12.)

And when he was come into the ship. He who does not desire Jesus, as He is and as He acts, the Ruler of hell, the Lord of nature, the Physician and Healer of men, may beseech Him to depart, whether courteously or ungraciously, and have his request granted. *Prayed him that he might be with him.* What a contrast does this restored man's desire to be *with* Christ, and Christ with him, offer to the stupid and swinish prayer of the Gadarenes, that He should *depart out of their coasts!* Like Mary, he chose "the good part." Here was proof indeed of his restoration to a *right mind* (Ps. cxi. 10, cvii. 43.) For to be *with* Christ is the sum and substance of happiness in this life and in heavenly glory. While Christ is with us, in this life, He "keeps us from evil" (John xvii. 12), and "gives us peace" (Matt. xi. 28). After death, in heaven, we shall "ever be with the Lord" (1 Thes. iv. 17, 18). "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me, where I am, that they may see my glory!" (John xvii. 24.) Who does not desire and *pray that he might be with Jesus?* (Ps. lxxiii. 21-25; Ruth i. 16, 17; Acts iii. 11; Phil. i. 23.)

Go home to thy friends, from whom thou hast been so long estranged. Not, indeed, with a prudent care against relapse, and in order to his full recovery, which would be prevented by his being alone, for he wished to go with Jesus, and the devils were clean gone from him. Here we see the gentle

graciousness of our Lord, which desires the return home of this man, thus restored to his family. *Tell them how great things, &c.* It is not now, as sometimes, when it was forbidden to make it known; here, upon the outskirts of the Jewish land, there was no danger to be obviated. The poor people of Decapolis shall have, though against their will, a testimony and living monument of His power—one who had lived among themselves. The first act God requires of a convert is, "Be fruitful." The good man's goodness lies not hidden in himself alone; he is still strengthening his weaker brother. How soon would the world and Christianity fail, if there were not propagation both of it and man? Good works and good instructions are the generative acts of the soul; out of which spring new prosperity to the Church and Gospel. (Luke xxii. 32; John i. 40, 41, 45; xv. 16; Rom. i. 11; James v. 19, 20.)

How great things Jesus had done for him. The great graces he had received of Jesus. A thankful heart can, with difficulty, confine itself within the narrow bounds of gratitude prescribed to it. It is just to publish those graces, which, being preceded by heinous sins, cannot be ascribed to anything but the pure mercy of God, and which are visibly counterbalanced by our demerits. It is the safer way to conceal such as may be looked on as the reward of great fidelity, in making a good use of those which a man has received before.

21. ^aAnd when Jesus was passing over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him; and he was nigh unto the sea. 22. ^aAnd, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet. 23. ^aAnd besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: *I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed: and she shall live.* 24. ^aAnd Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him.

^aMatt. ix. 1; Luke viii. 40. ^cMatt. ix. 18; Luke viii. 41.

Passed over again, &c. Though Christ, despised by the Gergesenes, did, in His justice, depart from them, yet, as the sea gains in one place what it loses in another, His abundant mercy builds up more in Capernaum than His justice throws down amongst the Gergesenes. Because they drove Him away, in judgment He went from them; but in mercy He went to others, who had not entreated Him to come. (Isa. lxxv. 1; Acts xiii. 46; Rom.

xi. 19-29.) *Jairus*. The insertion of proper names in the Gospel history is a great proof of its veracity. (Acts xxvi. 26.) *My little daughter*, &c. We do not regret the fall of the sweet and delightful blossoms of our plants and trees, though they soon drop off in such multitudes, because the fruit which succeeds is attended with more substantial enjoyment. (2 Sam. xii. 23.) This descending to the grave is the lot of all men; neither doth God respect the person of any man. (2 Sam. xiv. 14.) The rich is not protected for favor, nor the poor for pity; the old man is not revered for his age, nor the infant regarded for his tenderness. Youth and beauty, learning and prudence, wit and strength, lie down equally in the dishonors of the grave. (Isa. lvii. 1, 2; Rom. v. 12-21; Heb. ix. 27.)

25. And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood for twelve years, 26. And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, 27. When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. 28. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. 29. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of that plague. 30. And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? 31. And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? 32. And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. 33. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. 34. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague. (Lev. xv. 25; Matt. ix. 20. Luke vi. 19, viii. 46. bMatt. ix. 22; chap. x. 52; Acts xiv. 9.)

A certain woman. She intercepts Him as He passes on, followed by a pressing crowd, to the house of *Jairus*. *Nothing bettered*. The sciences produce no consolation in the time of affliction; but the knowledge of Christianity is a comfort, both in adversity and in the defect of all other knowledge. (Job xvi. 2; John vi. 68.) Though indirectly, yet how repeatedly and forcibly are we reminded of our own spiritual helplessness, and of the vanity of trusting in others! The demoniac—none could *bind* him, none could *tame* him. This hemorrhous—none could *cure* her. Man's treatment rather made her worse, and so she came to feel her need of a Divine Physician, the simple touch of whose clothes could at once "make her *whole*." (ii. 17; Phil. iii. 7-12.)

Came in the press behind. Let nothing keep you back from the throne of Grace.

If you doubt whether the work is yet begun in you, pray that it may be begun. If you cannot go to God *with* a broken heart, go to Him *for* a broken heart. (Gen. xxxii. 26; Job xv. 4.) *Touched his garment*. She seemed to consider His body entirely charged with healing power. *Virtue*—power. This is a remarkable expression. It seems to imply that faith would draw the healing power from Jesus almost without His volition! How unlike the unbelief of His own countrymen, which compelled the "virtue" to stay within Him, so that He could scarce do a miracle among them. But in both cases the operation was really *through* the consent of His will. *Who touched my clothes?* The judge who asks the prisoner whether he is guilty or not guilty, really knows, perhaps, but he will none the less put him to the answer. The Lord knew, but he must make her reveal herself.

And he looked round about to see her, &c. Jesus Christ takes more notice of a soul which seeks him in silence, in the spirit of faith, and by humble and secret ways, than of a multitude of mere professors of religion, who do nothing but through custom, and in the way of external devotion. He seeks those in His turn who have sought Him, and who could not have done it but by His grace; that is to say, second graces crown the first. He hides the operations of His grace under appearances altogether human, because this is the time to establish the belief of it, not to unfold its mysteries, and to manifest its glory.

The woman fearing and trembling, as a poor and timid woman would do, who had been the subject of such a sudden and wondrous cure, and dreaded His displeasure for such presumption on her part, and *knowing what was done* in her, was thereby inspired with awe. *Fell down before Him*. Afflictions are intended to humble us. All is humility in that kingdom, wherein God dwells. Here, in this fallen world, the meanest sinner lifts up himself against Him; but there the loftiest archangels cast down their crowns, and prostrate themselves before His footstool. (Ex. x. 3; Job xlii. 5, 6; Isa. ii. 10, 11, 17.) *All the truth*, respecting the affair in question. (See Luke viii. 47.) *Thy faith*, &c. The phrase "*hath*

made thee whole," as followed by "*Be whole of thy plague,*" may point to the continued effect of faith and justification, as witnessed in the sanctification of the hearts and lives of God's people. Something like this may be gathered from the 43rd verse of this chapter, and from i. 42. (Rom. viii. 30; Ps. li. 9, 10, ciii. 3.) *Go in peace, literally, go away into peace, i. e., into the enjoyment of every kind of good. What a glorious dismissal from the lips of Him who is "our Peace!"*

33. While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain, which said, "Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Master any further?" 34. As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. 37. And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. 38. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. 39. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. 40. And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. 41. And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha-cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, (I say unto thee,) arise. 42. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked, for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. 43. And when he charged them straitly that no man should know it, and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

*Luke viii. 49. †John xi. 11. ‡Acts ix. 40. §Matt. viii. 47; ix. 39; xii. 16; xvii. 9; chap. iii. 12; Luke v. 14.

Why troublest thou the Master—the Teacher, any further? Jesus, knowing how the heart of the agonized father would sink at the tidings, and the reflections at the delay which would be apt to rise in his mind, hastens to reassure him, and in His accustomed style—*Be not afraid, only believe*—words of unchanging preciousness and power! *John the brother of James.* Mark wrote his Gospel not long after our Lord's ascension, at a time, when the remembrance of the martyrdom of James was fresh in men's minds, so as to render James more generally known than John. (vi. 3; Acts xii. 2.)

Then that wept and wailed greatly. "Death at hand," says Cecil, "should be death in view. Let us consider our prospects from this house of sorrow, as the inhabitants of a present and future world. Many suppose that they can best contemplate the present world by crowding the house of mirth: their whole conduct however shows that it makes them too giddy for serious observation. But look at the *deceased*, and contemplate present things; his day, a hand-breadth; his

beauty, 'consumed like a moth-eaten garment;' his cares and pleasures, 'a dream;' his years, 'a tale;' his strength, 'labor and sorrow.' So soon is the whole cut off and fled, that we cannot help repeating with the Psalmist the 39th and 90th Psalms, and with the Apostle James, 'What is your life, &c.' (iv. 14; Eccl. ii. 4; xii. 1-9.)"

Laughed—sadly and without insolence. *Put out*—wonderful authority in the house of an apparent stranger. *The father*—therefore there were present three disciples, and three of the family; no more. (comp. verse 43.)

Talitha-cumi. An Aramæan or Syro-Chaldaic word, the ordinary dialect of the people; *talitha* a term of endearment, *my little girl*, "*come, my child;*" *cumi, arise, rise up.* *Damsel* (*I say unto thee*), *arise*, was the simple language in which Jesus performed a deed which, in dignity and power, might rival the creation of a universe. And often thus calmly, and quietly, and unobtrusively, He still acts, by His Divine Spirit, when the yet greater work of the spiritual resurrection of a soul, dead in trespasses and sins, is to be effected. Oftentimes—how often none can tell—a single discourse, a sentence, yea, even a word, has been blessed to this great and wonderful end; no effort visible, no display of majesty and power, except to the happy soul thus raised to spiritual life. As in the miracle before us, Jesus took the damsel by the hand, when He said unto her, *Arise*, so now, the word of Christ's power must be accompanied by the hand of His grace, ere the miracle of mercy can be wrought.

And straightway, the damsel arose, &c. The damsel lying in the house, rises in the presence of few witnesses, to whom it is earnestly given in charge not to divulge it. (Luke viii. 56.) The *young man*, carried *beyond the gate*, is raised in the presence of a large company of persons looking on. (Luke vii. 12.) Lazarus *called out of his grave*, appeared to such vast multitudes, that on account of the report of those who had seen him, many went to meet the Lord with palms in their hands, and because of Lazarus, believed on Him. (Acts x. 40, 41.) These three

examples (1 Kings xvii. 22; 2 Kings iv. 35; xiii. 21) were so many confirmations, under the Law, of a resurrection to life after death; and we have three to equal them under the Gospel. (Luke vii; John xi.) . . . But the three former, and these also, came far short of the resurrection of Him who raised them. *That no man should know it.* This injunction was doubtless merely a temporary one, on account of some existing circumstances. Jesus was not anxious that all His deeds of benevolence should be publicly known and celebrated; and the current of popular favor, which would be increased by His miracles, needed to be regulated with much prudence.

1. Into what country did Jesus and His disciples come? 2. Who met them? 3. What did this man do? 4. How did Jesus deliver him? 5. What did the devils ask? 6. What became of the unclean spirits? 7. What was the effect of this miracle? 8. What account is given of Jairus? 9. What of the woman with "an issue of blood"? 10. What are the particulars of the restoration of Jairus' daughter to life? 11. Why was there a command given "that no man should know it?"

CHAPTER VI.

1 *Christ is contemned of his countrymen.* 7 *He giveth the twelve power over unclean spirits.* 14. *Divers opinions of Christ.* 27 *John Baptist is beheaded.* 29 *and buried.* 30 *The apostles return from preaching.* 31 *The miracle of five loaves and two fishes.* 48 *Christ walketh on the sea.* 53 *and healeth all that touch him.*

AND he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him.
*Matt. xiii. 54; Luke iv. 16.

From thence—from the city of Capernaum. His own country, that is, into Nazareth, the place of His conception and education, in opposition to Capernaum, where He usually abode after the commencement of His public ministry.

2. And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, "From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?"—John vi. 42.

This is the *second* visit that we read of Jesus making to Nazareth after He had begun His ministry. Resolved not to lose a single opportunity of usefulness, He taught the great lessons that He came to seal by His blood, in the synagogue, where the Jews permitted a stranger Jew to unfold any lessons that he might desire to teach them. *Astonished*, &c. Those who should know Christ best, are very often most ignorant of Him. People are apt to consider, *not so much what* is spoken as by *whom* it is said.

3. Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joseph, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

*See Matt. xii. 46; Gal. i. 19. *Matt. xi. 6.

The carpenter. That our Lord should have been taught *some* handicraft occupation, the Jewish law required. And what was so likely as that He should be brought up to the trade of His reputed father, which, though lowly, was not degrading? As the curse was pronounced on our first parents and their seed, that "in the sweat of their brow they should eat bread" (Gen. iii. 49), our Saviour must undergo this curse too. *Offended at him*—accomplishing the prediction of Simeon, "Behold, this *child* is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel." (Luke ii. 34.)

4. And Jesus said unto them, "A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house."
*Matt. xiii. 57; John iv. 44.

A prophet, &c. Here a melancholy page of human nature is unfolded to our view. We are all apt to despise mercies, if we are accustomed to them and have them cheap. It is mournfully true that in religion, more than in anything else, "familiarity breeds contempt." *Among his own kin*, &c. If a minister have faults, they are known there, and he is censured; if he have great talents, they excite envy, and he is opposed; if he make himself familiar, he loses respect, and his influence is thus impaired; if he do not, he is counted proud, and avoided.

5. "And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them."

8. And he marvelled because of their unbelief. ¹And he went round about the villages, teaching.
²See Gen. xlix. 22; xxxii. 25; Matt. xiii. 58; chap. ix. 23. ³Isa. lix. 16. ⁴Matt. ix. 35; Luke xiii. 22.

Save that he laid, &c. Our Lord's wondrous miracles are recorded with an ease and noble simplicity of style, such as beautifully harmonizes with the unpretending manner in which those miracles were performed. What more stupendous than the starry firmament? Yet what more concise, brief and superhumanly simple, than the record: "He made the stars also." (Gen. i. 3-16; Ps. xxiii. 6, 9.) These verses contain two remarkable instances, in a short space, of the manner in which the feelings and circumstances of men are ascribed to God in the Scriptures. (Conf. iii. 5.) It is said of Him, who is Almighty, that He "*could* do there no mighty work;" it is said of Him, to whom all things were known, that He *marvelled because of their unbelief*. In the single word "unbelief," we have the secret of the everlasting ruin of multitudes of souls. They perish forever, because they *will not* believe. There is nothing beside in earth or heaven that prevents their salvation. Their sins, however many, might all be forgiven. The Father's love is ready to receive them, the blood of Christ to cleanse them, the power of the Spirit to renew them; but a great barrier interposes: they will not believe. (John v. 40.)

7. ¶ And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two, and gave them power over unclean spirits;
¹Matt. x. 1; chap. xiii. 13, 14; Luke ix. 1.

The twelve. Moses sent twelve men of the twelve tribes of Israel, to search the land, and to bring of the fruits thereof. (Num. xiii. 1-20; compare Rev. xxi. 12.) *Send them forth.* None ought to take upon them the office of preaching, till called to it by Christ Himself. *By two and two.* That they might encourage and support each other, and to show that union among the ministers of the Gospel is essential to the promotion of the cause of truth. Reformers in different ages seem to have come in pairs, as Moses and Aaron, Elijah and Elisha, Huss and Jerome, Luther and Melancthon, Wesley and Fletcher. (See Eccl. iv. 9, 10; John viii. 17; 1 Cor. xiv. 27.) *Gave them power, &c.* Here, as elsewhere, Mark places the casting out of

demons at the head of the miraculous cures. If Jesus had not been perfectly sure that He could communicate such power, in the free and ample manner in which His disciples were commanded to use it, He must have been lost to all His own designs to send them on such an errand. No impostor would ever have acted a part, such as this, nor is it possible for man to contrive a more certain method of ruining his own credit.

8. And commanded them that they should take nothing for *their* journey, save a staff only, no scrip, no bread, no money in *their* purse.

A staff only. The caution in Matthew against *two staves*, is part of the prohibition against extra provision. Some have ridiculed this mode of reconciliation, as if contradictions in Scripture might be allowed in such minutiae. They might as well say it was ridiculous for our Lord to allow one coat and forbid two. *No scrip.* This was a kind of leathern pouch or wallet which travelers in the Eastern countries usually hung about their necks, and in which they carried their victuals. *In their purse, i. e.,* for traveling purposes.

9. But *he* shod with sandals, and not put on two coats.—¹Acts xii. 8.

Sandals. They were to take no *shoes*, as being a special and more costly provision. *Two coats*, or tunics, worn next the skin. The meaning is: Take no change of dress, no additional articles.

10. ¶ And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into a house, there abide till ye depart from that place.—¹Matt. x. 11; Luke ix. 4, x. 7, 8.

There abide. As Luke more fully expresses it: "Go not from house to house." On this *Dr. Thomson* remarks: "The reason is very obvious to one acquainted with Oriental customs. When a stranger arrives in a village or an encampment, the neighbors, one after another, must invite him to eat with them. There is a strict etiquette about it, involving much ostentation and hypocrisy, and a failure in the due observance of this system of hospitality is violently resented, and often leads to alienations and feuds among neighbors. It also consumes much time, causes unusual distraction of mind, leads to levity, and every way counteracts the success of a spiritual mission."

11. ¶ And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say

unto you. It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city. 12. And they went out, and preached that men should repent. 13. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them. ^aMatt. x. 11, 15; Luke x. 10-12. ^bActs xiii. 51; xviii. 6. ^cJames v. 14.

Not receive you, &c. The Lord prepared His Apostles to find some who would refuse to hear their message. It would be their duty solemnly to warn these despisers of the awful guilt they incurred. The sin of rejecting the Gospel is far greater than any sin that the heathen *can* commit. The Saviour neither enjoins nor permits His Apostles to employ their Apostolical power to avenge themselves, nor even to desire that He should do it. It is the part of a minister of truth and charity to labor without ceasing, to suffer without resentment, and to leave his cause to God, with a full trust and confidence in Him.

Preached that men should repent. So John the Baptist preached (Matt. iii. 2, 8, 11), and thus also preached Jesus Himself (Matt. iv. 17). Luke expresses it (v. 6), *preaching the gospel*, which implies the preaching of repentance, since the promises and blessings of the Gospel can be secured, only by such as truly repent of their sins. *Anointed with oil.* Among the Jews, oil was very frequently used as a medical application. Some of the cases of sickness cured during this tour, perhaps, did not need miraculous power; and even when the oil was used as a means of restoring health, special Divine power might have accompanied the application.

11. ^aAnd king Herod heard of him: (for his name was spread abroad:;) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. 15. ^bOthers said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. 16. ^cBut when Herod heard thereof, he said, It is John whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead. 17. For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife, for he had married her. 18. For John had said unto Herod, ^dIt is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. 19. Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not: 20. For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. ^eMatt. xiv. 1, &c., on which see notes: Luke ix. 7. ^fMatt. xvi. 14; chap. viii. 23. ^gMatt. xiv. 2. Luke iii. 19. ^hLev. xviii. 16, xxi. 21. ⁱMatt. xiv. 5, xxi. 26.

For his name was spread abroad. Heavenly tidings tardily reach kings' palaces. (1 Cor. ii. 6-8; Acts xxi. 38.) *It is John, whom I beheaded, &c.* Observe the mighty power of conscience, how it speaks aloud, how it has the mastery in the sinner's

heart. It rules over kings and princes; it makes a Sadducee (xii. 18) believe in a resurrection; it hearkens not to the voice, of friends and courtiers, who say, *This is Elias, or this is that prophet*; it silences every note of peace and comfort; it fixes this on the wretched man's innermost soul—"It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen even from the dead, to confront me, and to pronounce my doom." "Such a conscience," writes Flavel, "is the devil's anvil, on which he fabricates all those swords and spears on which the guilty sinner pierces and wounds himself." (Gen. iv. 14; Job xv. 20-25; 1 Sam. xxviii. 14; 1 Kings xxi. 20.)

It is not lawful, &c. It is difficult to rebuke well; that is, at a right time, in a right spirit, and in a right manner. The holy Baptist rebuked Herod, without making him angry; therefore, he must have rebuked him with gravity, temper, sincerity, and an evident good-will towards him. On the other hand, he spoke so firmly, sharply and faithfully, that his rebuke cost him his life. . . . He reproved him, under the prospect of suffering for his faithfulness; and we should never use a strong word, however true it be, without being willing to acquiesce in some penalty or other, should it so happen, as the seal of our earnestness. (Acts xxiv. 25; 2 Tim. iv. 1-6.)

Fear'd. Holiness brings reverence. John did not fear Herod. *Knowing*—a proof of true religion; the fear of the bad, and their reverence for piety. He did not, however, acknowledge him as a prophet. Worldly men overlook the essential element of truth. Judas himself, when in utter despair, did not call Jesus the *Christ*, but the *innocent blood*. *Observed him, i. e.,* kept him in close custody, in order to preserve him from the machinations of Herodias. This shows why Herod first imprisoned John. *Did many things* which John commanded. He began externally to reform his manners. *Heard him gladly, literally, with the relish* with which one eats. He enjoyed his instruction. He was of the class of stony ground hearers, "who receive the word with joy." (Matt. xiii. 20; Luke viii. 13.) But he did not put away Herodias, as he was directed, nor refuse the head of his religious teacher.

when it was demanded as the price for the paltry gratification which he and his courtiers had received from a dancing girl. This shows how shallow was the soil into which the word had fallen.

22. *And when a convenient day was come, that Herod upon his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee. 23. And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod, and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee. 24. And he sware unto her, *Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom. 25. And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. 26. And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist. 27. And the king was exceeding sorry, yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her. 28. And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison. 29. And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother. 30. And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

†Matt. xxi. 6. †Gen. xl. 20. †Esth. v. 3, vi. 7. †Prov. i. 16. †Rom. iii. 15. †Matt. xiv. 9. †1 Kings xlii. 29, 30; 2 Chron. xxiv. 16.

Chief estates, &c. The other most distinguished men in Galilee. *Convenient day*, for the cherished purpose of Herodias. *Danced, and pleased Herod, &c.* The diversions of the world, feasting and dancing, are but too commonly the occasions of sin. After so fatal an example as this before us, can we in the least doubt, whether balls are not snares for souls, destructive of chastity and modesty, and a pernicious invention to awake and excite the passions? Unhappy mother! who exposes her daughter to the shipwreck which herself has suffered, and makes her the instrument of her passion and revenge, and the murderer of a saint! *The king said unto the damsel.* The antithesis between "king and damsel" gives emphasis to his wicked folly. *Unto the half of my kingdom.* This was a grand imitation of the great Ahasuerus, but in one without the supreme power, it was idle and boastful enough. *Give me by and by in a charger.* It was and is customary with princes in Eastern countries, to require the head of those they order to be executed to be brought to them, that they may be assured of their death.

Exceeding sorry, &c. Observe in Herod, hypocrisy, superstition, and a too great regard to men. His sorrow is the sign of the remorse of his conscience, and his conscience is his accuser, and a witness of his crime. It is a penal blindness, justly due to the abuse of light and instruction, for a

man to make a scruple of not performing an unjust oath, and to make none of delivering up an innocent person and a saint at the request of a dancer, to the revenge of an incensed adulteress. An oath is criminal, and by consequence void, when it cannot be performed without sin and injustice. How dangerous is it to take but one step in the paths of sin, since it is so very difficult to go back and retreat from it! Nothing does or can darken the mind or conscience of man more than the false and fallacious pleasures of lust and intemperance. Could Herod have ever thought himself obliged by the religion of an oath to murder the Baptist, had not his lust and his Herodias imprisoned and murdered his conscience first? . It seems his besotted conscience, having broken through the seventh commandment, the sixth stood too near it to be safe long. . . So that it was his lust, obstinately continued in, which thus darkened and deluded his conscience; and the same will no doubt darken, and delude, and in the end extinguish the conscience of any man breathing, who shall surrender himself up to it. (James i. 14, 15; 2 Peter iii. 3; Jude 16, 18.)

And he went out and beheaded him, &c. Behold him, that was the prophet of the Highest, and greater than any born of woman, imprisoned like a malefactor! Behold him cut off by a violent death, before the age of thirty-four—the burning light quenched—the faithful preacher murdered for doing his duty—and this to gratify the hatred of an adulterous woman, and at the command of a capricious tyrant! Truly there was an event here, if there ever was one in the world, which might make an ignorant man say, "What profit is it to serve God?" But these are the sort of things which show us that there will one day be a judgment. The God of the spirits of all flesh shall at last set up an assize, and reward every one according to his works. The blood of John the Baptist, and James the Apostle, and Stephen; the blood of Polycarp, and Huss, and Ridley, and Latimer, shall yet be required. It is all written in God's book. "The earth shall disclose her blood, and no more cover her slain." (Isa. xxvi. 21.)

The damsel gave it to her mother. See here the fruit of a bad education, a wicked daughter of a wicked mother; they are serviceable to one another in order only to sin and damnation. Revenge causes a person to take pleasure and delight in that which, if passion were absent, would raise the greatest horror. This is a dreadful example for this sex, which is naturally so soft, timorous and bashful. But one is capable of every wickedness when one is capable of forgetting God. *Laid it in a tomb.* We deposit our departed Christian friends calmly and thoughtfully in faith—not ceasing to love and remember that which once lived among us, but marking the place where it lies, as believing that God has set His seal upon it, and that His angels guard it. (John xi. 24; Jude 9.)

30. *And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.—Luke ix. 10.

The Twelve, having completed their ministerial journey, returned to Capernaum, where they found their Lord. *And told him all things, &c.* Solemn and touching picture! This is what every minister of the Gospel has yet to do—when his work is done, when his mission is over, and he crosses to meet his Lord in the deep solitudes of eternity. What an incentive this for every steward of the mysteries of grace to be earnest, faithful, self-denying, instant in season and out of season—“warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”

31. *And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. 32. *And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

^bMatt. xiv. 13. ^cChap. iii. 20. ^dMatt. xiv. 13.

This *desert place* is more definitely described by Luke (ix. 10). *There were many coming, &c.* No reason is assigned for the multitude, on account of whom Jesus retired from Capernaum, where He labored at this time, but John (vi. 4) accounts for it—the passover was nigh at hand, when we know, great crowds passed through the city to go up to Jerusalem.

Rest awhile. “This lesson,” says an old writer, “is gladly learned and too much practiced. *Rest ye* pleaseth every man. The truth is, that the body and mind of

man must after labor be refreshed with rest. But he which laboreth not is altogether as unworthy to rest, as to eat. (2 Thes. iii. 6-12.) Again, such as will take rest and ease after labors, must learn of Christ, as well to measure their ease as their pains. He permitteth His disciples to take their rest; but He limiteth and restraineth His permission, saying, ‘*Rest awhile.*’ For by too much rest men are not made the more fit, but the less willing to take pain.”

33. And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him. 34. *And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

^eMatt. ix. 33, xiv. 14. ^fLuke ix. 11.

Although Jesus longed to rest awhile with His disciples and to hear them relate the things that had befallen them during their travels; yet the multitude, who saw Him embark, ran round the lake and were waiting to receive Him at the place where He landed. Was He provoked by this interruption? No; He was *moved with compassion* for the destitute state of their *souls*. He regarded them as sheep without a shepherd, because their public teachers were ignorant of God. There is no outward deprivation which He pities so much as the want of a faithful ministry, and there is none which *we* should lament so much. A famine of the word of the Lord is far worse than a famine of bread.

35. *And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: 36. Send them away that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat. 37. He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, *Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat? 38. He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, *Five, and two fishes.

^gMatt. xiv. 15; Luke ix. 12. ^hNum. xi. 13, 22; 2 Kings iv. 43. ⁱMatt. xiv. 17; chap. viii. 5. ^jLuke ix. 13; John vi. 5, &c. See Matt. xv. 34; chap. viii. 5.

When the day was now far spent—began to decline. *Two hundred pennyworth.* The coin expressed by the word *penny* was equal, according to some computations, to nine, according to others, to fourteen cents of our money. *Five, and two fishes.* Probably this was the whole stock of provisions then at the command of the disciples—no more than enough for one meal to them.

39. And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. 40. And they sat down in ranks by hundreds, and by fifties. 41. And when they had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. 42. And they did all eat and were filled. 43. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes. 44. And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

31 Sam. ix. 13. Matt. xxvi. 26. Deut. viii. 3. 2 Kings iv. 42.

By companies. "So that," says *Starks*, "there were on each side 50, and 100 always together. Fifty such tables full made them just 5,000. Or, there were 50 seats in breadth and 100 in length." *He looked up to heaven.* Even the most necessary actions of our lives, though lawful, yet must be offered up with a true intention unto God, in union with the most holy works and blessed merits of Christ. (Col. iii. 17.) *They did all eat and were filled.* In relation to the food of the soul, those eat without being filled who make a considerable progress in the knowledge of Christ, and little or none at all in His love; who read His word without profiting thereby, who partake frequently of His representative body, without partaking of His spirit, and are very exact in outward performances, without any inward piety. *They took up, &c.* But if earthly bread is too precious to be wantonly trampled under foot, how inestimably precious must heavenly bread be! Every word that cometh out of the mouth of God is bread for the soul. Yet how much is suffered to fall to the ground! How carelessly we sometimes read the Scriptures! How many heart-stirring sermons have we heard, and then immediately forgotten! It is not that our memories are too weak to retain them (for we can recollect the news of the town, or the village), but it is that our hearts are too indifferent. It would be a blessed custom, after reading or hearing, to gather up the fragments; that is, to recall to our minds what we have heard, and to apply them to our consciences, "that nothing be lost."

Twelve baskets, &c. Beautiful type of true benevolence, and its invariable results. The Apostles had given their little all with an ungrudging spirit—but they were no losers. The loaves expanded in the hands of giver and receiver, and when the donors came to count their loss, lo, it was a mys-

terious gain! "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself." These overflowing baskets have their deep significancy. They point to the inexhaustible affluence and fullness of the Divine riches. They teach us that, though thousands on thousands have been ministered to, yet the table in the wilderness is still as full as ever. Millions of hungry souls have been fed, and still the promise is as ample as ever, "*He satisfieth the longing soul with good things.*" Still the command of Jesus to His servants is, "*Give ye them to eat*"—proclaim, "He that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price."

This miracle of the loaves and fishes, great as it was, was not a greater miracle than a beautiful harvest. Marvelous as is the creation of a hundred loaves out of two, it is not one whit less a miracle that a seed cast into the soil should germinate, bud, and grow up into a stalk, and then into an ear, and then into the full corn in the ear, and finally the glad and beneficent harvest. But we are so accustomed to the spring and the harvest, the sowing and the reaping, that we call that the natural thing; and we are so unaccustomed to one loaf being transformed or multiplied into a hundred, that we call that the miraculous thing. The fact is, miracles are suspensions or interruptions of the existing order of things; but the existing order of things might have been different, and all that a miracle proves is, that God who made the machinery has chosen to suspend or alter its action.

45. And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.

Matt. xiv. 22-24; John vi. 17-21.

The word *constrained* implies reluctance on the part of the disciples, perhaps from unwillingness to part with their Master and embark at night. *The other side, &c.* Jesus was still in the desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida, on the eastern side of the sea, and He dismissed His disciples unto the other side, *i. e.*, to Bethsaida in Galilee, the site of which

was in the region of Gennesaret, between Capernaum and the southern extremity of the lake. *Sent away the people.* His object in this was to put an end to the misdirected excitement in his favor (John vi. 15), into which the disciples themselves may have been somewhat drawn.

46. And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.

Oh, how salutary is it, how pleasant, how delightful, to sit alone and in silence to converse with God, and so enjoy the only chief Good, in whom all good things are found. (Ps. lxxiii. 24; Hos. ii. 14) Our Saviour *lived* in prayer. His heart ever spoke to God. In the city or in the wilderness, by the seaside or on the mountain-top, in the midst of the multitude in public, or with His disciples in private—still, in the deep recesses of His soul, He prayed. Yet did He select special seasons for prayer—times when He poured forth all His strength, concentrated all His energy at the footstool of mercy, and strove, if possible, to get a closer audience with His father in Heaven. O! how sweet and how important is solitude to the Christian!

"The calm retreat, the peaceful shade
With prayer and praise agree,
And seem by Thy kind bounty made
For those who follow Thee."

47. "And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land." 48. And he saw them toiling in rowing, for the wind was contrary unto them; and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.

13. "Matt. xiv. 23; John vi. 16, 17. "Isa. liv. 11; Jonah i. 13. "Luke xxiv. 28.

Toiling in rowing. The disciples had struggled and toiled to bring the vessel to land, but all in vain. And thus it is that we often labor and toil with our own troubles, and those of others, our eyes fixed exclusively upon them, as the disciples looked upon the waves which threatened to swallow them up, instead of looking to Jesus. From the heights of one of the mountains that girdled the north-east corner of the lake, where Jesus was, alone with His God, He *saw* His disciples toiling in rowing. He *seemed* to have hid his face from them, but it was in appearance only, not in reality. Storms and tumults may be raging without, temptations may be assailing within, God may seem to be hiding his face, and we are troubled. But behind these temporary clouds there sits a Saviour

of unchanging faithfulness, who, though we may have forgotten *Him*, has not forgotten *us*. *For the wind was contrary to them.* While engaged in doing the will of God, storms may overtake us. "Many are the storms which blow upon God's trees," says an old writer, "to keep them from becoming earth-bound."

He cometh unto them, walking upon the sea.

Wonderful spectacle! The tossing wave sustains His foot, as if it were the solid ground, the insurgent billows acknowledge, amazed, their mighty sovereign, Him who once bade them "be still," and they were still. With a firm and sure step, He walks there upon the flowing element, toward the distressed boat. The towering waves may sometimes, indeed, for a moment, hide Him from the eyes of His disciples, but they cannot block His path to the goal. What then took place is continually repeated. Over the foaming waves of agitated thought and feeling, which make us fearful, Jesus walks calmly as their Lord and Sovereign. They may rise against, but they cannot over-master, Him. They may sometimes conceal Him from the sight of His disciples, but they cannot check His course. Storms often prepare the way for Jesus to visit His people, with glory to Himself, and permanent profit to them. The *cause* of the trouble of the disciples at this time was beneath His feet! Glorious sight! that which is beneath the feet of Christ can never drown His Church. But if the storm had not come, the disciples would not have seen *this*. Were it not for the storms we have to pass through, what should we know of Jesus? *And would have passed by them.* They were to follow Him in a westerly direction; no longer fruitlessly rowing eastward against the wind. He went before them, as it were, to show the way.

49. But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out: 50. For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, "Be of good cheer: it is I, be not afraid."
"Isa. xliii. 2; John xx. 19, 21.

Alas! how sad often is the contrast between the faithfulness of a Saviour God and the faithlessness and unbelief of *man*. The sudden appearance of the Lord with His radiant form, near the vessel, makes an entirely different impres-

sion from what would have been expected. The circumstance so miraculous and supernatural appears to them, in the grey twilight, as something strange and fearful. As they see the form advancing toward them upon the waves, they are filled with terror, under the supposition that it is a spirit, and anticipate with fright the sinking of their vessel at its approach. *It is I.* There is something in these three little words, which, from the mouth that spake them and the circumstances in which they were uttered, passes the power of language to express. Here were the disciples in the midst of a raging sea, their little bark the sport of the elements, and with just enough of light to descrie an object on the waters, which only aggravated their fears. But Jesus deems it enough to dispel all apprehensions to let them know that *He was there*. From other lips that "It is I" would have merely meant that the person speaking was such a one and not another person. That, surely, would have done little to calm the fears of men expecting every minute, it may be, to go to the bottom. But spoken by One who at that moment was "treading upon the waves of the sea," and was about to hush the raging elements with His word, what was it but the Voice which cried of old in the ears of Israel, even from the days of Moses, "I AM," "I, EVEN I, AM HE!"

51. And he went up unto them into the ship, and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. 52. For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.—4Chap. viii. 17, 18. 5Chap. iii. 5, xvi. 14.

Were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. The latter feeling found expression in exclamations; the whole strength of their internal amazement they did not express. *For they considered not, &c.* They did not recognize the power of Christ in the multiplying of the bread; it seems that He therefore caused the tempest that, by this further means, they might be brought to know Him. So it happens now, that many persons in a time of prosperity fail to notice God's bounty toward them, who, afterward and at length, when worn down with suffering, confess His name. (Ps. ci. 1; Jer. xxii. 21; Isa. xlviii. 10.) *Their heart*

was hardened, a common phrase for unbelief. It is here equivalent to little faith, as in the parallel passage in Matt. xiv. 31.

From this narrative we learn, 1. That while engaged in doing the will of Christ, storms may overtake us. 2. That storms often prepare the way for Jesus to visit His people with glory to Himself, and permanent profit to them. 3. That when Jesus comes to His disciples, He comes at the *right time*. 4. Believers often fear the approach of their greatest mercies. 5. That wherever Christ is, there is safety. 6. Jesus will travel to the extremity of His people's misery, and save them. 7. That no storms can overtake His disciples which He cannot control. 8. That apart from Christ, His people can do nothing.

53. And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore. 54. And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him, 55. And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was. 56. And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.

5Matt. xiv. 34. 6Matt. ix. 20; chap. v. 27, 28. Acts xix. 12.

Ran, &c. Afflictions, like goads in our side, as troublesome as they are, yet serve to quicken us in our work, and make us mend our pace to heaven. And therefore, O Christian, whatsoever thy present troubles be, know that God brings them upon thee only to make thy graces the more healthful and vigorous. (Deut. iv. 20, 30; Hos. v. 15; Isa. xxvi. 8, 9.) *Whithersoever he entered, &c.* The fame of the singular cure of the woman which had an issue of blood (v. 27, 28), had now probably reached them. It had spread through that entire neighborhood. (Acts xviii. 8, 9.)

They laid the sick, &c. Happy that sick person, who, following the example of these people, is never weary in seeking out the true Physician, by a faith and confidence accompanied with good works! Let us learn to profit by the presence of Christ, who comes to us so many different ways. To assist the sick, to give or to procure their remedies, is a work of charity very acceptable to Christ; but how much more so is it to be instrumental in restoring to them the health of the soul! *The border of his garment.* The high

priest of the Jews was not sprinkled with a few scanty drops of the perfume of the sanctuary, but his person was so bedewed with it, that it literally ran down from his beard to the skirts of his garment. (Ex. xxx. 25-30; Ps. cxxxii.) The high priest was in this, as in every circumstance, the living type of our great High Priest. The per-

fumed garments were typical, first, of the graces and virtues of the Redeemer Himself, in His human character; secondly, of whatever is refreshing, encouraging, consoling and cheering in the external administration of His Word; and, thirdly, of the internal comforts of the Holy Spirit. (Cant. v. 10, 16; Ps. xlv. 9; 1 Peter ii. 7-9.)

1. What did Jesus do on the Sabbath day? 2. What impression was made by His teaching? 3. At what did Christ marvel? 4. What commission was given to "the Twelve?" 5. What is recorded of their mission? 6. What did Herod say? 7. What did Herod do? 8. What part had the daughter of Herodias in this matter? 9. What was done with John the Baptist? 10. What miracle did our Lord perform? 11. In what circumstances of trial did He come to His disciples? 12. What took place in "the land of Gennesaret?"

CHAPTER VII.

1 *The Pharisees find fault at the disciples for eating with unwashen hands.* 5 *They break the commandment of God by the traditions of men.* 14 *Heat desireth not the man.* 24 *He healeth the Syrophenician woman's daughter of an unclean spirit,* 31 *and one that was deaf, and stammered in his speech.*

THEN came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. 2. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen hands, they found fault. 3. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. 4. And *when they come* from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables.—Matt. xv. 1, &c., on which see Notes.

Certain of the scribes, &c. Whether these doctors of the law, whose ordinary residence was Jerusalem, were deputed by some public body, or, of their own accord, came expressly for the purpose of hearing the discourses and witnessing the miracles of Jesus, or, being in that remote district of the country at any rate, took the opportunity of obtaining personal information respecting an individual whose character and claims had become a subject of general interest, cannot be determined. *That is to say.* The Evangelist adds an interpretation, as in verse 11, chapter v. 41, himself not regarding unwashed hands as defiled.

All the Jews—the Jews in general. *Oft.* The meaning of the original word, thus rendered, is not perfectly clear. The primary signification of the word was, probably, *fist*. To do a thing *with the fist* was

probably equivalent to the expression, to do a thing *diligently, carefully*. The signification *carefully* is recommended by sufficient reasons. *From the market*, literally, *from market*. *Have received* (from the tradition of the elders) *to hold, i. e.*, to observe. *Tables*. The Greek word thus translated should be rendered *couches*; meaning the *couches* upon which they used to recline at meals. It is the heart which a man must wash, it is the inward part which he must examine, when he has been busied about worldly affairs, and which he must cleanse in the presence of God from the filth which it may have thereby contracted.

5. ¹Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? 6. He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, *“This people honour-eth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.”* 7. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. 8. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

²Matt. xv. 2. ³Isa. xxix. 13; Matt. xv. 8.

Why walk not, &c. Grafting their traditional precepts upon the letter of such commands as are found in Isaiah (i. 16), “Wash you, make you clean,” unmindful of those words which immediately follow: “Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes,” or those of Jeremiah: “Wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved.” (Jer. iv. 14.) The teachers of religion among the Jews

had invented a purely human system which entirely supplanted, and even subverted the Divine law, "making the word of God of none effect." Unhappily, we see only too much of the spirit of the Pharisees now. There are thousands of professing Christians, who seem to care nothing about the religion of their neighbors, provided that it agrees in outward matters with their own. Does their neighbor worship according to their particular form? Can he repeat their shibboleth, and talk a little about their favorite doctrines? If he can, they are satisfied, though there is no evidence that he is converted. If he cannot, they are always finding fault, and cannot speak peaceably of him, though he may be serving Christ better than themselves. Let us beware of this spirit. It is the very essence of hypocrisy. Let our principle be, "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xiv. 17.)

Well hath Esaias, &c. It is as if Jesus had said, "Ye are hypocrites, *i. e.*, you assume a character that does not belong to you. While insisting on observances, as necessary parts of religious duty, which Jehovah has never required, and in conforming to which, not His honor, but the honor of you and your rabbis is involved, at the same time you dispense with what His law has rendered absolutely obligatory; and in making that a duty which He has not made a duty, and superseding the obligation of that which He has made a duty, Esaias has accurately described your character, and strongly condemned your conduct." *In vain do they worship me, &c.* "It cannot serve the purpose of worship. It cannot be acceptable to me. It cannot be useful to them." No religious service can be acceptable to God if He has not enjoined it, and even a religious service which He has enjoined, can be acceptable to Him only if it be performed out of regard to His authority, and not from any other motive.

9. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. 10. For Moses said, ⁴Honour thy father and thy mother; and ⁵Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: 11. But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is Corban*, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; ⁶*he shall be free*. 12. And ye suffer him no more to do aught for

his father or his mother; 13. Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered; and many such like things do ye. 14. ⁷And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Harken unto me every one of you, and understand: 15. There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, these are they that defile the man. 16. ⁸If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

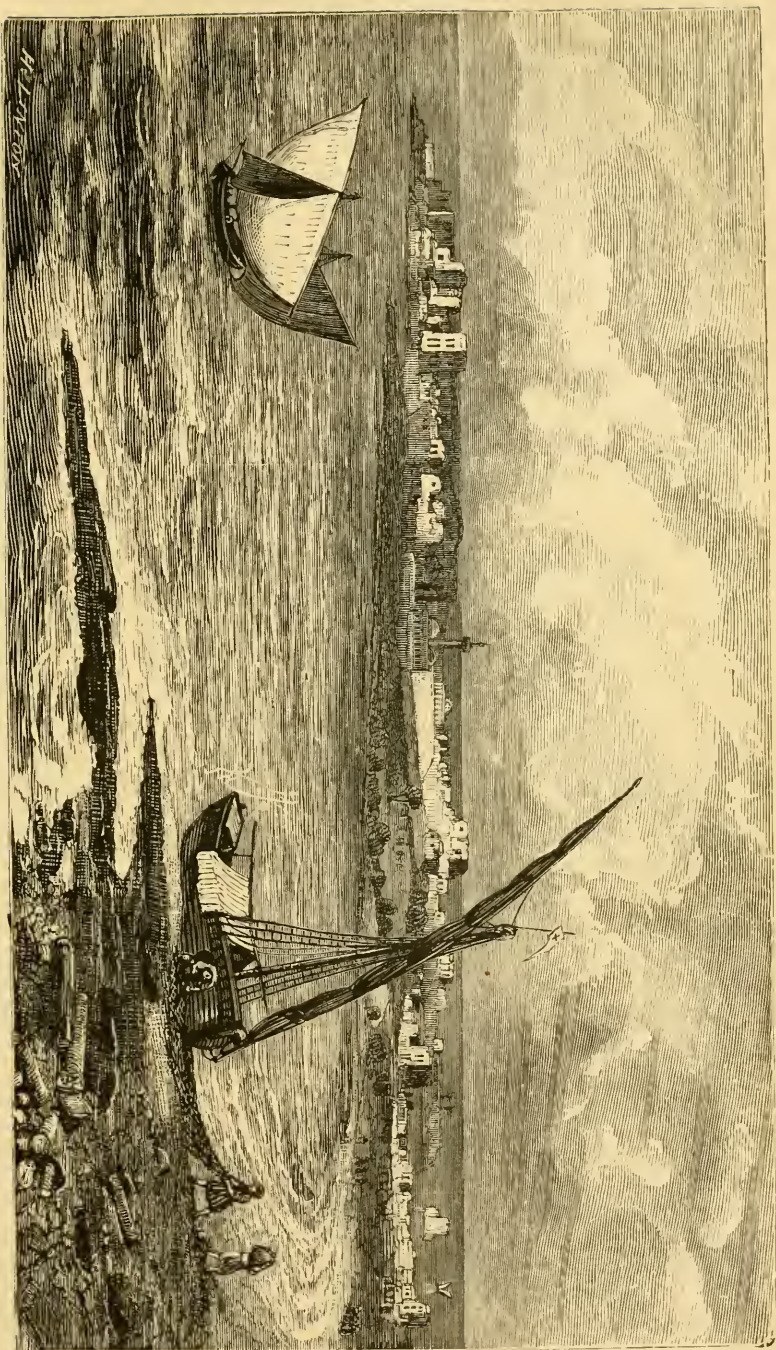
⁴Ex. xx. 12; Deut. v. 16; Matt. xv. 4. ⁵Ex. xx. 17; Lev. xx. 9; Ps. xx. 20. ⁶Matt. xv. 5. ⁷Matt. xv. 10. ⁸Matt. xi. 15.

See on Matt. xv.

Full well ye reject the commandment of God, &c. Religion often serves as a cloak for impiety, hard-heartedness to the poor, and indifference toward parents. We cannot possibly please God by gifts offered contrary to His law or His Spirit; it is sacrilege to dedicate that to Him which is taken away from the piety which nature inspires, and the Divine law enjoins. This is, as much as in us lies, to invalidate our Saviour's declaration, that He accepts as done to Himself the good which is done to the least of His disciples. *Die the death.* The law is "the ministration of condemnation"—death and death; but the Gospel is "the ministration of the Spirit." (2 Cor. iii. 8.) "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." (Rom. viii. 2.) For *die the death*, we have "grace for grace." (John i. 16.) *But ye say, &c.* If the language of sermons be vague and general, if it do not apply clearly and directly to our own times, our own ways of life, and habits of thought and action, men elude its hold upon their consciences with a wonderful dexterity; and, keeping their common practices safe out of the reach of its influence, they deceive themselves by their willingness to hear it (vi. 20), and by their acquiescence and even delight in it. (Ezek. xxxiii. 3-6; Rom. vii. 22.)

It is Corban, or, "let it be CORBAN—by whatsoever, &c. *Corban* signifies what is dedicated to God, and what cannot be turned to any other purpose without sacrilege. The vow before us is, "Let everything by which I may be profitable to my parents be *Corban*. I vow that I will not do anything for the support of my parents, and if I do, may I draw down on myself the punishment due to a violation of sacred property." Such a vow, in ordinary circumstances, could only be made in a moment of passion. No man could approve of such a vow. We have no reason to think the scribes and Pharisees did so.

TYRE, FROM THE SOUTH.



They would readily, doubtless, have condemned it, but still, according to their doctrine, the vow, though a rash one, was an obligatory one. To the man who had made such a vow, they would have said, "You should not have made it, but, having made it, you must keep it. By keeping your vow, you no doubt expose yourself to the penalty connected with the breach of the fifth commandment, but by breaking it, you will expose yourself to the punishment you have invoked on yourself—the punishment due to the violation of sacred property, a much greater punishment than that due for filial undutifulness. There is only a choice of evils, but there is, in this case, a greater evil in breaking the vow than in keeping the vow." Such were the absurd refinements of rabbinical casuistry, by which they confounded the plainest moral distinctions, and made sin duty, and duty sin. *Many such like things do ye.* "This is but a specimen of your traditions; and are my disciples to be censured for disregarding such traditions, which can be of no use—which are so mischievous?"

Hearken. Give close attention; I am about to make a statement, which at once deserves and requires attention. *There is nothing from without a man, &c.* "It is not anything extrinsic and material, anything which affects merely the outer man—the animal frame—that, properly speaking, makes a man morally impure: whatever does so must be something residing within, proceeding from the inner man—the spiritual, the intellectual, the moral nature."

If any man have ears, &c. The rule (verse 15) must be of very great importance to Christians. For our Lord, 1. calls all the people unto Him, on purpose to tell them only this (verse 14). 2. He requires of them a particular attention. 3. He requires it of every one, without exception. 4. He exhorts them to endeavor thoroughly to understand it. And 5. He here lets them know that in order to do it they have need of a singular grace, and a particular gift of understanding.

17. ¹And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable. 18. And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; 19. Because it entereth not into his

heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught purging all meats? 20. And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. 21. ¹For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders. 22. Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; 23. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

¹Matt. xv. 15. ²Gen. i. 5, and viii. 21; Matt. xv. 19.

Are ye so without understanding also? The true knowledge of the spirit of the Gospel is a thing more rare and uncommon than we imagine among the generality of Christians, and even of the learned. *Whosoever thing from without, &c.* (See on Matt. xv. 17, 18.) *Out of the heart of men, proceed, &c.* What an awful picture we have here of human nature, and drawn, too, by One who knew what was in man! What can the proud and self-righteous say when they read such a passage as this? (Prov. iv. 23, xxviii. 26.) This is no sketch of the heart of a robber or murderer. It is the true and faithful account of the hearts of all mankind. Let it be a settled resolution with us, that in all our religion the state of our hearts shall be the main thing. Let it not content us to go to church and observe the forms of religion. (Acts viii. 21.) Never let us rest till we find within the witness of the Spirit that God has created in us a clean heart, and made all things new. (Ps. li. 10; 2 Cor. v. 17.)

21. ¹And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid.—Matt. xv. 21.

Tyre, called by the Hebrews, *Tor*, now *Soor*, a colony of Sidon (see Isa. xxiii. 12), built about 1700 years B. C. It was celebrated for wealth, manufactures, commerce, and purple dye. *Sidon*, now *Saida*, the most ancient and important maritime place in the old world; it is thought to have taken its name from Sidon, the first-born of Canaan. It is about twenty-five miles north of Tyre. *No man.* For He was still within the borders of Israel. *He could not be hid.* Christ's fame had early spread from Galilee to this very region. (Chap. iii. 8; Luke vi. 17.) Happy is that person who is made manifest, not because he will not, but because he cannot be hid!

23. For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: 24. The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

A certain woman. "The antiquity of oblivion," says an old writer, "blindly scat-

tereth her poppy, and deals with the memory of men without distinction to merit of perpetuity. . . . But to be nameless in worthy deeds exceeds an infamous history. The Canaanitish woman lives more happily without a name than Herodias with one. And who had not rather have been the good thief, than Pilate?" (2 Cor. vi. 9.) *Whose young daughter, &c.* Youth enters upon the journey of life headstrong and inexperienced, with a bias of original corruption, and all the passions awake. In such circumstances, how shall a young man direct his steps, so as to "escape the corruption that is in the world through lust?" (2 Peter i. 4.) He must, for this purpose, take with him the directions to be found in the Scriptures of truth. "I have written unto you, young men," says the beloved disciple, "because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." He, who became man for our salvation, passed through this state of youth undefiled, that He might, as it were, reclaim and consecrate it anew to God. Let every young person often meditate on this. (Eccl. xi. 9, 10, xii. 1; Ps. cxix. 9.)

Was a Greek. Some refer this, not to her country, but religion, as though it were said, she belonged to the Greek or heathen people. *A Syrophenician, i. e.,* a Phœnician of Syria, in contradistinction from the Lybo-Phœnicians or Phœnicians of Libya, viz.: the Carthaginians. *The devil*—that unclean spirit which had possessed the girl. Every sin is an unclean spirit which possesses the sinner. It is at the feet of Jesus that he must seek a remedy for it. How great this woman's zeal and earnestness! Few mothers are as much concerned about the spiritual welfare of their children. The generality, alas! instead of shutting the heart of their daughters against the evil spirit of vanity, of impurity, and of the love of the world, or of endeavoring to cast him out thence, rather set it open to him a thousand different ways.

27. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs.

It is not meet—not fitting. It is not in the order which God has established. *Children's bread.* This our Saviour said to test the woman's faith. The Jews were

the children of the kingdom; this woman was of the Gentiles, whom the Jews denominated heathen and dogs. *Dogs.* The original is *little dogs*, so that with the contempt, there is a tenderness in the epithet. It is interesting to observe the various ways in which Jesus behaved to afflicted persons. Some He *offered* to relieve, saying to one at the pool of Bethesda, "Wilt thou be made whole?" and to another, with a withered hand, at the synagogue, "Stretch forth thy hand." Others He restored on their *first* application to Him; while He suffered this woman to plead long and earnestly before He showed her mercy. Before He exposed her to this test, He knew that she could endure it.

28. And she answered and said unto him, yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

Jesus could not cast her lower than she was content to cast herself. Even the very depth of her degradation only forms a strong plea for the extension of His love. *Yes, Lord*—she cannot be overcome, because she will not doubt. The humiliating comparison to which she has been subjected, becomes the occasion for a bolder flight of the eagle wing, and a keener glance of the eagle eye of faith. She springs from the supreme control to the benevolent equity of Providence. She rises above the clouds of the Divine power, often to us, who can only see them from below, dark, disturbed and stormy, into the holy serenity beyond them. She sees the calm Sovereign of the universe, partial, yet impartial too, preferring some, yet forgetting none. She knows that "His care is over all His works," and—deepest wonder of her heaven—sent enlightenment! She can see that He loves *her*, and yet accord His unquestionable right to love, if He please it, others more—allows she can ask but little, yet believingly dares to pronounce that little certain! She will permit (would to God we could always follow her in our speculations) no mystery of dispensation to contradict the truth of the Divine character. *Yet the dogs, &c.* Everything is here. All Christianity is concentrated in one happy sentence. She believes in her own lowliness; she believes in God's absolute supremacy; she believes in the secret propriety of the

apparent inequalities of Providence; she believes that those inequalities can never affect the true universality of His love. God is all, yet she is something, too, for she is God's creature. Men from deep places can see the stars at noon-day, and from the utter depths of self-abasement, she catches the whole blessed mystery of heaven, like the Apostle's Christian, "in possessing nothing, she possesses all things."

29. And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

For this saying, &c. Often have we admired the efficacy of the words of God; here we are called to admire the efficacy of the words of man. The words of the Syro-Phœnician woman open the heavens, triumph over the Lord, drive away the devil, and accomplish whatever she wishes.

30. And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

The child lying on the bed is completely freed from the power of the wicked spirit, and is now taking that quiet rest which hitherto the evil spirit had not allowed. The color is returned to those pallid cheeks, the blood no longer streams from those lacerated limbs. The sepulchre and the desert are no more the haunts of the rescued maniac; the mother's love is triumphant through faith.

Let us see to it that our afflictions lead us to Jesus. Every cross is a message from God, and intended to do us good in the end. The plea which this woman urged is now as good as ever—indeed better than ever. Weak faith has no longer to pursue a departing Saviour; distress has not to address itself in piteous accents to an ear that seems deaf. Jesus is not now passing by silent, reserved, and wrapt in thought of other objects than us. He looks on us, He pities us, He loves us, with open arms He invites us to His bosom.

31. ¶ And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.—Matt. xv. 29.

Departing, &c. The direction of the journey was first northward toward Lebanon; thence from the foot of Lebanon north-easterly, and back through the district of Decapolis, that is, back through the region which lay to the east, or the farther side of the sources of the Jordan,

to the eastern bank of the Sea of Galilee. *Decapolis.* This word denotes a district containing ten cities—the word *deka* in the Greek language meaning *ten*, and *polis*, a city.

32. And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.
 *Matt. ix. 32; Luke xi. 14.

They, i. e., the friends of the diseased man. *Had an impediment.* He was not wholly dumb, but a *stammerer*, as is the case with one who becomes deaf after having learned to talk. They gradually lose their use of speech entirely, or speak with great difficulty. *Beseech him to put his hand, &c.* In their eagerness they appear to have been somewhat too officious. Though usually doing as here suggested, He will deal with this case in His own way. How thankful we should be for the gifts of speech, hearing, and other senses. To God's mercy it is owing that we are not deaf and dumb, blind, or otherwise defective. How compassionate should we be to those who are thus afflicted, how anxious to use these talents to God's glory, as being His gifts, and such as must be accounted for!

33. And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue;—Chap. viii. 23; John ix. 6.

Took him aside, &c. Jesus can heal us anywhere. He can un-top the ear and loosen the tongue whilst we are in the hurry of the crowd, or when we have sought the secrecy of the closet. But He loves the solitude; if we wish Him to work a miracle, a spiritual cure, let us prove that we wish it, by going aside from the multitude, detaching ourselves from a world that "lieth in wickedness," breaking away from the company of His enemies, and then may we hope that He will meet us, and say unto us, with as much of power as of graciousness, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." *Put his fingers, &c.* In the adaptation by Christ, of the *mode* of cure to the *circumstances* of this dumb and deaf man, we learn by what *various* means He now cures the *spiritual* infirmities of men. He knows how to treat each case in the most *suitable* manner. There are many different states of mind to be found among the unconverted, and all seem to us cases very hard to cure. The wisdom of Jesus

enables Him to meet the difficulties of each case that He undertakes to relieve. He knows how to solemnize the light mind of one, and how to abase the proud spirit of another—how to tame the violent temper, and to enlarge the selfish heart.

31. And looking up to heaven, she sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened
John xi. 41 and xvii 1 John xi. 33, 38.

Looking up to heaven, as seeking God's help and blessing. If ever any child of man might have dispensed with prayer, it was surely He who being God as well as man, had but to speak the word, as here with so Divine an authority He spoke it, "Ephphatha, Be opened!" Yet we see how He ever addressed Himself in prayer to the Father, "His Father and our Father," so that He is not more an example of every other grace than of this grace of prayer, of which we might least have expected to find Him an instance. *He sighed*. The fact that Jesus sighed before He could bring Himself to say to the deaf and dumb man, "Be opened," even though He knew that he would not join himself to His enemies, is the most affecting of all testimonies, that the tongue cannot be used without peril. And it might do more than whole sermons on the guilt of idle words, to make us watchful in keeping "the door of our lips," were we only to have in mind this sigh of the Redeemer. When tempted to the light jest, and, yet more, to the profane allusion; when inclined to employ on what is frivolous, or malicious, or impure, that high faculty which God bestowed that we might make creation vocal with His praise—then, if we cannot recollect any elaborate arguments which establish the special sinfulness of sins of the tongue at least we may recall the simple narrative of this miracle, and it may tend to make and keep us fearful of misusing and desecrating the power of speech, to remember that the Saviour could not impart this power, without betokening His consciousness how perilous it was.

Ephphatha. In the preservation of the actual Aramaic which Christ spoke, we recognize the narrative of an eye and ear witness, from whom the Evangelist had this account, and in whose soul the words of power, which were followed with such

mighty consequences, which opened the ears, and loosed the tongue, and raised the dead, had indelibly impressed themselves. We should call on Christ to open our ears, that we may hear His word meekly; to open our lips, which are sealed by backwardness and lukewarmness, that our mouth may show forth His praise; and to open our hearts, as He did that of Lydia, to receive thankfully the gracious offers of salvation.

35. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain
Isa. xxxv. 5, 6; Matt. xi. 5.

Christ first opened his ears, then untied his tongue, because we must hear well before we can speak well. (Job. xxxii. 6, 7; Prov. xv. 2; James i. 19.) *Straightway*, &c. Those whom Jesus healed were endowed with the power of using their restored faculties *immediately*. The dumb man *spoke plain*. Thus the prophecy of Isaiah was in one instance fulfilled, "The ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly."

36. And he charged them that they should tell no man, but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it:—Chap. v. 43.

He charged them, &c. The palace of Herod, at Cesarea Philippi, was not distant, and mercy and miracle must in this guilty world work in secret. From our Lord's command, we may learn that we must not do kindness in an ostentatious manner (Matt. vi. 3), that we should never needlessly attract attention to it, but rather conceal it, and especially that, when it would hurt the feelings of those who have received kindness to have the matter published to others, we should take pains to prevent such a fact from transpiring or getting abroad.

37. And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

He hath done, &c. This exclamation, in which the surprise and admiration of the beholders find utterance, reminds us of the words of the first creation (Gen. i. 31), upon which we are not unsuitably thrown back, for Christ's work is in the true sense a "new creation." It is a very great commendation of a minister, to say that he does all things well, that is, with gravity, modesty and external becomingness, and

with application, piety and internal religion. This is the way to make even the deaf to hear the truth, and to draw from sinners an acknowledgment and confession of their miseries.

"He hath done," &c. They did not say, as modern Christians are too prone to say, "It was the medicine that healed," but they traced the links along the chain of beneficence, and saw that they were all held in the hand of Him who then did, and now does, all things well. When we are healed of a disease, it is as much a miracle as it was when this deaf ear was opened. Why is there virtue in the medicine? Who gave it its mysterious power? The difference is only this, that now God

works with means, then He worked without them; we should look above the medicine, and beyond the physician, to the Lord Jehovah who healeth all our diseases.

If no human voice in that crowd had been raised to acknowledge Jesus as the healer of diseases, the blind, who saw the stars of the sky and the flowers of the earth for the first time, the deaf, who heard the sweet sounds of an affectionate voice they never heard before, the withered limbs, that were restored to more than pristine vigor, the empty graves, the dead who mingled again with the company of the living, could have all stood forth and proclaimed, "We are witnesses that He hath done all things well."

1. What objection was made to the disciples in their eating bread? 2. How was it answered? 3. How are we to understand verse 11? 4. What explanation did Christ give to His disciple of "the parable?" 5. Where did He go? 6. Who came to Him? 7. State the particulars of the interview? 8. What was the result of it? 9. Who was brought to Jesus in the coats of Decapolis? 10. How was he cured? 11. What charge was given to the multitude? 12. What did they say?

CHAPTER VIII.

1 Christ feedeth the people miraculously: 10 refuseth to give a sign to the Pharisees: 14 admonisheth his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod: 22 giveth a blind man his sight: 27 acknowledgeth that he is the Christ, who should suffer and rise again: 31 and exhorteth to patience in persecution for the profession of the gospel.

IN those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them,

This narrative is not a repetition of the miracle of feeding the five thousand, recorded in chap. xiv. 15-21. This is plain from xvi. 9, 10, where both accounts are alluded to in connection. Besides, there are important differences apparent between the two miracles. The time is decidedly different. The guests this time remained three days with Jesus, the first time only one day. This time the supply of bread which Jesus and His disciples had, was greater than at the first time—seven loaves and a few fishes, whilst the first time the number of the loaves was five. On the other hand, the number of the guests is smaller, namely, four thousand besides

women and children; the former time there were a thousand men more. In the one case the people, in a frenzy of enthusiasm, would have taken Jesus by force to make Him a king, in the other case no such excitement is recorded. And whilst then twelve baskets were filled with the fragments that were left, now there were only seven. The baskets, moreover, in which the fragments were collected on the other occasion, are called by all four Evangelists, *cophini*; those used for that purpose after this miracle are, in both Matthew and Mark, *spurides*.

2. I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat: 3. And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far.

See notes on Matt. xiv. 19, &c.; Mark vi. 41, &c.

I have compassion, &c. "Thou who hadst such pity on the bodies of men, that Thou wouldst not send them away fasting, oh, let not our souls be unfed, when with humble

faith we wait upon Thee for our spiritual nourishment, lest we faint in the way of our pilgrimage."—*Austin*. He has very little of his Lord's compassion in him, and holy zeal for the kingdom of God, and love to those who have the same hopes and fears with himself, who thinks it much to suffer repeated inconveniences and debar himself of what otherwise he might enjoy not only with innocence, but great advantage, when he may be the happy instrument of relieving the greatest necessities and promoting the salvation of those for whom Christ died. (vi. 34; John iii. 17–19; 2 Tim. ii. 10.)

4. And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these *men* with bread here in the wilderness? 5. And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.

^bMatt. xv. 34; see chap. vi. 33.

Admire in the Apostles their love of truth. Though they themselves are the writers, they do not conceal their own great faults, and it is no light accusation to have so soon forgotten the similar miracle previously performed. Observe, also, their wisdom in another respect; how they had overcome their appetite, taking so little care of their meals that though they had been three days in the desert, yet they had with them only seven loaves.

6. And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground; and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people. 7. And they had a few small fishes; and he blessed and commanded to set them also before them.

^cMatt. xiv. 19; chap. vi. 41.

Gave thanks. What a scandalous thing it is to take our food without being mindful who bestows it on us! Paul "gave thanks" in the presence of the heathen (Acts xxvii. 35), yet Christians are often ashamed to do it before Christians. *And gave to his disciples*, &c. Observe, it was the disciples, and not our Lord, who distributed to the multitude. We are here reminded of the office of the ministry, which is, to distribute spiritual gifts out of the store which the Lord hath first created and blessed: from a source of His providing "to feed the Church of God," like "faithful and wise stewards" to "give them their portion of meat in due season." (Luke xii. 42.) For, doubtless, as "man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of

the Lord" (Deut. viii. 3), we have in this timely supply of mere temporal want, a type of that heavenly bounty which sends us all things that are needful for our souls.

8. So they did eat, and were filled; and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets. 9. And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

They did eat and were filled. The same statement with regard to the former miracle is given by all the Evangelists. (Matt. xiv. 20; Mark vi. 42; Luke ix. 17; John vi. 11.) *Took up*, &c. Jesus had in the former instance directed that this should be done, "that nothing be lost." (John vi. 12.) *And he sent them away.* This concludes the account of one of those stupendous miracles that are so simply told, that we are apt to lose sight of some portion of their sublimity. If a mere human historian had been recording such a prodigy as this, he would have exhausted, if his taste had not been very good, language of bombast, he would have called into aid expressions of admiration and wonder, and he would have been exuberant in poetical and grand descriptions of a miracle which would have overwhelmed him with its magnitude and greatness. But the sacred historian, as if he had dipped his pen in the light of Him who did the miracle—as if he were writing under the inspiration, as he was, of Him whose deeds of beneficence he was recording—tells the story with that artless simplicity which proves how true it is, and which shows indirectly how the penman was guided and inspired by the Holy Spirit of God.

10. ¶ And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha. 11. ¶ And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him. 12. And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? Verily, I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation. 13. And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.

^dMatt. xv. 39. ^eMatt. xii. 38; John vi. 30.

Dalmanutha was west of the sea of Tiberias, in the district of *Magdala*. These were either different denominations for the same region, or separate denominations for distinct, but contiguous regions. *The Pharisees came forth*, &c.—came out of their dwellings in that country. People generally come out of their dwellings, but these men came forth as spies out of a hiding-place; and their coming was proof that the most extreme care as to the circum-

ances of the landing of Jesus, in a quiet place and in the dead of night, could no longer protect the Lord from their eyes.

Seeking from him, &c. They wanted a sign from heaven, not because they desired to be convinced, but because they wanted to tempt, grieve, ensnare, or provoke Jesus. The fact is, when men have once made up their minds not to be persuaded, they are unconvinceable. *Sighed deeply, as we say, fetching a deep sigh.* In his spirit—from his very heart. He sighed so deeply, not merely in general sorrow for the hardened unbelief of these men, but also in the feeling that the decisive crisis of severance from the predominant party had come. For the demand of a sign from heaven was a demand that He should, as the Messiah of their expectation, accredit Himself by a great miracle. *There shall be no sign*, such as they seek after. *To the other side, i. e.,* to the northern Bethsaida, or Bethsaida-Julias.

14. *Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread,* neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf. 15. *And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.* 16. *And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread.* 17. *And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?* 18. *Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?* 19. *When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve.* 20. *And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.* 21. *And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?*

^aMatt. xvi. 5. ^bMatt. xvi. 6. ^cMatt. xvi. 7. ^dChap. vi. 52. ^eMatt. xiv. 21. ^fJohn vi. 13. ^gMatt. xv. 37, verse 8. ^hChap. i. 52, verse 7.

See on Matt. xvi. 6, &c.

More than one loaf. It is asked, how they had no bread, when they had just filled the seven baskets. Their answer is that they had forgotten to take them with them, a proof how little care they had for the flesh in other things, since, in their eagerness to follow the Lord, even the necessity of refreshing their bodies had escaped from their minds. (John iv. 28.) *Take heed, &c.* The teaching or doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees was quite different, but both were equally pernicious; and the Herodians, though rather a political party, were equally envenomed against our Lord's spiritual teaching. The false doctrines against which Jesus cautions His disciples, as *leaven*, might seem a small thing compared to the whole body of

truth—once admitted they would work secretly and noiselessly—and they would gradually change the whole character of the religion with which they were mixed.

Were the *disciples* in danger of being tainted by bad doctrine? Ought we not to fear its evil influence? Error in *principle* is the parent of vice in *practice*. Our constant prayer ought to be, "Hold Thou me up, that my footsteps slide not." This saying of our Lord (verse 15), was intended for all time. There will always be Pharisees and Sadducees in the ranks of professing Christians. Their name may change, but their spirit will always remain.

Why reason ye, &c. The discourse proceeds by distinct questions to the verb *remember*, verse 18. "Yet hardened"—as on that former occasion (the walking on the sea), when it is expressly recorded by Mark of the disciples, that "they considered not the miracle of the loaves, for their heart was hardened." (vi. 52.) Hardening flows from the *heart* to the sight, the hearing, and the memory. (verse 18.) *How is it that ye do not understand?* The word "understand" literally signifies to *bring together in the mind, to comprehend*, and is an advance on the word "perceive" in verse 18. The little use we make of God's gifts, our forgetfulness of His particular benefits, and our not taking sufficient notice of the visible wonders which He works every day for us in the world, make it evident that sin has spread its darkness over the understanding of man, as well as over his heart. There is need of somewhat more than miracles to establish faith and Christian influence.

22. ¶ And he cometh to Bethsaida, and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

Bethsaida. Bethsaida-Julias, which lay upon the north-eastern coast of the sea of Tiberias. *Josephus* tells us that the tetrarch Philip, who ruled only in the eastern part of Galilee, made the village of Bethsaida into a town, and named it Julius, after the daughter of Augustus. *They bring a blind man, &c.* Christ went about to do good, and wherever He came He found some good to be done; and so should we, if we had a proper measure of the same zeal and love for the welfare of the bodies and souls of men.

23. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town, and when ~~he~~ ^{he} had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw aught.—Chap. vii. 33.

How sad this man's condition! Art may exhibit her stores, and nature her charms, but they affect him not. Spring throws her flowers beneath his feet, summer spreads her varied glories, and autumn her richest tints, but he heeds them not. The sun falls upon his path, but nature is ever clothed in sackcloth to him; the ebon curtains of a perpetual night enfold him in their embrace, without one solitary star to relieve the gloom. He sleeps, but it is night; he awakes, but there is no morning. Still sadder is that condition of which this is but a faint type, the condition of men enveloped in the darkness of sin, and not seeing the realities of the spiritual world. *He took the blind man by the hand.* Did He forget He was the Son of God? Oh, no! nor was it needful he should, for never are the great so exalted as when they stoop to the help of misery, and endeavor to raise those who, but for their aid, must be forever fallen. He was not ashamed to do good, or too great to be useful. Are we ashamed to grasp the hand of honest, poverty, or to be seen identified with misery? Jesus did not say to this man, "Do you take hold of my hand," or, "Keep by my side and I will conduct you out of the city," but He took *him* by the hand. Neither does He say to the dark, the guilty and the self-condemned, "Do you do such and such things, and then I will help you," but He shines upon the soul freely, reveals His glory, and *gives* faith to the soul, while He exclaims, "Believe, and live."

And led him. He did not forget He was leading a blind man, and accommodated His pace to the condition of His patient. *Out of the town*, where the man was exposed to great danger. Jesus always leads *from* danger. Oh, what numberless dangers we should escape if we were always willing for Him to lead us! Our Lord meant to cure the blind man, but He did not want fame—the applause of the multitude—hence he conducted him into privacy. *And when he had spit on his eyes*, &c. Very unlikely instrumentality, many would have thought, to open the eyes; but thus it is

that Jesus is pleased to work, that He may have the glory due to His name. (1 Cor. i. 27, 28.)

24. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees walking. 25. After that, he put *his* hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up, and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

The blind man, it appears, had not been *born* blind, for he knew the names of surrounding objects. His sight was so imperfectly restored at first, that it was only by their movements that he could distinguish men from trees; he knew that those were men that he beheld, because they walked. We find but one example, in all Scripture, of any bodily cure which our Saviour wrought by degrees: only the blind man, whose weak faith craved help by others, not by himself, *saw men first like trees*; then in their true shape; all other miraculous cures of Christ were done at once and perfect at first. Contrarily, we find but one example of a soul fully healed, that is, sanctified and glorified, both in a day; all others, by degrees and leisure. The steps of grace are soft and short. Those external miracles He wrought immediately, by Himself; and, therefore, no marvel if they were absolute, like their Author. The miraculous work of our regeneration He works together with us: He giveth it efficacy; we give it imperfection. (iv. 28; Phil. ii. 12, 13; Eph. iv. 30.)

The cure of our blindness is only begun here on earth, for our understanding has some degrees of darkness which will not be dispersed until we come to heaven. This cure requires abundance of patience, because the light of truth does not often enter all at once into the soul. God would have men learn the greatness of the evil, the necessity of His grace, and the difficulty of the cure, from the delay of His light, and the several degrees thereof through which they must pass. When the Apostle wrote to the Ephesians, though he knew they were converted, yet he told them that he constantly prayed that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened, that they might know the hope of their calling, and the riches of their glorious inheritance. (Eph. i. 18.) These are the things that we so dimly discern. We do not behold the excellency of

heaven with sufficient clearness. But the day will come when those who now see *imperfectly* shall see face to face, shall know even as they are known.

He put his hands again, &c. If, as it would seem, the miracle was wrought gradually only for the sake of the effect which would thus be produced on the bystanders, it is probable that the effect intended was, that the disciples should understand that the working of the Lord was often gradual. Certain it is, that such is the freeness of God's grace, that it is linked to no single way of manifestation, but works in divers manners, sometimes accomplishing in a moment what at other times it brings about only little by little.

26. And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.
•Matt. viii. 4; chap. v. 43.

Besides the usual reasons against going about blazoning the matter, retirement in this case would be salutary to the man. The question arises in some minds, how could he tell it to any one in the town, if he did not enter into it, according to the first clause of the command? But this difficulty arises from overlooking the Greek idiom, which answers here to the idea, *go not into the town and tell it to any there*. Solitude and silence after conversion is much safer than much talk and running about. We should let the truth take firm root in us before we speak much about it. The converted man must take care not to turn around again to the world. Fearful judgment, when God reckons a man, or a city, or a land no longer worthy of the knowledge of His word and works!

27. ¶ And Jesus went out, and his disciples into the towns of Cesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?—•Matt. xvi. 13; Luke ix. 18.

On verses 27–33 see on Matt. xvi. 13, &c.

Our Lord and His disciples now proceeded to the neighborhood of Cesarea Philippi, probably avoiding the city itself, and only touching its suburbs or towns of its vicinity. *Whom do men*, &c. It is neither out of ignorance, nor curiosity, nor want of other discourse, that Christ speaks on this subject, but, on the contrary, from a knowledge of the different opinions men had concerning Him, and from a desire to satisfy their curiosity by the truth, and to avoid, by means of holy instruction, the

loss of time which usually attends traveling.

23. And they answered, «John the Baptist: but some say Elias; and others, One of the prophets.
•Matt. xiv. 2.

This answer of the disciples of Christ proves two things: 1. That the general public opinion in respect to the person of Jesus had been for the moment considerably lowered by the efforts of His opponents, since people now no longer ventured to designate Him decidedly as the Messiah, and that they rather agreed to hold Him for a forerunner of the Messiah: 2. That their opinions concerning Him were various, according to their various dispositions of mind. *John the Baptist*. Some shared the superstitious opinion of Herod Antipas, connected with the theory of the metempsychosis, and which was designed perhaps to quiet the prince's distress of conscience for the murder he had committed on John. *Elias*. Others, who rated Him highest, and admired His holy zeal, were inclined to see in Him the second Elijah, the most definite forerunner of the Messiah. *One of the prophets*. Others only made a general acknowledgment of something higher in Him, and were willing to let Him pass for one of the prophets.

29. And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.—•Matt. xvi. 6; John vi. 69 and xi. 27.

The disciples were now to give a distinct confession in opposition to those erroneous and divergent opinions; therefore Christ asked further, *But whom say ye that I am?* To this Peter replied in his own name, and in that of his brethren, *Thou art the Christ*. He does not say, "Scribes and Pharisees, rulers and people, are all perplexed, and shall we, unlettered fishermen, presume to decide?" But feeling the light of his Master's glory shining in his soul, he breaks forth, not in a tame, prosaic acknowledgment, "I believe that thou art," &c., but in the language of adoration, such as one uses in worship, *Thou art the Christ*, the anointed of the Father, through whom alone His people can come into blessing. The true knowledge of the mysteries of Christ is not to be found, but only among the disciples of the truth and the light. Out of this school there is nothing but uncertainty or falsehood.

30. *And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.—*Matt. xvi. 20.

There is a time to speak, and a time to be silent, concerning the Divine mysteries. Man is both unworthy and incapable of hearing them before Christ has, by His sufferings and death, merited for him the grace requisite thereto.

31. And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.—*Matt. xvi. 21, Luke ix. 22.

Jesus then predicted His own approaching death and resurrection, and this was a very important prediction, because it showed that His death did not come upon Him unawares, that He clearly foresaw it, that He was not surprised into Calvary, but that He anticipated a cross as the conclusion of His painful and sorrowing pilgrimage upon earth. *After three days.* 1. It is ten times expressly said, that our Lord rose, or was to rise again the *third day* (Matt. xvi. 21, xvii. 23, xx. 19; Mark ix. 31, x. 34; Luke ix. 22, xviii. 33, xxiv. 7, 46; Acts x. 40); and so the expression, which is most used, both in our Lord's predictions before His death, and in His and His Apostles' language after His resurrection, being this; these other forms of speech, which are but once or twice found in Scripture, must be interpreted to accord with it. 2. According to the language both of the Hebrew and the Greek, that is said to be done after so many days, months or years, which is done in the last of them. (Deut. xiv. 28, xv. 1, xxvi. 12, xxxi. 10; 2 Chron. x. 5, 12.) "After three days they found Him in the temple" (Luke ii. 46), that is, on the third day. 3. The Jews understood "after three days" to signify no more than *on the third day*, for having told Pilate that Christ had said "after three days I will rise again," they desire only that a watch might be kept "till the third day." (Matt. xxvii. 63, 64.)

32. And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

When Christ had proclaimed His death, the great cardinal truth of Christianity, Peter, ever rash to speak and often to do what was wrong, began to rebuke Him, as if it were not meet that He should die, as if there could be a crown without a cross. We all sympathize too much with Peter; we would rather avoid the cross; and

snatch prematurely at the crown, we should like to get to heaven without trials, to reach the goal without trouble, to arrive at the end of the journey without the travel that is requisite before it, and we would rebuke those who should say that through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of heaven.

33. But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

Notice how particularly our Saviour's gesture is here stated: His "turning about" (the act, by the way, of one who walks *in advance*), His "looking on His disciples," and lastly, the awful rebuke which He addressed to Peter. Concerning this last, it will, of course, be understood that our Saviour's words point out *Satan* as the adversary who, availing himself of human weakness and human sinfulness, is in reality the one who, all along, opposes himself to God. Whoever opposes the love of the cross is a Satan. How dangerous a counselor is natural tenderness in the affairs of salvation! Men think to preserve nature, to please a friend and to use a penitent gently by sparing them in what is troublesome and grievous, and so they ruin them by a fatal kindness.

On verses 31-33: see on Matt. xvi. 21-23; Luke ix. 22.

34. † And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, †Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.—*Matt. x. 38.

Whosoever will come after me—that is, obey me, be my disciple—let him *deny himself* much that he would like, much that he would prefer, *and take up his cross*. Whatever cross God may assign us in His providence, we are to take up, and seek that it may be sanctified by His grace, and thus, bearing our cross, we are to follow Him.

35. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, and the gospel's, the same shall save it.—*John xii. 25.

Whosoever will save his life shall lose it—in the deeper sense of losing himself—his soul, which is his true life. *But whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it*, in the higher sense of the everlasting security of his soul. O, the gain of godliness. Though a man should lose his life for Christ, he finds it in the

spiritual life which shall feed all the strength of holiness, and all the joy of salvation forever. He finds it in the communion of deathless saints, in the noblest employments, in the elevations of intellect, in the exercise of the sweetest affections, and, above all, in and with God, who is the fountain of life and blessedness forevermore.

36. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? 37. Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

On these verses *Stier* observes: "If, in a general raging fire around thee, thou wert to save and preserve thy great and well-filled palace, and yet be destroyed thyself by the fire, what wouldst thou have gained in comparison with him who, while his goods were burned, has yet escaped with his life? Therefore, also, conversely, what shall it *damage* a man though he should give up the whole world—which will at one time pass away and be consumed—if only his soul be saved? The true, eternal salvation of one human soul is of infinitely more value than the whole world; thus must we set profit and loss against each other, and he who has not so reckoned will, in the end, find to his eternal loss how terribly he has miscalculated. Then will the bankrupt be forced to cry out, *what shall a man give in exchange, or, for an equivalent?* To which the Psalmist has long ago answered, *It must cease forever.* (Ps. xlix. 8.) God alone has found the ransom for man's soul. (Matt. xx. 28.) He who despises this, who makes its power and sufficiency of none effect for himself, has lost all forever, but his personality remains to all eternity to rue his loss."

See on Matt. xvi. 21-8.

38. Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

†Matt. x. 33. †See Rom. i. 16; 2 Tim. i. 8.

Whosoever, &c. Whosoever shall deny or disown me, either in my person, my Gospel, or my members, for any fear or favor of man, he shall with shame be disowned and eternally rejected by me at the great day. (Matt. x. 33.) Both fear and shame make persons disown Christ and religion in the day of temptation. Many good men have been overcome by the former passion, as Peter and others, but we find not any good man in Scripture guilty of the latter, namely, that denied Christ out of shame. This argues a rotten, unsound and corrupt heart. It is not sufficient that we own Christ by believing in Him, we must honor Him by an outward profession also.

Men are ashamed of Christ and His Gospel: 1. Because it is not always a profitable cause. 2. Because not many mighty, wise or noble of this world, are called. 3. Because of the afflictions that accompany a profession of faith. 4. Because loud Christian professors have very often acted most unworthily of it. While we do not parade our religion, or make a display of our principles, we ought not to be silent when they are assailed, or to connive when they are sacrificed; but everywhere and always not to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. When Jesus shall come in the glory of His Father, there will be but two classes: they that have not been ashamed of Him, and they who have. To which class shall we belong?

1. What did Jesus say to His disciples? 2. What miracle did He perform? 3. What is said about this miracle? 4. Where did Christ next go? 5. How did the Pharisees "tempt" Him? 6. What charge did He give to His disciples? 7. How did He rebuke their reasoning among themselves? 8. Who was brought to Him? 9. What did Jesus do to this man? 10. What did He ask His disciples? 11. What did Peter say to our Lord? 12. How did he rebuke Peter? 13. What was said by Him to the people and the disciples? 14. Explain verses 37 and 38.

CHAPTER IX.

2 *Jesus is transfigured.* 11 *He instructeth his disciples concerning the coming of Elias:* 14 *casteth forth a dumb and deaf spirit:* 20 *foretelleth his death and resurrection:* 33 *exhorteth his disciples to humility:* 38 *bidding them not to prohibit such as be not against them, nor to give offense to any of the faithful.*

AND he said unto them, ^aVerily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen ^bthe kingdom of God come with power.

^aMatt. xvi. 28; Luke ix. 27. ^bMatt. xxiv. 30, xxv. 31; Luke xxii. 18.

Taste of death. Death, the mighty tyrant (Rom. v. 17) who held men in the bondage of fear all their life long (Heb. ii. 14) is dethroned, his charter is made null, his authority is brought to naught by the death of the Son of God. A voice from heaven now says, "Blessed are the dead." (Rev. xiv. 13.) To those who "die in the Lord," death is a shadow, where the substance is gone, a taste, the body suffering only for a moment, the soul feasted in all abundance forevermore. "As for the ungodly, it is not so with them." (Ps. xxiii. 4; Acts vii. 60; Ps. lxxiii. 15-19; 1 Cor. xv. 55-57.) *The kingdom of God, &c.* The kingdom of God had already *come*. It came, its foundation was laid, when "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." This kingdom proceeded further, when Jesus chose His twelve Apostles. But our Lord's prophecy that the kingdom should come *with power*, was fulfilled when the guilty nation which had rejected their heavenly King, suffered the penalty of their iniquities. And some were at that time standing by our Lord, who *did not taste of death* till this was done. In another, and an important sense, they all saw the *kingdom of God come with power*, on the day of Pentecost, when three thousand persons "gladly received the Word" of truth, as preached by Peter, and were baptized in the name of Him, whom shortly before they had joined in crucifying.

2. ^aAnd after six days Jesus taketh *with him* Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them. —^cMatt. xvii. 1; Luke ix. 28.

Transfiguration—verses 1-10. See on Matt. xvii. 1-13; Luke ix. 27-36.

As the law required no more than two or three witnesses to constitute a regular and judicial proof, our Saviour frequently chose to have only this number present at

some of the most important and interesting scenes of His life. The three disciples whom He now selected, were those that generally attended Him on such occasions, and who seem to have been distinguished as His most intimate and confidential friends. John, we know, was so in an eminent degree. James, his brother, would, from that near connection, probably be brought more frequently under his Master's notice; and as Peter was the very person who had expressed himself with so much indignation on the subject of our Saviour's sufferings, it was highly proper and necessary that he should be admitted to a spectacle which was purposely calculated to calm those emotions, and remove that disgust which the first mention of them had produced in his mind.

Into a high mountain. Some think that Tabor was the scene of the transfiguration. But there seems to be validity in the objection to this, that our Lord can hardly be supposed to have taken a journey into Galilee, to be transfigured on Mount Tabor, and then to have returned to the region of Cesarea Philippi, as it is evident he must have done from Mark ix. 30. It appears also that He rejoined His disciples the next day (Luke ix. 37) after the transfiguration, which would have been impossible had He been transfigured on Mount Tabor and His disciples remained at Cesarea Philippi. It is better, therefore, to understand it of some mountain in the immediate neighborhood, although its identification now is out of the question.

Transfigured—changed in appearance. *Before them.* As they stood lost in wonder at the phenomenon. It was a full, steady splendor.

3. And his raiment became shining, exceeding ^awhite as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. ^bDan. vii. 9; Matt. xxviii. 3.

His raiment, &c. The fullness of the Spirit which was in Christ cast its splendor over His whole being, yea, the heavenly luminosity of His inner man, which else was still bound by the obscurity of His earthly appearance, now broke forth, and poured even upon His apparel a white glistering of light, which was wholly new

to the astonished disciples. This was a mightier reappearance of that phenomenon which the Baptist saw when the Spirit descended upon Him, a foreshining of the perpetual glorification to be afterward realized. When Moses talked with God "the skin of his face shone;" but Moses was arrayed with a glory which came from without: our Lord, with that which proceeded from the inherent brightness of Divine glory. He was transfigured, not as receiving what He was not, but as manifesting to His disciples what He was. The resurrection-bodies of the saints will resemble that of their Lord. They too shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

4. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

Moses and Elias, as servants, stand by their Lord in His glory. Heaven, as it were, comes down to earth, and glorified humanity is made visible to the eyes of flesh. In Moses were represented the generations of the dead: and in Elijah, who died not, those who shall be alive at the last day. *Appeared . . . talking.* They were not only *seen* by the disciples, but they were *heard* also conversing with Jesus. This is a circumstance of great importance, especially when we are told what the subject of their conversation was. Luke gives us this useful piece of information; he says, that "they spake of our Lord's decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." The very *mention* of Christ's sufferings and death by such men as Moses and Elias, without any marks of surprise or dissatisfaction, was of itself sufficient to occasion a great change in the sentiment of the disciples respecting those sufferings, and to soften those prejudices of their's against them, the removal of which seems to have been one of the more immediate objects of the transfiguration. But if we suppose further (what is far from being improbable) that in the course of the conversation several interesting particulars respecting our Saviour's crucifixion were brought under discussion; if they entered at any length into that important subject, *the great work of our redemption*; if they touched upon the nature, the causes, and the consequences of it; the pardon of sin,

the restitution to God's favor, the triumph over death, and the gift of eternal life; if they showed that the sufferings of Christ were prefigured in the law, and foretold by the prophets; it is easy to see, that topics such as these must tend still further to open the eyes, and remove the prepossessions of His disciples; and the more so, because they would seem to arise incidentally in a discourse between other persons casually overheard; which having no appearance of design or professed opposition in it, would be apt to make a deeper impression on their minds than a direct and open attack upon their prejudices.

In this scene there was displayed to the disciples the oneness of the Old Covenant with the New, and the superiority of the New to the Old. The essential import, indeed, of this incident seems to be, that it was the formal resignation of those who had hitherto been mediators (typical) between God and man in favor of the "One Mediator," whom God now also definitely proclaimed as such by His own choice. Moses and Elias, law and prophets, found their fulfillment and were merged in Jesus, and mainly in His death of which they spoke.

5. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. 6. For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.

"Love will stumble rather than be dumb." Peter knew not what he ought to say, but he knew what he felt, and out of the abundance of the heart his mouth spake, *it is good for us to be here.* He loved the presence of his Lord at all times; now he specially desired it, when he saw it surrounded with honor and glory; he wished to detain Him on the mount, and there to abide with Him, and so to return to the trials and temptations of the world no more. He desired, at the same time, the communion of saints, in their union with the Lord of life and glory—of saints departed, as Moses and Elias, of saints still in the same mortal body with himself, as James and John. "It is good for us to be here." Though, in the trouble of his thoughts he *wist* (or knew) *not what to say*, or rather spake inconsiderately, yet afterward, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, he saw clearly into the mystery of Christ's

transfiguration, he recorded, for our benefit, the glorious truth of the "majesty, honor and glory" of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of His "power and coming" hereafter in that glory. (viii. 24, 25; 2 Peter i. 16-18; John xiii. 6, 7, xiv. 26.)

7. And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

The summit of the mountain, or at least that portion on which they stood was covered with ineffable splendor like that of the Shechinah, and it *overshadowed* them with its glorious refulgence. This refers, of course, to our Lord, Moses and Elias. That the disciples did not enter into the cloud (Luke ix. 34) is evident, because the voice which they heard issued from it. This *voice* was none other than that of God. (2 Peter i. 17.) *This is my beloved Son.* Once before, at His baptism, and once afterward (John xii. 18), did God, in an audible voice, bear testimony in favor of His Son. *Hear him.* An emphatic declaration that the teachings of Jesus were to take pre-eminence over those of Moses and the prophets. (Comp. Deut. xvii. 15; Heb. i. 1, 2.) As Christ's future glory was to be witnessed by three in heaven, and three in earth (Luke ix. 34), so was it right that this, the foretaste of His coming kingdom, besides its three earthly witnesses (Peter, James and John), should have its three heavenly witnesses (the Father, Moses and Elias) also.

8. And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man anymore, save Jesus only with themselves.

Saw no man, &c. One great purpose of the transfiguration was to represent the cessation of the Jewish, and the commencement of the Christian dispensation. Moses and Elias disappear—the former objects of the disciples' veneration are no more. Christ remains alone "*the Way, the Truth, and the Life.*" No man can come unto the Father but through Him.

9. And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. 10. And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.—Matt. xvii. 9.

The command which Jesus gave to His disciples, they kept and obeyed; they maintained the most profound silence respecting the occurrence. Unquestionably the secret must have proved suffi-

ciently oppressive to them, since they did not know how they were to understand the words *till the Son of man were risen from the dead.* This expression was to them, at present, in two respects inexplicable: First, in itself, for they knew not in what sense it was to be taken; and then again, because not knowing its meaning, they knew not either the period when their tongues should be loosed respecting this great secret. If, for example, Jesus had spoken of the general resurrection of the dead at the last day (see John xi. 24), He would then have imposed upon them in that command almost an everlasting silence on the great event which they had witnessed. They had eager discussion therefore with each other as to the meaning of that announcement. The reason for the secrecy which Christ enjoined, is probably to be found in the facts, that for the larger circle of disciples the transaction could only be made intelligible through the medium of Christ's resurrection, and, that even those His most confidential disciples themselves could only then properly apprehend it, when they viewed it in connection with the expectation of their Lord being raised from the dead, since in its very nature it was a prophetic prelibation of His resurrection.

11. And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come? 12. And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things: and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. 13. But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

Mal. iv. 5; Matt. xvii. 10. *Ps. xxii. 6; Isa. liii. 2, &c.; Dan. ix. 26. †Luke xxiii. 11; Phil. ii. 7. ‡Matt. xi. 14, xvii. 12. §Luke i. 17.

On verses 11-13 see on Matt. xvii. 10-12.

Why say, &c. The original is, *that say the scribes*, where must be supplied the ellipsis, found not unfrequently in such indirect questions: (why is it) *that the scribes say, &c.* *Elias verily cometh first.* Our Lord replies by affirming the truth of what the scribes taught, and then proposes in His turn a question: *And how is it (also) written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things and be set at nought?* By taking these words as an interrogation, which in the original is admissible, the way is prepared for the conclusion in verse 13, that Elias has indeed come and suffered, as was prophesied of him; and in like manner

also will prophecy be fulfilled as to the sufferings and death of the Son of man. Thus the parts of our Lord's reply are made to cohere and correspond. *Set at naught, i. e.,* made nothing of, despised.

Elias is indeed come, &c. The treatment which he was to experience at the hands of men, was not the subject of prophecy. *Listed—chose.*

14. ¶ And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. 15. And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him. 16. And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?—Matt. xvii. 14; Luke ix. 37.

A great multitude, &c. At the foot of the mountain, probably in an inhabited valley. The group was evidently in a state of great excitement. *Greatly amazed.* This word implies admiration, as well as awe and veneration. Somethink that our Lord's countenance retained traces of His glory on the mount. (Ex. xxiv. 29, 30.) Jesus observed, probably with displeasure, that the doctors of the law, as adepts in disputation, had with their questions pressed His disciples very closely, perhaps to some degree of embarrassment. He immediately steps up to them with the inquiry, "What are ye disputing with them about?" They gave Him no answer—a proof how much they were afraid of Him.

17. And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit. 18. And wheresoever he taketh him, he tearth him; and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away; and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. 19. Matt. xvii. 17; Luke ix. 38.

On verses 17–29 see on Matt. xvii. 14, &c.

How unlike was this scene to that which the three Apostles had just witnessed on the top of the mountain! *There* all was light, love, bliss and joy; here, sin, and sorrow, and suffering. *A dumb spirit.* This statement does not contradict that of Luke, "he suddenly crieth out;" this dumbness was only in respect of articulate sounds, he could give no utterance to these. Nor was it a natural defect, nor one under which he had always labored, but the consequence of demoniacal possession. *And wheresoever, &c.* The hint here supplied as to what befel the youthful sufferer, leads to the supposition that he was subject to the repeated assaults of his foul enemy, who, in some mysterious way, was able to go away and come back again, as

the inmate of a house does to his dwelling. Who does not feel for the pitiable condition of the father? And yet who knows what is good for man in this vain life? But for this calamity, perhaps, this suppliant had never known or addressed the Saviour. How many can say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted?" *I spake to thy disciples, &c.* Observe the man's mistake. He first goes and applies to the servants instead of the master. And do not we often err in the same way? Do not our ignorance, carnality and impatience lead us to stop at instruments? But they are nothing without God, and the sooner we are convinced of this the better, that we may not weary ourselves for very vanity.

19. He answereth him, and saith, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me." Deut. xxxii. 20; Ps. lxxviii. 6, 8, 22; John xx. 27; Heb. iii. 10, 12.

Our Lord replies to the father by a severe rebuke to the disciples. As if wounded at the exposure before such a multitude, of the weakness of His disciples' faith, which doubtless He felt as a reflection on Himself, He puts them to the blush before all, but in language fitted only to raise expectation of what Himself would do. *O faithless generation, &c.* It is no great matter to live lovingly with good-natured, with humble and meek persons, but he that can do so with the froward, the willful, the ignorant, the peevish and "perverse" (Luke ix. 41), he only has true charity, always remembering that our true solid peace, the peace of God, consists rather in compliance with others, than in being complied with, in suffering and forbearing, rather than in contention and victory. (Ps. cxx. 5–7; Acts xiii. 18; Rom. xv. 1–3; 1 Cor. xiii. 4–8; 1 Peter ii. 18–21.)

20. And they brought him unto him; and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. 21. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. Chap. i. 26; Luke ix. 42.

The moment when the boy beholds Jesus, the evil spirit that possesses him raises a fearful paroxysm. But, with a calmness which is at the same time a feeling of deep sympathy with the wretchedness before Him, Christ looks on the tearing, rolling and foaming, wisely delays the

help in order that all who were agitated might be tranquilized and prepared for the salutary impression, and kindly asks the father how long it is since this happened the poor boy. Satan does all he can to prevent the young coming to Jesus. *Of a child.* The case was a very inveterate one. It was one of long standing and great malignity, therefore it was the better suited to display the almighty power of Jesus. He loves to save where it is *most* evident that no *other* hand but *His* can afford help.

22. And oftentimes it has cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

The father begins to describe the case in stronger terms than before, and as he before complained that the disciples could not help him, so now, in his anguish, he speaks unbelievably the bold words: *But if thou canst*, &c. This "us," proceeding from paternal love, this cry for pity, would, in ordinary cases, notwithstanding all the boldness of the *if*, have moved Christ immediately to say, Be whole. Now, however, His mind is so full of thoughts about faith and unbelief, that the bodily malady, bad as it is, falls into the background, He delays still the help which will certainly come, and must first speak and testify of faith. The poor father's faith could and must, first of all, do the most, as the son appears almost passively incapable.

23. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

*Matt. xvii. 20; chap. xi. 23; Luke xvii. 6; John xi. 40.

A severe master would have rejected such a prayer as the father offered. (Verse 22.) But Jesus cherished the tenderest bud of faith. *If thou canst*, &c. The poor man was encouraged by this assurance to offer up a still more earnest prayer than before. When our Lord says, "All things are possible to him that believeth," we are to understand what classes of things He is speaking of, in which He includes all. And the condition (to him that believeth) belongs not to every rash and presumptuous belief that the mind, not in communion with God, may conjure up. The belief of which He speaks is that faith of which God grants the power.

24. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.

*Eph. ii. 8; Phil. i. 29; 2 Thes. i. 3, 11; Heb. xii. 2.

With tears. It is pleasing to see sensibility in religion. *Lord, I believe*, &c. Did not the Holy Spirit dictate this prayer? "We know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Rom. viii. 26.) Have our hearts ever been so full of good desires that we could only speak a few words? And were these words half choked with tears and sobs? God has heard those prayers. He never despises the broken and contrite heart. *Help thou mine unbelief*, help me, though I am conscious that my faith is weak, I have confidence in no one else but thee, and though I might justly be required to have more faith, yet, O pity my distressed situation, and let not my lack of faith prevent the exercise of thy power. "Our justification," says an old writer, "does not depend upon the degree of our faith, but on the reality of it." (Matt. xiii. 23, xxv. 22, 23.) Strength of grace is seen in holy joys, but truth of grace may be seen in sighs and groans. (Matt. v. 3, 4; Rom. viii. 23, 1 Peter i. 6.) "*Help thou mine unbelief.*" Had this prayer been improper, the receiver ought to have rebuked it, but He encouraged it. Let us not be afraid, with all the first Christians, and immensely the majority ever since, to call upon His name. Let us bring all our complaints to Him. He is the author and finisher of faith. In Him all fullness dwells.

25. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.

When the Saviour dispossessed this boy of a devil, He enjoined the evil spirit to *enter no more into him*. But when He Himself was tempted of Satan, the devil "departed from him for a season." (Luke iv. 13.) Thus we see that Jesus was pleased to show Himself a God in other men's matters, and but a man in such cases as He Himself was concerned, being contented still to be tempted by Satan, that His sufferings for us might cause our conquering through Him. (x. 45; Rom. xv. 3.)

26. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; inasmuch that many said, He is dead. 27. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

When a soul is willing to be converted,

the devil makes his last efforts, but Christ renders them ineffectual by His grace. Whatever He permits the devil to do against those whom He designs to save is only for the glory of His own grace, and to the confusion of the tempter. It is by His almighty power that He casts the devil out of the body and the soul, and puts His Spirit into possession of the heart of man. It was this *father's* faith that obtained the restoration of his son. Here is an encouragement for parents. If Jesus showed so much compassion to one who prayed for a *bodily* cure for his son, how much more must He feel for those who implore *spiritual* blessings for their children!

28. *And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? 29. And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

*Matt. xvii. 19.

This kind can come forth by nothing, &c. That is, in order to work miracles, to cast out devils, faith of the highest kind is necessary. That faith is produced and kept vigorous by much prayer, and by such abstinence from food as fits the mind for the highest exercises of religion, and leaves it free to hold communion with God. Learn hence, 1. That in extraordinary cases, where the necessities either of soul or body require it, recourse must be had to the use of extraordinary means, one of which is an importunate application unto God by solemn prayer. 2. That fasting and prayer are two special means of Christ's own appointment, for the enabling of His people victoriously to overcome Satan, and cast him out of ourselves or others. We must set an edge upon our faith by prayer, and upon our prayer by fasting.

30. † And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee, and he would not that any man should know it. 31. † For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. 32. But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

*Matt. xvii. 22; Luke ix. 44.

Verses 30-32: see on Matt. xvii. 22-3; Luke ix. 44-5.

Now, for the first time, there is a distinct notice of our Lord's leaving the coasts of Cesarea Philippi. *Is delivered, &c.* Using the present tense, He signifies that the thing shall be shortly, for so did He hasten to death, and so seriously did

He think of it, that *that* might seem present to Him, which was to come. (Luke x. 18, xii. 50; John xiii. 27.) *Rise the third day.* Jesus knew beforehand the whole amount of His sufferings, in all their connections and bearings, and therefore never foretold them without likewise foretelling His resurrection; neither did He foretell this, without foretelling His sufferings. Thus does true faith apprehend the latter and the former, as one entire matter, and makes very much of everything pertaining to either. Here is something for exercising the heart, something which must never be lost sight of in the darkest night of affliction, or in the clearest blaze of the terrestrial noon, for it is to "guide our feet in the way of peace." As we hold a candle to the flame, until it is fully lighted, so we must hold ourselves to this subject, with affecting meditation. (Luke xxiv. 26; 1 Peter v. 1; 2 Cor. xiii. 4.)

33. † *And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house, he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? 34. But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest? 35. And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all. 36. And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, 37. Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

*Matt. xviii. 1; Luke ix. 46, xxii. 24. *Matt. xx. 26, 27; chap. x. 43. *Matt. xviii. 2; chap. x. 16. *Matt. x. 49; Luke ix. 48, x. 16; John xii. 44, xiii. 20.

Disputed among yourselves, &c. If there was to be any *primacy* among the Apostles, why was Christ on this occasion silent concerning it? Or, if He had, in the hearing of the others, conferred it on Peter, what occasion would there have been for the Apostles to dispute about it? *If any man desire, &c.* The whole manner in which our Lord treats the question shows that the kingdom of God is designed, in its official relations, to form the direct opposite to official relations in the world. The fundamental impulse of the world is for all to struggle upward, toward power and distinction, in order to overtop and to rule each other. On the other hand, the fundamental impulse of the kingdom of God is this, that all shall stoop down in humility and serving love in order to draw each other up. And it is just by the might of this disposition to stoop that we are to measure a man's greatness in the kingdom of God. (See Phil. ii. 6, &c.)

And he took a child, &c. Here Jesus teaches by action. His object was, not only to recommend children to the care of His disciples, but to teach the disciples themselves an affectionate, humble, docile temper. The action was one which accorded with the holiness of His nature, and affectingly characterized it. Never was dignity so sweetly tempered by benevolence, never did the condescending tenderness of an elevated nature issue in a current at once so gentle and so copious. Children are entitled to our warmest interest. Think of their destiny! Yesterday that child was nothing, but when will it cease to be? Never! Immortality is written upon it, and the inscription is indelible, for it was traced by the finger of God. *Whosoever shall receive one of such, &c.* Here is precious encouragement for the Sabbath-school teacher. To receive children to instruct them merely in human learning, would not certainly be receiving them in Christ's name. But when we receive them to instruct them in His religion, to lead them to Him as their Saviour, to train them up in His nurture and admonition, we receive them in His name, and in so doing we "receive Him." *Receiveth not me (only), but him that sent me.* The service rendered to the lowest and humblest of our race, if done with proper motive, is virtually rendered to the supreme Lord of the universe, and as such shall be rewarded with life everlasting.

On verses 33-37 see on Matt. xviii. 1, &c.

38. * "And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbade him, because he followeth not us."—Num. xi. 28; Luke ix. 49.

See on Luke ix. 49.

Master, we saw, &c. Although only the disciples who followed Christ had a commission to work miracles, yet there were others, no enemies to Christ, who, in imitation of His disciples, attempted to cast out devils, and God was pleased, for the honor of His Son, sometimes to give them success. *We forbade him.* Here is an evidence of their rashness in forbidding him, under their own impulse, before they had consulted Jesus about it, and of their envy and emulation, in that they were dissatisfied and grieved that good was done,

because *they* did not do it. It is as hard a matter to look upon the gifts of others without envy, as it is upon our own without pride. "Followeth not *us*." "A preacher," says one, "sometimes imagines that his only desire is that men should follow Christ, and adhere to His Word, and it is himself whom he desires they should follow, and to whom he is very glad to find them adhere. John has fewer imitators of that perfect freedom from self-interest, which he had after the descent of the Holy Ghost, than he has of this defect in his state of imperfection. A man willingly approves the good which is done by others, when he loves good for its own sake, and God for His."

39. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: *for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.—1 Cor. xii. 3.

Forbid him not. Our Saviour thus replied, because He knew that this action of casting out devils in His name, would in some way redound to His glory, although He undertook the matter without direction from Christ. We ought not to censure and condemn those who do that which is good in itself, though they fail in the manner of their doing it. *That can lightly speak evil of me.* Two principles of immense importance are here laid down: First, "no one will 'lightly' or 'soon,' i. e., readily speak evil of me, who has the faith to do a miracle in my name, inasmuch as the outstreaming of the power to work in my name, cannot be greater than the inward recognition of that name; and second, If such a person cannot be supposed to be *against* us, ye are to hold him *for* us." Let it be carefully observed that our Lord does not say this man should not have "followed them," nor yet that it was indifferent whether he did or not, but simply teaches how such a person was to be regarded, *although he did not*, viz.: as a reverer of His name, and a promoter of His cause. (See on Luke ix. 50.)

The disciples were thus taught to see, in all men who had not declared themselves in opposition to them, furtherers of their cause, because not only all beginnings, but also all preparations of faith, even the smallest, should likewise be accounted component parts of Christ's Divine harvest; and further, for this cause also, because

those who are enemies of the disciples of Jesus are generally quick enough in making it known.

40. For ye that is not against us is on our part.
7 See Matt. xii. 30.

It has justly been observed that religion does not consist in mere negatives. Yet it here appears that if true religion does not consist in mere negatives, it may be inferred from what is negative, or that where there is no enmity, there is real friendship for Christ. There can be no neutrality; all men are either the friends or the enemies of Jesus. Men's hostility to Christ manifests itself, 1. By a dislike to draw near to God in the exercise of devotion. 2. In a dislike to think and speak about God and the Redeemer. 3. In a dislike of the followers of Christ, and those who bear His image. Some persons, from situation, connection, or other unavoidable causes, are kept from associating with the godly, yet they drink in the spirit of the Gospel and are concerned to honor it. Others, who frequent the assemblies of the saints, have but little to say on behalf of Christ, either from weakness or natural timidity, and so are unnoticed and unknown; yet there are some of this description who, though they cannot speak much for Jesus, could even die for Him. Many are deterred from making a public profession of religion through fear that all is not right with them, that they need higher attainments, and a more enlarged experience of the truth to justify their pretensions of love to Christ; yet He will own them as His friends amidst all their weaknesses and infirmities. (Matt. xxii. 20.) Some by their backslidings from peculiar temptations may have rendered their religion doubtful, yet their hearts mourn in secret for their folly and guilt, and they are far from being against Christ, or indifferent to His cause. (John xxi. 15.)

It becomes us, from Christ's example, to give encouragement wherever there are the least appearances of love to Him—to make that the test of true religion, rather than the existence of any other principle, and without respect to party distinctions. An old writer observes: "Moses, when he saw the Israelite and the Egyptian fight, did not say, 'Why strive you?' but drew

his sword and slew the Egyptian; but when he saw the two Israelites fight, he said, 'You are brethren, why strive you?' If the point of doctrine be an Egyptian (*i. e.*, fundamentally opposed to the faith), it must be slain 'by the sword of the Spirit,' and not reconciled, but if it be an Israelite (*i. e.*, if it concerns points not fundamental), though in the wrong, then, 'Why strive you?' (Gal. ii. 5; Rom. xiv.)

41. *For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.
*Matt. x. 42.

If the least service rendered to any one that bears the name of Christ will meet with a reward, with how much more consideration should we treat a man, who not only bears the name of Christ, but also performs a great and good work in His name! (See on Matt. x. 42.)

42. *And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.—*Matt. xviii. 6; Luke xvii. 1.

Offend—be a stumbling-block to, or furnish occasion to sin. *That a millstone, &c.* This was common punishment in ancient times. It was frequently resorted to in the case of rebels, and other malefactors, in the times of the later emperors of Rome. It was inflicted on many of the first Christians, and it is still used in the East to punish a variety of crimes.

43. *And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44. *Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 45. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 46. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 47. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: 48. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 49. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. 50. *Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltiness, wherewith will ye season it? *Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.
*Deut. xiii. 6; Matt. v. 29, xviii. 8; 1sa. lxxvi. 2; Lev. ii. 13; Ezek. xliii. 24. *Matt. v. 13; Luke xiv. 34. *Eph. iv. 29; Col. iv. 6. *Rom. xii. 18, xiv. 19; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Heb. xii. 14.

See on Matt. xvii. 7, &c.

Offend thee, or cause thee to offend, or sin. Cut it off. We are not to understand this, or the similar expression in the following verses, literally. The obvious meaning is, if an object, dear as a hand, foot, or eye, stand between us and our progress to heaven, and our complete surrender to Christ Jesus, that object, however dear, and the sacrifice of it, however

painful, we are to part with, renounce and resign, counting all but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. God denies us nothing, but with a design to give us something *better*. If He forbids a lust, it is to give us Himself. O wretched man! that ever thy heart should be so blind, so hard, so long in choosing. (Acts vii. 5; Heb. x. 34.) *Into hell*—the place of future punishment, the word being here contrasted with *going into life*, that is, future bliss. For a similar contrast see Matt. xxv. 46. *The fire that never shall be quenched*. On reading this expression, how can any one doubt that the misery of the lost is perpetual and ever-enduring? Universalists, instead of preaching down hell, would do much better if they would preach up Christ and heaven. If we show that whatever be the intensity of the misery of the lost, there is no reason why one sinner on earth should perish, we do better than by encouraging them in the path of ruin to plunge into the place of misery, in the wretched and vain anticipation that hell is only a sort of purgatory that has a happy and prosperous end. (See on Matt. iii. 12.)

Where their worm, &c. The *worm* and the *fire* are severally two-fold, each internal and external: the internal both burns and gnaws the heart; the external both gnaws and burns the body. (Ps. xxxix. 11.) There is nothing but a life of great piety, or a death of great stupidity, that can keep off these apprehensions. (Eph. v. 14; Jude 23.)

For every one shall be salted, &c. The causal particle "for" evidently shows that our Saviour is assigning a reason of what He had said before. (Verses 43, 45, 47.) Some of His hearers might perhaps think it strange that *their worm should never die*, that *their fire should never be quenched*, and hardly believe it possible for them to exist forever in such a state of torment, and therefore He now assigns a reason for what

He had said, viz.: that the *fire* shall be to them as *salt*, it shall not *consume*, but preserve them, and so make them capable of existing forever in everlasting burnings. *And every sacrifice*, &c. The word here translated "and" is sometimes used for "as" by way of similitude. The meaning is, the wicked shall in that torment of fire be made a sacrifice of everlasting holocaust to the Divine justice, of which God has given a proof and illustration in the typical law, having therein commanded that all sacrifices which were offered by fire, should be salted to preserve them from corruption. (Lev. ii. 13.) "It seems probable from this passage," says *Bishop Newton*, "as well as from other places of Scripture, that the fire of hell is not *metaphorical* but *real*. . . . The wicked having offended both in body and soul, they shall be punished in the one as well as in the other: and as the worm of guilt, the sense and consciousness of their evil doings, will torment their souls, so the fire will forever excruciate their bodies." (See Luke xvi. 24; Matt. xiii. 40, &c., xxv. 41.)

Salt is good, &c. Our Lord reminded the disciples, that as salt, though valuable in itself to season other bodies, was yet worthless and irrecoverable when it had lost its saltiness, so they would become more vile than others, if they were not truly sanctified; for they would be employed in converting and preserving others, and would have none to season them should they turn aside. It would therefore be incumbent on them to watch over their own hearts, to mortify their lusts, and laying aside ambition, the parent of contention, to live at peace with each other. "If the teachers themselves to whom is committed the Divine Word, with which men must be seasoned as with salt . . . do themselves become insipid" (not savoring of that holy word, in doctrine, spirit and practice), "what remaineth, but either, that the hearers perish, or that God should send other teachers."

1. What did our Lord say about "the kingdom of God?" 2. Where did he take Peter, James and John? 3. What is said of His Transfiguration? 4. Who appeared, and talked with Jesus? 5. What did Peter propose? 6. What did the voice say from the cloud? 7. Who was brought to Jesus? 8. What did He ask his father? 9. Did Jesus cast out the dumb and deaf spirit? 10. What did His disciples ask? 11. What reply was made? 12. What did Christ do when the disciples disputed who should be the greatest? 13. What did John say to our Saviour? 14. Explain the answer he received. 15. Explain also verses 43-50.

CHAPTER X.

2 *Christ disputeth with the Pharisees touching divorce-ment: 13 blesseth the children that are brought unto him: 17 resolveth a rich man how he may inherit life everlasting: 23 telleth his disciples of the danger of riches: 28 promiseth rewards to them that forsake anything for the gospel: 32 foretelleth his death and resurrection: 35 biddeth the two ambitious suitors to think rather of suffering with him: 46 and restoreth to Bartimeus his sight.*

AND *he* arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judea by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again.—Matt. xix. 1.

From thence. The last locality mentioned by Mark was Capernaum. (ix. 33.) *By the farther side of Jordan.* From this, as well as from Matt. xix. 1, it is evident that Jesus did not merely come to Peræa, but traveled through Peræa to the borders of Judea, that is, to the most eastern limits of Peræa. *As he was wont, &c.* How thick and close does this heavenly Sower scatter His seed! Every line is a new lesson, and every lesson a rule of perfection. Oh, the magnificent bounty of our God! He gives not barely the measure we give others, but pressed down, and shaken together, and running over into our bosoms. Why are we then so slow and dull to learn these Divine instructions? Why so remiss to practice them? Are they not sweet and excellent in themselves? Are they not infinitely profitable to us? Oh, make us greedy to learn what Thy love makes Thee so earnest to teach! (Job xxxiii. 14; Phil. iii. 1, 18; 1 Sam. iii. 9.)

2. ¶ And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him. Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife? tempting him. 3. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? 4. And they said, *“Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.”* 5. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept: 6. But from the beginning of the creation *“God made them male and female.”* 7. *“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife: 8. And they twain shall be one flesh; so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.”* 9. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 10. And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. 11. And he saith unto them, *“Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. 12. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.”*

¶ Matt. xix. 3. *“Deut. xxiv. 1; Matt. v. 31. [†]Gen. i. 27. [‡]Gen. ii. 24; 1 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. v. 31. [§]Matt. v. 32; Rom. vii. 3; 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11.*

Verses 2–12: see on Matt. xix. 3–9, v. 31.

Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. Is it asked, how could this be tempting Jesus? It was a very plain and Scriptural question, and the answer, one would suppose, must be free from any

risk, and a very easy one. The secret of the difficulty in answering was this. Jesus was still in the dominion of Herod Antipas, who had put away his wife, and was living with a woman who was not his wife, and therefore, they thought that Jesus by their question would be put in a great dilemma, and either way get into trouble. If He had said it was lawful, He would have been sanctioning sin, and if He said it was not lawful, He would be put in prison for offending Herod, as John was. Jesus answered them, however, evidently irrespective of any governing power, and fearless of any snare. He ever showed, what we should ever feel, that the path of truth, and right, and duty, and principle, is always, in the long run, the path that leads to safety.

What did Moses command you? The account given by Matthew (xix. 3) and Mark are not contradictory. Matthew records what was said in one part of the conversation, and Mark what was said in another. *For the hardness of your heart, &c.* Moses, as a civil lawgiver, “for,” because of, or having respect to, the hardness of your hearts—looking to your low moral state, and your inability to endure the strictness of the original law, suffered you to put away your wives; tolerated relaxation of the strictness of the marriage bond—not as approving of it, but to prevent still greater evils. *From the beginning of the creation—* therefore there was no creation before the creation described in the beginning of Genesis. *For this cause—to correspond with this Divine law in the creation.* For whose sake then may they part, if not for that of father and mother?

Cleave to his wife, &c. Woman was not made of an outward, but of an inward part of man, says an old writer, that she might be dear to him, even as his inwards; not of the hand of man, lest she should be proud, and look for superiority; not of the foot of man, lest she should be contemned, as far his inferior; but of his side, that she might be used as his fellow, cleaving to his inside, as an inseparable companion of all his haps, whilst they two live. And, as the rib receiveth strength from the breast of

man, so doth the woman from her husband, from whom cometh all her strength, counsel, and good comfort at all times. No creature had his mate made of his own flesh but man; therefore, no creature under heaven should be like man in the love of his mate; but man above them all. (1 Peter iii. 7.)

What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. The relation of marriage ought to be highly revered and honored. Nothing but death ought to terminate it. "The Prussian laws on marriage, dating from the infidel reign of Frederic II., are scandalously lax and demoralizing, by increasing the causes, and facilitating the accomplishment of divorce. With the revival of true Christianity in Prussia, a reform movement commenced, which aims at a return to the law of Christ."—*Dr. Schaff.* Similar laxness has marked and disgraced legislation in many of the States of our own country. The evils proceeding from the multiplication of divorcees and from the marriage of persons divorced for some other reason than the one specified by our Lord, are so alarming that we hesitate not to say, that both churches and ministers should clear themselves of all responsibility in the matter. The churches should discipline members who become divorced for any other than the Scriptural reason, members who marry with parties so divorced, and ministers who marry them. *Whosoever shall put away his wife, &c. And if a woman shall put away her husband, &c.* Jesus here puts both sexes on a level. Neither has a right to divorce for other cause than unchasteness, and neither, so divorced, has a right to marry again.

13. ¶ And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.—*Matth. xix. 13; Luke xviii. 15.*

Touch them—in accordance with the Old Testament custom. (Gen. xlvii. 14.) He should lay His right hand on them and pray the Divine benediction upon them. Children are the fruit of marriage; their Christian education, and the care of presenting them to Christ, that they may become members of His body, is the end thereof. They are an unhappy fruit if they are not presented to our blessed Saviour, and if He does not touch them by

blessing them and uniting them to Himself by His Spirit of adoption.

14. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.—*1 Cor. xiv. 20; 1 Peter ii. 2.*

He was much displeased. As Christ was not often "much displeased" with His disciples, there must have been some great offense to excite this great displeasure. It was a great offense to attempt to drive away these infants from their Saviour. How could the disciples take so much upon them, as to forbid the mothers thus to bring their precious little ones? Pride lurked in their hearts, and suggested many harsh and ungenerous measures. Before Jesus left this world He charged Peter to feed His lambs—those lambs whom He carried in His bosom. Faithful ministers love little children, and are ready to instruct them. *Suffer the little children to come unto me, &c.* How many dying children have lisped these words in their last moments! When Jesus uttered them, He knew what comfort they would afford to the lambs of His flock for many ages to come. And how full of comfort are they also to all who love the dear children! We know who it is who here took such notice of infants. It was the eternal Son of God, the great High Priest, the King of kings, by whom all things consist, "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person." *For of such is the kingdom of God.* It has been thought by some that this expression means that of persons of a child-like disposition is the kingdom, and this is true; but the expression really means, of such very children is the kingdom of God, or, heaven, chiefly made up. There is no reason to doubt that infants dying before the years of responsibility, are admitted into everlasting joy.

15. Verily I say unto you, *Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.*—*Matth. xviii. 3.*

Veres 13-16: see on *Matth. xix. 13-15, xviii. 3; Luke xviii. 15-17.*

Whosoever, &c. This indicates, 1. That children enter into the kingdom of heaven, and, 2. that in the case of adults there is required childlike character, as a prerequisite to enter into the kingdom of

heaven. That character is teachable, confiding, trustful, obedient. (See Luke xviii. 17.)

17. [†]And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

[‡]Matt. xix. 16; Luke xviii. 18, on which see Notes.

Running. This man was surely impelled by a remarkable earnestness. He seems to have been eagerly waiting. *Kneeled*—he therefore felt a great zeal. *What shall I do*, &c. This inquiry, far from being unreasonable, is the first and chief question which ought to be found upon the lips of every man. For what avails to us the adjustment of every other point, if the question of our eternal state is still undecided?

18. And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good, but one, that is God.

Why callest thou me good? If it should be asked for what reason Christ put this question, we answer, for the same reason that He asked the Pharisees, why “David, in Spirit, called him Lord?” (Matt. xxii. 43), and that was to try, if they were able to account for it. This ruler, by addressing our Saviour, under the name of “good Master,” when the inspired Psalmist had affirmed long before, that there is “none that doeth good, no, not one” (Ps. xiv. 3), did in effect, allow Him to be God, no mere man, since the fall of Adam, having any claim to that character. And when he was called upon to explain his meaning, for that God only was *good*, he should have replied in the words of Thomas: “My Lord and my God!” which would have been a noble instance of faith, and cleared up the whole difficulty.

19. Thou knowest the commandments, I do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honor thy father and mother.—Ex. xx.; Rom. xiii. 9.

Thou knowest the commandments, &c. It should never be forgotten that if it be true, as it is, on the one hand, that by faith, and faith alone, the sinner is justified before God, yet it is equally true, that the faith which so justifies, is a faith infallibly productive of obedience to the will of God. Morality, indeed, will, of itself, never save a soul, but no man can be saved whose faith does not prompt him to the vigorous and cordial discharge of all the duties of morality. Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

20. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. 21. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me. 22. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.—Matt. vi. 19, 20.

Jesus beholding him loved him. In other words, He was struck with many sweet and attractive qualities of his mind. Purity, docility, ingenuousness, justice, gratitude, benevolence, any or all of which qualities may have entered more or less into his character, are in themselves lovely and conciliating.

Sell whatsoever thou hast, &c. No man is obliged to sell all that he has, &c., because Christ gave such a command to one person, any more than he is obliged to sacrifice his son, because God commanded Abraham to do so, and yet, doubtless, these were written for our instruction, that we might be ready always to obey the severest calls of Providence, a matter of no small difficulty, and which we infinitely deceive ourselves and others in. It is a common thing to say, “God’s will be done,” without one grain of sincerity, or true resignation. (Acts v. 4). *Went away grieved*, &c. Possibly, had he been permitted to unite the services of God and Mammon, to serve his neighbor without injuring himself, to shape his morals according to the conceptions of men, instead of the “pattern” of the sanctuary, he might have remained with Christ, and veiled a cold and conceited heart under the covering of a bright and showy religious profession. If mortification and self-denial, and taking up the cross, and devoting himself body and soul to Christ, and sacrificing all for the benefit of others, are the only terms of being a disciple of Jesus, then, however grieved at the result, he must quit the Saviour and cleave to the world.

Here is a most solemn lesson for young persons invested with all those qualities which attract and delight the observer, full of honor, and candor, and kindness, anxiously attentive to many of the duties of society—persons whom it is difficult to see without loving, and without wishing to transfer many of their attractive qualities into our own character. Let them learn from the narrative, that they may have all those attractions which win the applause

of the world, and yet, unless they "take up their cross" and "follow" Christ, unless they have "the mind which was in Christ Jesus," unless they are seeking redemption by His blood and the sanctification of their hearts by the influence of His Spirit, unless they are prepared to renounce all and do all which God requires, theirs, for the present, *is a lost state*, a state in which, if called to judgment, they would be disinherited of heaven, and dismissed to the place of the impenitent and unholy.

23. ¶ And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 24. And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! 25. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 26. And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? 27. And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

¶ Matt. xix. 23; Luke xviii. 24. ¶ Joh xxxi. 24; Ps. lli. 7; 1 Tim. vi. 17. ¶ Jer. xxxii. 17; Matt. xix. 26.

How hardly, &c. Looked at in the light of the occasion which called it forth, it is easy to see a special applicability of the passage to the time when it was spoken. It was extremely difficult at that time, at the first preaching of the Gospel, for any rich man to become a convert to Christianity. This can readily be believed, for those who were enjoying all the comforts, and elegancies, and luxuries of life, would not be very ready to sacrifice these, and submit to poverty, hardships, persecutions, and even death itself, to which the first converts to Christianity were frequently exposed. They would, therefore, generally follow the example of the rich man before us; would turn their backs on the kingdom of heaven, and go away to the world and its enjoyments. And this in fact we know to have been the case. For it was of the lower ranks of men that our Lord's disciples *principally* consisted, and we are expressly told that it was the common people chiefly that heard him gladly; and even after his death, Paul asserts that not many mighty, not many noble, were called. Still, however, it cannot be doubted that our Lord, in these words, had an eye also to rich men in future professing Christianity, as well as to the rich men of those days, who were either Jews or heathens.

Although the similitude made use of,

that of a camel passing through the eye of a needle, implies absolute impossibility, yet, according to every rule of interpreting Oriental proverbs (for such this is), it means only, in its application, *great difficulty*. And in this sense it was actually used, both by the Jews and the Arabians, and is plainly so interpreted by our Lord, when He says that "they that have riches" shall *hardly* enter into the kingdom of God. The explanation He gives in verse 24, shows plainly to whom He refers. He there indicates plainly that the possession of property in itself is not ruinous or reprehensible. The persons whom He describes are such as "*trust in riches*"—those who place their whole *dependence* upon them, whose views and hopes are centered in them and them mainly, who place their whole happiness, not in relieving the distresses of the poor and soothing the sorrows of the afflicted, not in acts of worship and adoration, and thanksgiving to Him from whose bounty they derive every blessing they enjoy, not in giving Him their hearts, and dedicating their wealth to His glory and service, but in amassing it without end, or squandering it without any benefit to mankind, in making it the instrument of pleasure, of luxury, of dissipation, of vice, and the means of gratifying every irregular appetite and passion without control.

Who then can be saved? The disciples are affected with wonder and admiration, at this teaching of our Saviour. Learn thence, that such are the special and peculiar difficulties which lie in the rich man's way to salvation, that his getting to heaven is matter of wonder and admiration to the disciples of Christ. Observe how our Lord resolves this doubt. *With men, &c.* Here it is implied, 1. That it is impossible for any man, rich or poor, by his own natural strength, to get to heaven; and 2. That when we are discouraged with the sense of our own impotency, we should consider the power of God, and fix our faith upon it.

28. ¶ Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. 29. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, 30. But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with

persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. 31. ^aBut many *that are* first shall be last; and the last first. ^bMatt. xix. 27. ^c2 Chron. xxv. 9; Luke xviii. 30. ^dMatt. xix. 30.

But he shall receive a hundredfold, &c.—Virtually, not formally, not a hundred fathers, but he shall have that in God, which all the creatures would be to him, if they were multiplied a hundred times; wife here is left out in the repetition. (1 Sam. i. 8; 1 Cor. iii. 21–23.) *With persecutions.* The afflictions and troubles, where-with God in His love chastens His children for their good, are indeed part of His promise, and that a gracious part, too. Here it is expressed; but, where it is not so, it must be ever understood, in all the promises that concern this life. It is a received rule among divines, that all temporal promises are to be understood *cum exceptione crucis*; that is to say, not absolutely, but with this reservation—unless the Lord, in His holy wisdom, shall see it good for us to have it otherwise. . . If we submit our wills to His, both in doing and suffering, doubtless we cannot finally miscarry. He will consult nothing but for our good; and what He hath consulted must stand. (John xv. 2; Rom. viii. 17; 1 Thes. i. 6.)

32. ^fAnd they were in the way going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed, and as they followed, they were afraid. ^gAnd he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him. 33. *Saying,* Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: 34. And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him; and shall kill him, and the third day he shall rise again. ^hMatt. xx. 17. ⁱLuke ix. 22.

Verses 32–34: see on Matt. xx. 17; Luke ix. 22.

The Lord Jesus knew, from the beginning, all that was before Him. The treachery of Judas Iscariot, the fierce persecution of the chief priests and scribes, the unjust judgment, the delivery to Pontius Pilate, the mocking, the scourging, the crown of thorns; the cross; the hanging between the two malefactors, the nails, the spear—all, all were spread before His mind like a picture. How great an aggravation of suffering foreknowledge is, those well know who have lived in the prospect of some fearful surgical operation. Yet none of these things moved our Lord. He says: “I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters,

and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting.” (Isa. l. 5, 6). He saw Calvary in the distance all His life through, and yet walked calmly up to it, without turning to the right hand or to the left. He suffered intentionally, deliberately, and of His own free will. (John x. 18). Surely there never was sorrow like unto His sorrow, or love like His love.

35. ^j¶ And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldst do for us whatsoever we shall desire. 36. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? 37. They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. 38. But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? 39. And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of, and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: 40. But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared. 41. ¶ And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John. 42. But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, exercise lordship over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43. ^kBut so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: 44. And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. 45. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

^lMatt. xx. 20. ^mMatt. xx. 24. ⁿLuke xxii. 25. ^oMatt. xx. 26, 28; Luke ix. 48. ^pJohn xiii. 14; Phil. ii. 7. ^qMt. ix. 28, 1 Tim. ii. 6; Titus ii. 14.

Verses 35–45: see on Matt. xx. 24, &c.; Luke xxii. 24–6.

And James and John, &c. Matthew represents Salome, their mother, herself as advancing the prayer, while according to Mark the sons do it, such variations, however, which are explained by the nature of the case, show only the mutual independence of the Evangelists, and instead of impairing, greatly increase the weight of their statements. *Ye know not what ye ask.* Our Lord thus answered, doubtless, with a shudder in His soul, at the absence of foreboding with which His beloved disciples could ask a thousand times for that which was perilous, or even destructive, and still oftener for that which was unreasonable. For not only the want of foreboding with which they asked for themselves the places of the thieves, but also the arrogant regardlessness with which they aspired above all the other disciples, deserved a repulse.

Drink of the cup. This is a well-known Scripture phrase, denoting, generally, a partaking in some heavy and bitter portion. (Isa. li. 17; Jer. xxv. 15, 16; Matt.

xxvi. 39, 42.) *With the baptism, &c.* Our Lord elsewhere also speaks of His death, under the figure of a baptism of blood. (Luke xii. 50.)

We can. The desire of the sons of Zebedee was probably not merely an ambitious effort after dignity, it was inspired by a nobler motive. Rather their wish was, now that the Lord had spoken so plainly of His suffering, and perhaps some of the band of disciples might be terribly discouraged thereby, to express in the strongest way the confidence with which they, on their part, anticipated His glorification. "The Lord has often given me," says *Halyburton*, "when clouded by this fear (the fear of death) a sweet discovery of the beauty of this disposal, that we have promises to live upon, until the trials come, and that, when they come, we shall then get accomplishments to live on. 'In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen.' . . . I dare not say, 'I am ready to die;' I dare not say, 'I have faith, or grace, sufficient to carry me through death;' I dare not say, 'I have no fears of death;' but this I say, 'There is grace enough for helping me, laid up in the promise;' there is 'a throne of grace,' to which in our straits we may have recourse. He is 'a God of judgment,' who has the disposal, and will not withhold 'grace,' when it is really 'the time of need.'" (Dent. xxxiii. 25; Matt. vi. 34; 1 Cor. x. 13.) *Not mine to give*—as a matter of private friendship or of present favor, apart from the Divine plan of human redemption. The inferiority of Christ to the Father, which appears here as in many other places, is not an essential, but an official one. As Mediator, God-man, the Messiah, He always appears in subordination to the Father, and this, rightly understood, is not inconsistent with those great texts in which His Divinity and co-equal power with the Father are fully taught.

But it shall be given, &c. "The supplement which our translators have inserted," says *Dr. Brown*, "is approved by some good interpreters, and the proper sense of the word rendered 'but,' is certainly in favor of it. But besides that, it makes the statement too elliptical—leaving too

many words to be supplied—it seems to make our Lord repudiate the right to assign to each of His people his place in the kingdom of glory, a thing which He nowhere else does, but rather the contrary. It is true that He says their place is 'prepared for them by His Father.' But that is true of their admission to heaven at all, and yet from His great white throne Jesus will Himself adjudicate the kingdom, and authoritatively invite into it those on His right hand, calling them the 'blessed of His Father,' so little inconsistency is there between the eternal choice of them by His Father, and that public adjudication of them, not only to heaven in general, but each to his own position in it, which all Scripture assigns to Christ." The true rendering, then, of this clause, we take it, is this: "But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give, save to them for whom it is prepared." When, therefore, He says, "It is not mine to give," the meaning is, "I cannot give it as a *favor* to whomsoever I *please*, or on a principle of *favoritism*, it belongs exclusively to those for whom it is prepared, &c." And if this be His meaning, it will be seen how far our Lord is from disclaiming the right to assign to each his proper place in His kingdom; that, on the contrary, He expressly asserts it, merely announcing that the principle of distribution is quite different from what these petitioners supposed." *Called them unto him.* (Refer to viii. 34; ix. 35.) Men, that are often angry and for every trifle, in a little time will be little regarded; and they, that reprove with passion, will be less regarded, when they reprove with reason. (Gal. vi. 1; v. 22, 23.)

They which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, &c. The several governments, both in the East and West, in our Lord's time, tyrannized and exercised arbitrary power over the people. Christ appears to have spoken these words, to abate the envy rising against the sons of Zebedee, among the other Apostles.

But whosoever will be great among you, &c. Our Lord here showed them how wrong were all their disputes about precedence, explaining to them that true precedence

was not in rank, but in usefulness. High beneficence is high rank. Thus an incidental occurrence becomes the pedestal on which is exhibited to all mankind a precious and instructive lesson. That lesson is, that the disciple who desires to attain the loftiest dignity, must make up his mind to be characterized and distinguished by the greatest usefulness. The maxim is, that whosoever desires to be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, to be most renowned and celebrated among the wise and good of mankind, must bear in mind that there is but one path to pre-eminence and real celebrity—the path of the greatest possible usefulness. He who will have man's praise, must make up his mind to be man's servant. This is not the way of human nature. As *Luther* said, "human nature would be glorified first, without being crucified." It needs to be learned that there is but one way to the crown, namely, the cross, and that through tribulation, self-sacrifice, and self-denial in Christ Jesus, we must attain the kingdom of heaven.

And to give his life a ransom for many. We have here an express declaration from the mouth of our Lord Himself, that He came into the world to give His life as the price of our redemption from death; to die in our stead, that He might thereby purchase for us eternal life. (See also Matt. xvi. 28; John vi. 51, xi. 50–53; Rom. v. 15; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Heb. ix. 28.)

43. * 44 And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, sat by the highway side begging. 45. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. 46. And many charged him that he should hold his peace; but he cried the more a great deal, Thou son of David have mercy on me. 47. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. 48. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. 49. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. 50. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way. 51. Matt. xx. 29; Luke xviii. 36. *Matt. ix. 22; chap. v. 34.

Verses 46–52: see on Matt. xx. 29, &c.; Luke xviii. 36, &c.

Blind Bartimeus. Matthew mentions "two blind men." (xx. 30.) Mark mentions but one, and tells us his name. He was Bartimeus, and the very fact that he so names him seems to indicate that he

was a well-known person at the time. A learned commentator remarks: "As his was the case of special interest, whose case Mark wishes to narrate, so he omits to state that another man was healed at the same time. It is very possible that Mark was not informed of that fact. Inspiration does not imply omniscience. One inspired writer may be more fully informed than another. Both may be perfectly true so far as they go. But the naturalness of the picture of the two blind men, sitting by the road side, leaves but little doubt that Matthew, who was a disciple (as Mark was not), wrote as an eye-witness of the miracle."

Sat by the highway side begging. Blindness is worthy of compassion even when found in circumstances of affluence and ease—but how much more so when attended with indigence and want! Poor people should be thankful to God for the preservation of their limbs and senses. If they have no patrimony, nor independence, they can labor, and while they have hands and eyes they should scorn habits of beggary. But the helpless are not to starve, nor are we indiscriminately to reject every application we meet with upon the road. *And when he heard, &c.* Sitting under the shadow of some tree, listening to apprehend if any travelers were approaching—for though he could not see, he could hear, and this was an alleviation of his distress—a noise strikes him, the sound draws nearer and nearer, and he asks what it means.

Jesus of Nazareth. . . . And many charged him, &c. We must expect not only to have our prayers hindered, but our very faith itself endangered—the faith in which we alone can pray—as we pass through this wicked world. (Luke viii. 1, 8; xxii. 31, 32). *He cried the more, &c.* He was not to be discouraged. "This is my opportunity. I have addressed thousands who could give me bread, but here is one who can give me eyes. In a moment He will be out of hearing—and when may He pass by again?" *Jesus stood.* What cannot prayer do? Once the sun of nature stood still at the desire of Joshua, who was eager to complete his victory. And lo! now, "the Sun of Righteousness" stands

still, with "healing under His wings," at the desire of Bartimeus, who begs a cure.

Casting away his garment. How natural this representation? We must throw away everything that would keep us from coming to Jesus. *What wilt thou, &c.* Our Saviour is acquainted with all our sins, but He requires us to confess them; He understands all our wants, but He commands us to acknowledge them. Jesus in stooping to ask this blind man to state his condition, speedily gave a proof of His own assertion, so recently made. (Verse 45). *Thy faith, &c.* It was a great act of faith in Bartimeus to call Him *the Son of David*, and *Lord*, whom the people described to him, as being *Jesus of Nazareth*. His faith was great, because, being blind, he could not see the miracles which Jesus did. "Faith came" to him in the truest way, "by hearing." He believed on the testimony and report of others, and so he inherited, in a manner, that emphatic promise of the Lord his Saviour, "Blessed are they who have have not seen, and yet have believed." (John xx. 29).

Immediately. The restoration of sight was instantaneous—the miracle at once

complete. *And followed Jesus in the way.* This was an improvement of the greatness of the mercy. "I can never," says he, "discharge my obligations to such a gracious and almighty friend. But let me devote myself to His service—let me continually ask, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?'" Following Jesus is the best way to evidence a change of heart. None follow Him blind. The truly converted are willing to forsake all, in order to follow Him whithersoever He goeth. And every proof of our conversion, separate from this adherence to the Saviour, is fallacious and ruinous.

Thousands have read this simple and touching story, as a truthful history of their own sad, spiritual blindness, and its removal through the abounding grace of Jesus Christ. Thousands have sung, and we believe will sing to the end of time, the beautiful hymn

"Mercy, O thou Son of David!"

as the genuine expression of their own feelings, in view of the wondrous change wrought in them by the same Almighty Saviour.

1. What question was proposed to Christ? 2. How did He dispose of it? 3. How did He receive the young children that were brought to Him? 4. Who came running to him? 5. For what purpose did he come? 6. What did he say? 7. What was our Lord's reply? 8. What was the issue of the young ruler's case? 9. What did Christ say about riches? 10. How did He remove the astonishment of His disciples? 11. What did He say to Peter? 12. What did James and John ask? 13. Explain our Lord's answer. 14. State the particulars of the restoration of sight to Bartimeus.

CHAPTER XI.

1 *Christ rideth with triumph into Jerusalem: 12 curseth the fruitless leafy tree: 15 purgeth the temple: 20 exhorteth his disciples to steadfastness of faith, and to forgive their enemies: 27 and defendeth the lawfulness of his actions, by the witness of John, who was a man sent of God.*

AND when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples, 2. And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat, loose him, and bring him.—Matt. xxi. 1; John xii. 14.

Verses 1-10: see on Matt. xxi. 1-11.

When they came nigh, &c. Our Saviour is at last approaching the capital, whither

we beheld Him, in the preceding chapter (verse 32) proceeding with mysterious haste. From Jericho to Jerusalem is about twenty-five miles, a wild road, leading mostly through mountain passes, which the Saviour must have traveled, followed by a multitude of persons. He had now reached that neighborhood lying east of Jerusalem, where the districts of Bethphage and Bethany unite—being part of the Mount of Olives. *Sendeth forth two of his disciples*—probably John and

Peter. *A colt*, &c. Kings and princes commonly rode on the ass or mule, in times of peace; the horse was used more for war. (See Job xxxix. 19.) *Whereon never man sat*. In this it is supposed is implied, that he for whose use the colt was to be brought, was a sacred person; thus in Num. xix. 2, Deut. xxi. 3, we find that heifers to be offered in sacrifice were to be such as had never been employed in labor.

3. And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? Say ye that the Lord hath need of him: and straightway he will send him hither. 4. And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him. 5. And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? 6. And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go. 7. And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him.

If any man say, &c. Thus did our Lord, in assuming His meek sovereignty, show that the hearts of men were in His hand, and though He submitted to indignity from others, yet in such hearts would He establish His kingdom, and reign in meekness. As when he needed a room for the Passover, He foresaw who would afford it, and where he was to be found (chap. xiv. 12-16), so now, also, did He know who was worthy of this honor, and willing to grant what He needed. Let us gladly yield up to Christ whatever He demands. *In a place where two ways met*, literally, in a way leading around a place, i. e., a street of the town.

8. And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strowed them in the way. 9. And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: 10. Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

¹Matt. xxi. 8. ²Ps. cxviii. 26. ³Ps. cxlviii. 1.

Their garments—Men put their garments down for Jehu to walk upon. (2 Kings ix. 13.) *Branches off the trees*—the palm-trees. There were many species of the palm. It is the date-palm for which Syria and Palestine were distinguished. Jericho so abounded in palm-trees that it was called the “city of palms.”

Hosanna, Blessed is he that cometh, &c. When we read of the multitude shouting “Hosanna,” and call to mind that in less than one short week the same voices exclaimed “crucify Him, crucify Him,” we should learn a lesson of self-distrust, and fear lest we should ever be found so false and fickle. Many join the followers of

Christ when He seems to be riding in triumph; many voices are heard loud in profession, when profession is the fashion of the day; but how is it when the scene is changed? when the cross is to be meekly borne? when slights are to be endured for His name's sake, and temptations to be perseveringly and unostentatiously resisted? Experience shows that His ranks are then thinned, His professed friends and followers melt away. Few, as it were, go with Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. (Heb. xiii. 13.)

11. And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

¹Matt. xxi. 12, on which see notes.

When he had looked round about, &c. Silently and penetratingly Jesus took in everything in His glance, everywhere discerning spiritual death under the glistening curtain of life, the completest ruin in the apparent bloom of living worship: everywhere complete heathenism upon Moriah. Thus He went around, and perceived everything with clear glance and deep silence in His true heart. He had not completed this work until late in the evening, when, in the little company of the twelve, He went to Bethany through the approaching night. (See on Matt. xxi. 12-13.)

12. ¶ And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry: 13. And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find anything thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for the time of figs was not yet. 14. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever. And his disciples heard it.

¹Matt. xxi. 18. ²Matt. xxi. 19. ³John xv. 6; Heb. vi. 4, 8, 10; 2 Peter ii. 20.

Verses 12-14: see on Matt. xxi. 17-19.

He was hungry. Jesus having left Bethany for the purpose of hastening to His abode and ministry in the house which was His Father's, in the deep attraction of His heart toward the place and the work, had not thought of appeasing His bodily necessities with a morning meal. *Fig tree*—the fig tree was very common in Palestine, and it is found there still, though not in great abundance. *Having leaves*. Its extraordinary show of leaves so early, gave a promise of early figs, since in the fig tree the blossom and the fruit appear before the formation of the leaves. It was this profusion of leaves which warranted the Lord in expecting to find figs

on the tree. It turned out that the tree was *precocious*. *He came, if haply he might find*, &c. By the laws of Moses great freedom in helping one's self to fruit was allowed, and *Thomson* says that the custom of plucking ripe figs as one passes by the orchards is still universal, . . . especially from trees by the roadside, and from all that are not enclosed. (See Matt. xxi. 19.)

No man eat fruit of thee, &c. It is observed that in the whole narrative of our Saviour's life no passage is related of Him low or weak, but it is immediately seconded, and, as it were, corrected by another high and miraculous. No sooner was Christ humbled to a manger, but the contempt of the place was taken off with the glory of the attendance in the ministration of angels. His submission to that mean and coarse ceremony of circumcision was ennobled with the public attestation of Simeon concerning Him: His fasting and temptation attended with another service of angels: His baptism with a glorious recognition by a voice from heaven. When He seemed to show weakness in seeking fruit upon this *fig tree*, which had none, He manifested His power by cursing it to deadness with a word: when He seemed to be overpowered at His apprehension in the garden He then exerted His mightiness in causing His armed adversaries to fall backward, and healing Malchus' ear with a touch. When He underwent the lash, and violent infamy of crucifixion and death, then did the universal frame of nature give testimony to His divinity; the temple rending, the sun darkening, and the earth quaking, the whole creation seemed to sympathize with His passion. And when afterward He seemed to be in the very kingdom and dominion of death, by descending into the grave, He quickly confuted the dishonor of that, by an astonishing resurrection, and, by an argument *ex abundanti*, proved the divinity of His person, over and over, in an equally miraculous ascension. (xi. 7-10; Rom. i. 3, 4; 2 Cor. xi. 30, xiii. 14; Heb. xi. 34.)

We may regard this blasting of the fig tree in two lights. The fig tree, rich in foliage, but destitute of fruit, represents: I. The Jewish people, so abundant in out-

ward shows of piety, but destitute of its reality. Their vital sap was squandered upon leaves. And as the fruitless tree, failing to realize the aim of its being, was destroyed, so the Theocratic nation, for the same reason, was to be overtaken, after long forbearance, by the judgments of God, and shut out from His kingdom. The deep yet latent curse of the people and country appeared to the soul of Jesus in this sign of the misgrowth of a tree on the way, therefore through His word He revealed the hidden curse. II. This fig tree was an apt emblem of an unprofitable follower of the Messiah. It was a *showy* tree. It made a boast of fruitfulness. It was a lying tree. It invited people to believe that it had figs. It promised, by its foliage, to give men figs. Christ, therefore, doomed it to perpetual barrenness.

It is a great mistake to suppose that the act sprung from any feeling whatever on account of the fruitlessness of the tree. That, to such a being as Jesus Christ, was a matter of no consequence. But the Apostles, who were looking on, needed more instruction and faith. The tree was cursed that the Apostles might be blessed. The record of the miracle is full of solemn warning to churches and individuals. The leaves of a profession may exist where there is no fruit. A fruitless profession is a perpetual falsehood.

15. [†] And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrow the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves: 16. And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessels through the temple. 17. And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. 18. And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine. 19. And when even was come, he went out of the city. [‡] Matt. xxi. 12; John ii. 14. [§] Isa. lvi. 7. ^{||} Jer. vii. 11. [¶] Matt. xxi. 45, 46; Luke xix. 47. ^{‡‡} Matt. vii. 28.

Began to cast out, &c. Men ought to have taken warning the day before, whilst the Lord spared them and admonished them by gestures. *Sold bought*—animals for temple sacrifice and other commodities. *Money changers*. The Jewish money being alone accepted for the sacred treasure, brokers were always at hand to furnish it in exchange for the foreign coin. *Doves*—used in sacrifice by the poor. *My house*. In the prophetic writings, the temple of God is thus designated. *Den of thieves*.

(Jer. vii. 11.) Robbers and thieves have in every age betaken themselves to dens and caves, where they can enjoy their ill-gotten plunder in security. Hence the appropriateness of the expression as used here by our Lord.

Christ's clearing of the temple was a type of His second coming, and if, even in the days of His lowliness, He could put forth such awful power, how much more when He shall come in the clouds of heaven "in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels!" (Luke ix. 26.) His indignation will be first poured out against those who have profaned His name and gifts and ordinances by their ungodliness and worldly lusts. "Holiness," we are told, "becometh His house forever" (Ps. xciii. 5), and let us remember, that our bodies also are accounted His temple, in which He lodges: as it is written, "The temple of the Lord is holy, which temple ye are." (1 Cor. iii. 17.) Holy, indeed, ought we to be, and we should pray Him now to cast out of our hearts whatever displeases Him, that so, however suddenly He come to His temple, He may find it a house of prayer, a place of holy thoughts and heavenly tempers and practices, not a den of base and deceitful habits.

20. ^rAnd in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. 21. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.
^aMatt. xxi. 19.

On verses 20-24 see on Matt. xxi. 20-22, xvii. 20, vi. 14-15; Luke xvii. 6.

In the morning, &c. (See on verses 13, 14.) *Dried up from the roots.* Whilst the trees of the Gentiles have been long since clad with verdure, the fig tree of Jerusalem has remained as our Saviour left it, for a warning to all. There it has stood through all the changes of time, as though, but yesterday, it had been visited by the curse of God. (Jer. xxiii. 40; Luke xxi. 24.)

22. And Jesus answering, saith unto them, Have faith in God.

Although the symbolical meaning of the dried up fig tree was that which has been already stated, our Lord was also pleased to inculcate another lesson from it, such as we need always to learn, on the power of *faith*, and that lesson is followed by another of like importance, on the

necessity of *love*, verse 25. (John xvi. 12; Acts xiii. 40, 41, 46; Gal. v. 6.) Jesus before referred to the power of faith (Matt. xxi. 21), now He is more explicit. The words might be rendered, "have faith of God," that is, be not confident in yourselves, or in any inferior power, but let your confidence be altogether that which cometh from God. So the Apostle exhorts (Eph. vi. 10), "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might."

23. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.
^aMatt. xvii. 20; Luke xvii. 6, on which see notes.

In his heart, i. e., in his mind. This is strengthened by the affirmative expression of the same idea in the next clause. The power of God is ours when our heart is entirely His by a faith which is lively and free from all distrust or doubtfulness. This is the fruit of that holy and faithful friendship which the Holy Ghost forms between God and the saints, and which consists only in desiring the very same things. Nothing is more or less difficult in respect of Him who can equally do all things, and whom nothing is able to resist.

24. Therefore I say unto you, ^rWhat things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.
^aMatt. vii. 7; John xiv. 13; James i. 5, 6.

Therefore—in view of this readiness of God to make your faith true the instant that it exists. *I say*—I declare this high privilege of the faithful soul. *Unto you*—Who have attained full communion with God. *Ye desire.* We are apt to acquiesce in the bare act of prayer, and can be well enough content all our lives to go without the spiritual good things we pray for. The case is plain, we do not *desire* them. (Matt. v. 6.)

"Prayer," says *Chrysostom*, "is an all-efficient panoply, a treasure undiminished, a mine, which is never exhausted, a sky unobscured by clouds, a haven unruffled by the storm; it is the root, the fountain and the mother of a thousand blessings. It transcends a monarch's power. . . . I speak not of the prayer which is cold, and feeble and devoid of energy; I speak of that which proceeds from a mind outstretched, the child of a contrite spirit,

the offspring of a soul converted: this is the prayer which mounteth to the heavens. . . . The power of prayer hath subdued the strength of fire, it hath bridled the rage of lions, hushed anarchy to rest, extinguished wars, appeased the elements, expelled demons, burst the chains of death, expanded the gates of heaven, assuaged diseases, repelled frauds, rescued cities from destruction, it hath stayed the sun in its course, and arrested the progress of the thunderbolt; in a word, it hath destroyed whatever is an enemy to man. I repeat, that I speak not of the prayer engendered by the lips, but of that which ascends from the recesses of the heart." (John iv. 24; Luke xi. 1; James v. 16.)

25. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any, that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. 26. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

†Matt. vi. 14: Col. iii. 13. ‡Matt. xviii. 35.

If ye do not forgive, &c. On the connection between *forgiving* and the *prayer of faith*, *Stier* remarks: "Whenever the heart, conscious of its own guilt, is not perfectly ready to exercise forgiveness, whenever there is any ban of enmity there is a secret *doubting* which breaks and hinders the power of prayer. This is what the Apostle means in 1 Tim. ii. 8, "without *wrath* and *doubting*." It will be observed that Christ speaks indefinitely; *forgive*, not merely your brethren, but men (Matt. vi. 14)—all men, good and bad, friends and enemies. If we forgive one another freely, our Heavenly Father will forgive us fully.

27. ¶ And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there came to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders, 28. And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things? 29. And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. 30. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me. 31. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? 32. But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. 33. And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

†Matt. xxi. 23, on which see notes. ‡Matt. iii. 5.

By what authority, &c. Had they been true to their office, or to themselves, they needed not to have asked this question. They had possessed long since abundant means of knowing the Divine authority both of the Lord's ministry, and of John's baptism. But their carnal passions pre-

vented them from acknowledging the first, while their cowardly fears, the offspring of a bad conscience, brought them into a dilemma, respecting the last. Do we see nothing like this among ourselves? Received truths are disputed; things certain are treated as uncertainties; old objections, often refuted, are revived; questions are raised, where the clearest light and evidence have long supplied an answer, adequate to the conviction of every honest mind: but men refuse to be convinced; they harden themselves in error; because of their lusts, they "love to have it so;" while some even venture to hope that their supposed inability to believe, which is their condemnation, will serve as an extenuation of their general guilt, at the last day. How awful, in these respects, are the warnings of the Lord! "Yet a little while is the light with you; walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you." "Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" *Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.* (Jer. xiii. 16; Ezek. xiv. 1-5; Luke xxii. 66, 67.)

I also will ask you. The counter-question is once more a testimony to the heavenly supremacy of Christ's wisdom as a Teacher. *Was it from heaven? i. e.,* did John act as a true prophet under Divine authority? The antithesis, *or of men*, signifies his having come by his own arbitrary boldness, undertaking an enthusiastic work, supported by the party spirit of like-minded confederates. Now if the sanhedrim declared for the latter part of the alternative, they would not only come into collision with the faith of the people, but they would condemn themselves as having proved false to the theocracy, as the administrators of its laws. If, on the other hand, they acknowledge the Divine mission of John, they must also acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, for John had declared himself to be the forerunner of the Messiah, and he had moreover directed the people to Jesus as the Messiah. In this dilemma, knowing their spirit, we are prepared for their answer, "We cannot tell."

They feared the people. In Matthew, "We fear the people." Mark expresses

the same in sense, but in the narrative form. This habit of passing from the direct to the indirect narration, is very common with all the ancient writers. Some think that this is Mark's own reason why they did not charge John with deriving his doctrine from men, and that they felt a fear of the consequences of such an assertion, but did not openly admit this, even to one another. But Luke gives the very words which they spake among themselves, "All the people will stone us," which shows that they did not attempt to conceal their fear of consequences from one another.

For all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. The appearance of sanctity, put on by every impostor, is a proof of the influence it has, when genuine and unaffected, over the minds of men. The preacher will always be attended who

conforms to his own doctrine, and exemplifies it in his life, be that doctrine ever so rigid. (Matt. iii. 5, 6, vii. 29; Acts xi. 24.)

Neither do I tell you, &c. Christ discovers not Himself to hypocrites. That man is altogether unworthy of the truth who seeks it only to oppose it. (See 2 Thes. ii. 11, 12.) It is to no manner of purpose to dispute and reason with those who study only how to ensnare in their discourses, and to take advantage of everything against truth. Such persons show plainly what concern they have for truth when they make use of lies and forgeries to oppress it. Humility does not oblige anyone to give an account of his conduct to all sorts of persons, nor at all times, nor in all circumstances, but only to be ready to do it whenever the glory of God and the benefit of his neighbors require it.

1. Where did Christ send two of His disciples? 2. For what purpose were they sent? 3. What did the multitude do as Jesus rode along? 4. What is said about the fig tree? 5. What did Christ do in the temple? 6. What farther is said about the fig tree? 7. What did our Lord say to His disciples respecting faith? 8. What about prayer? 9. What about forgiveness? 10. What conversation took place in the temple between Jesus and the chief priests, scribes and elders?

CHAPTER XII.

¹ *In a parable of the vineyard let out to unthankful husbandmen, Christ foretelleth the reprobation of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles. 13 He avoideth the snare of the Pharisees and Herodians about paying tribute to Cæsar: 18 convinceth the error of the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection: 28 resolveth the scribe, who questioned of the first commandment: 35 rebuffeth the opinion that the scribes held of Christ: 38 bidding the people to beware of their ambition and hypocrisy: 41 and commendeth the poor widow for her two mites, above all.*

AND she began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a place for the wine-fat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

^aEzek. xx. 49; Matt. xxi. 33; Luke xx. 9. ^bPs. lxxx. 8, 16; Isa. v. 1, 7; Jer. ii. 21; Rom. xi. 17, 24. ^cRom. iii. 1, 2; ix. 4, 5.

Verses 1-12: see on Matt. xxi. 33-46; Luke xx. 9-18.

The general idea of this parable is taken from Isaiah v. 1-7. In its immediate reference it contains, partly as a narrative of the past, partly as a discovery of the future, the wonderful history of the

Jewish Church. It manifests the riches of Divine love, and the benefits flowing out of it to the chosen people, portrays an almost inexhaustible patience and long suffering on the part of God toward the refractory and unthankful sinner, discloses at the same time the wickedness and the hardening of the sinful heart as rising to a fearful height, and finally closes with a threatening of certain and dreadful, but most righteous, judgments. But when viewed in a more extended reference, this parable speaks also of the general truths, which, in the Christian Church, are continually unfolding themselves, and reflected anew in the history of individuals and entire communities. Viewed in either light, the description given of the lord of the vineyard serves to admonish us of the union there is in God's character of mercy and

holiness, of goodness and righteousness, of patience and indignation.

The "certain man" was more than possessor of the vineyard, he had himself "planted" it. (Ex. xv. 17.) The planting of this spiritual vineyard found place under Moses and Joshua, in the establishing of the Jewish polity in the land of Canaan. It is described Deut. xxxii. 12-14. (See Ezek. xvi. 9-14; Neh. ix. 23-25.) *Set a hedge about it.* In Ephes. ii. 14, the law is described as "the middle wall of partition" between the Jew and Gentile. By their circumscription through the law, the Jews became a people dwelling alone, and not reckoned among the nations. (Num. xxiii. 9.) *The wine-fat.* This was a square or round vat or pit excavated in the earth, mortared and plastered so as to make it tight like a modern cistern. Over this vat was the *wine-press*, into which the grapes were heaped, and when the juice was trodden out it flowed into the vat. *Built a tower*—a tower or observatory in the garden, having a view in all directions, in which a watchman is stationed to guard against robbers. The vineyard represents the Church or fold of God's service. This must be girt as with a *hedge*; it must have its ordinances for receiving the *flow* of the divine *nourishment*; it must have its *towers* and *watchmen* against the assaults of the profane or the incursions of hypocrites. *Let it out*—leased or rented it, with rent to be paid from the produce. *Went into a far country*—literally, *went away from home*, i. e., went abroad on his travels. This seems to be added as a reason why he rented out his vineyard, and sent his servants for the fruits, instead of meeting the husbandmen in person; and is not, as some absurdly think, a representation of the great distance of earth from heaven. It has no special bearing upon the application of the parable, and is only added to make the picture more natural and animated.

2. And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. 3. And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty. 4. And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled. 5. And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.

The messages that are spoken of in the first parts of the parable, as sent by the owner to the husbandmen, for the fruit of the vineyard, refer to the constant appeals made to Israel by God's servants—the prophets. The reception which they met with was just as here described. They were despised, they were shamefully entreated, they were often put to death. *Beating some, and killing some.* "I am convinced," says *Melancthon*, "that in this world the true heavenly doctrine will ever have to maintain a conflict with errors and corruptions, and that those who uphold the cause of Divine truth, will be under the cross and suffer for their principles. From the beginning of the world it has been so, and holy and enlightened men know that these things must be borne." (Luke ii. 34; Acts xxviii. 22; Gal. iv. 28, 29.)

6. Having yet therefore done Son, his well beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my Son. 7. But those husbandmen said among themselves, 'This is the heir: come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.' 8. And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard. ^aPs. ii. 7. ^bPs. ii. 2, 3, xxii. 12, 16.

This is the heir, &c. After the raising of Lazarus, the Evangelist informs us that the "chief priests and Pharisees gathered a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe in Him: and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation." The very original of the parabolic picture! *Come, let us kill him, &c.* We, on the contrary, say, "This is the Son of the eternal God, let us believe on Him, and the inheritance shall be ours. (xv. 32; Rom. viii. 17.) And they took him, &c. All three narrators describe Him as thus "cast out of the vineyard," by which we are reminded of Him who "suffered without the gate." (Heb. xiii. 12, 13; John xix. 17.) By that, as in the Pentateuch by the exclusion from the camp, was signified the cutting off from the people of God, and from all share in their blessings. (See 1 Kings xxi. 13.)

9. What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.

What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? &c. Jesus puts the question to His opponents, so that the answer from their own mouth (see Matt. xxi. 41) might serve

as a testimony to the righteousness of the punishment that had been so richly deserved by the wicked vine-dressers. The coming of the Lord is the period when the work of Divine judgment shall be executed. *He will come and destroy*, &c. The despisers of the Divine mercies, and those who misuse them, shall be torn away from them, that these may be given to others more likely to improve them. (See 1 Peter ii. 3-10.) *Will give the vineyard unto others.* The rejection of the Jews and the call of the Gentiles was one of the greatest mysteries of the Gospel dispensation; so obscure, so hard to receive, that even Peter, though gifted with the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, needed a repeated special vision from heaven, to convince him of it. Accordingly, as a doctrine so repugnant to Jewish prejudices, it was gradually taught and revealed by the Lord. Here, indeed, it is intimated with sufficient clearness; but our Lord had recently prepared the way by two most remarkable symbolical actions—the drying up of the fig tree, pointing to the rejection of the Jew; the assertion that the temple was God's house of prayer “for all nations,” equally expressing the call of the Gentiles. (xi. 17, 21; Acts x. 14; Eph. i. 9, 10; iii. 1-12.)

10. And have ye not read this Scripture, ‘The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner.’ 11. This was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? 12. ‘And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way.’
 1Ps. cxviii. 22. 2Matt. xxi. 45, 46; chap. xi. 18; John vii. 25, 30, 44.

The stone which the builders rejected (as unsuitable and unfit for use) *is become the head of the corner.* Jesus, rejected by the high priests, scribes, and elders, not owned and recognized as the true Messiah, is the strong and firm corner stone of the new building of the Christian Church, in which those who were hitherto divided asunder, Jews and heathen, have been united into one glorious body. (Eph. ii. 13, 20.) *This was the Lord’s doing*, not according to the will, nor accomplished through the working of man. (Phil. ii. 9-11; Eph. i. 20-23.) *And it is marvellous in our eyes*, the exaltation of Christ, the gathering of a new Church, and the general extension of this Church is, as a work and manifestation of God’s purposes and almighty power, an

object for men’s adoring wonder. *For they knew*, &c. Their conscience bearing witness.

13. ¶ And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words.
 3Matt. xxii. 15; Luke xx. 20.

Pharisees and Herodians. The Herodians were a political party rather than a religious sect. They were probably the partisan supporters of the Herod family, and so favorable to the Roman dominion. They were not therefore very strenuous for the peculiarities of the Jewish religion. The great foes of religion, which have in all ages opposed its progress and undermined its glory, are hypocrisy and profaneness. Between these two thieves the jewel hangs, as its great Master on the cross; and they both revile it, the one under the character of a familiar friend, the other under that of an open enemy: which of these does the greater harm, is sometimes difficult to determine. (xiv. 45, 46.)

14. And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man; for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Cesar, or not?

Master, we know, &c. How flattering the language with which our Lord was accosted by His enemies! How well these Pharisees and Herodians talked! What smooth and honeyed words were these! (Ps. lv. 21.) All professing Christians should be much on their guard against flattery. We greatly mistake if we suppose that persecution and hard usage are the only weapons in Satan’s armory. That crafty foe has other engines for doing us mischief, which he knows well how to work. He knows how to poison souls by the world’s seductive kindness, when he cannot frighten them by the fiery dart and the sword. Let us not be ignorant of his devices. By peace he destroys many. *Is it lawful*, &c. To the Jew. “According to theocratical principles, which regarded Jehovah as the only King in Israel.” This question of itself obscures the supposition of duty, and the question: “Must we, as servants of the theocracy, refuse the tribute?” meant in other words: Must we resist the dominion of the Romans, and rise up in rebellion? *Or not?* The *not lawful* they would fain have put in His mouth.

15. Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it.

A penny, the coin in which the tribute was paid. This was the Roman *denarius*, worth, in our money, about fifteen cents.

16. And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cæsar's.

The *image* was probably the likeness of of the Roman emperor Tiberius Cæsar. The *superscription* was the motto upon the coin, which declared his sovereignty. In earlier ages the coin bore the symbols of the republic. *They said unto him, Cæsar's.* He would have them convicted by their own mouth.

17. And Jesus answering said unto them, 'Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

¹Rom. xiii. 7; ¹1 Peter ii. 17.

Render to Cæsar, &c. The answer of Jesus is very different from what they expected. He wisely discriminates between allegiance to the civil power and allegiance to God, yet by no means separating our civil and religious duties. A good Christian must be a good citizen. Our Lord in this reply, it has well been said, evades the peculiarity of every party, yet sustains the truth in question. The Herodians cannot complain, for Cæsar's government is not attacked. The Pharisees cannot complain, for His decision is but their own confession put in shape. The very Gaulonites cannot complain, for He does not decide that there are no just grounds for revolutionizing the government from the foundations, and asserting independence alike of Cæsar's coin and Cæsar's authority. All he decides is (and this He does, not as a political patriot or as a political arbiter, but as a religious teacher), that while Cæsar's government is the acknowledged government, it must receive its dues. Our Lord's mission was not to preach rebellion against the Romans, or a redress of civil wrongs. He came to preach deliverance to the captive, but it was the captive of sin and death. He aimed to make the heart of man better, to teach the duty of love to God and our fellow-men, knowing well that if the Gospel was cordially embraced, the great social and political evils would in due time be removed. Nothing is plainer than that the influence of our Christian character should pervade every relation of life, and control us in the discharge of every duty.

The things that are God's. God has greater

claims upon us than any other being can have. He created man in His image, bestowing upon him a reasonable soul and an immortal spirit. Therefore we are God's, because we bear His image, as the tribute money bore the image of Cæsar. But God has not only *created us*, He has *redeemed us*. When Satan had taken us captive, Christ *redeemed us* with His precious blood. (1 Cor. vi. 20). Have we given ourselves to the Redeemer? Is it our chief desire to do His will and to promote His glory?

Learn, 1. That our Saviour was no enemy to civil government. 2. That those who are subject to a government, ought, from a principle of conscience, to pay tribute to it. 3. That as Christ is no enemy to the civil rights of government, and His religion exempts none from paying their civil dues, so governments should be as careful not to rob Him of His Divine honor.

Let us not forget the obedience which we owe to the God of the Bible in spiritual matters. No temporal loss, no civil disability, no displeasure of the powers that be, must ever tempt us to do things which the Scripture plainly forbids. Our position may be very trying. We may have to suffer much for our conscience' sake. But we must never fly in the face of unmistakable requirements of Scripture. If Cæsar coins a new Gospel, he is not to be obeyed. We must "render to God the things that are God's."

18. ¶ Then came unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying, 19. Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. 20. Now there were seven brethren; and the first took a wife, and dying, left no seed. 21. And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third, likewise. 22. And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all, the woman died also. 23. In the resurrection, therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife. 24. And Jesus, answering, said unto them, Do ye not, therefore, err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God? 25. For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage: but are as the angels, which are in heaven. 26. And, as touching the dead, that they rise, have ye not read in the book of Moses, how, in the bush, God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? 27. He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living; ye, therefore, do greatly err.

¹Matt. xxii. 23. ²Acts xxiii. 8. ³Deut. xxv. 5. ⁴1 Cor. xv. 42, 49, 52. ⁵Matt. xxii. 29; Luke xx. 35-38. ⁶Ex. xiii. 6.

Verses 18-28: see on Matt. xxii. 23-33.

Which say there is no resurrection. The Sadducees did not believe that there would be any resurrection of the dead, because they did not understand *how* it could be.

When they applied to Jesus they described a case which might have occurred under the Jewish law. The land of Canaan was divided into small inheritances. If a man died without a child to succeed him, God enjoined that his brother should marry the widow, and that if a child were born, he should succeed to the property of the deceased brother, and be considered as his heir. The Sadducees imagined that they had proposed a difficulty which the Lord *could not solve*, but by a word He exposed their folly.

And dying. "It is appointed unto all men once to die," and then they must shift the scenes and begin anew. No one can plead exemption, either by privilege or example. For all that have gone before us have trodden the same path—wise Solomon, rich Dives, long-lived Methuselah, righteous Job—none have been exempted, be they what they will, though their head have been of gold, their body of iron, their arms of brass, yet their feet, like Nebuchadnezzar's image, have been of clay, and they have gone into the dust. Here fortune has no part; the manner of our death, indeed, may be casual, but the matter of it is certain. (Gen. v. 8, 11, xiv. 17, 20, xxvii. 31; Josh. xxiii. 14; Zech. i. 5; 1 Kings xxii. 34.)

In the resurrection, therefore, &c. How carnal are the thoughts of carnal men concerning the life of heaven, and how unworthy of that blessed state! We must lose all the ideas of whatever passes upon earth, in order to frame one which may at all come near the true nature of that eternal happiness. The creature shall belong only to its Creator; man shall live only for his God. *They neither marry, &c.* All the alliances and unions here on earth are tokens and effects of man's indigence and mortality. When once he shall enter into eternity, where all his desires will be satisfied, all his wants supplied, and his mortality swallowed up in glory, then all unions shall be merged in the union with God.

But are as the angels. Angels are not divided into families as men are, and glorified saints will not be connected in heaven with the relations they had upon earth. They will have connections, but

not of an *earthly* kind. The pastor will rejoice to find again the flock he fed below. (See 1 Thes. ii. 19.) The pious parent will find himself united in *spiritual* bonds to the children who were born the *second* time, in answer to his fervent supplications. The friends who have borne each other's spiritual burdens up the hill of Zion, will walk together by the waters of life that gladden the city of their God. *Spiritual* bonds can never be dissolved.

I am the God of Abraham, &c. These words of our Saviour show us how much more there is in Scripture than at first sight appears. God spoke to Moses in the burning bush, and called Himself *the God of Abraham*; and Christ tells us, that in this simple announcement was contained the promise, that Abraham should rise again from the dead. In truth, if we may say it with reverence, the all-wise, all-knowing God cannot speak without meaning many things at once. He "sees the end from the beginning;" He understands the numberless connections and relations of all things, one with another. Every word of His is full of instruction, looking many ways; and, though it is not often given to us to know these various senses, and we are not at liberty to attempt lightly to imagine them, yet, as far as they are told us, and, as far as we may reasonably infer them, we must thankfully accept them. (Ps. cxix. 96.)

The God of the living. As the Sadducees denied not only the resurrection of the *body*, but the immortality of the *spirit*, therefore Jesus brought forward a proof of the *eternal* life of the pious dead. How glorious is the idea that *all* the saints are actually in existence! They not *only* live, but "are as the angels." Though we know not the degree of their happiness, Jesus did. He had but lately left the blessed company above, and now He was going to *die*, that they might live on forever, and that their number might continually increase.

28. ¶ "And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?"—Matt. xxii. 35.

On verses 28-34 see on Matt. xxii. 34-40.

One of the Scribes. A teacher of the law. Which is the first commandment of all? He

meant the first in importance, the primary, leading commandment, the most fundamental one.

29. And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, *Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:* 30. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.—*Deut. vi. 4; Luke x. 27.*

Israel. The name put upon Jacob as wrestling with the angel of the covenant at Peniel. (Gen. xxxii. 28.) The disciple who was ready to receive the knowledge of God as revealed in "the Son of God the King of Israel," was called "an Israelite," indeed. (John i. 47.) *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.* Of all things, God requires this faith and persuasion of His fatherly goodness as the chief service, for, before He asks anything of us, He says, "I am the Lord thy God," giving Himself and all that He has to be our own—"The Lord *our* God," as He is the Head of the communion of saints; "the Lord *thy* God," as He is the Head of every particular member in the same mystical Body. That we may love Him, and also, for His sake, love one another, we must apprehend the Lord God in both these relations. (Ps. xlviii. 13; John xx. 28; 1 John v. 1, 2.) *With all thy heart . . . soul . . . mind . . . strength.* These are formulas nearly equivalent, but involving no redundancy, and united for intensity of sense, importing, not that perfection in degree, or exaltation in kind, contended for by some, but only denoting that "we must assign to God the *first* place in our affections, and consecrate to Him the united powers and faculties, both of body and mind," with which He hath endowed us so as to exert them most effectually. (Comp. Deut. vi. 5.)

31. And the second is like, *namely* this, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* There is none other commandment greater than these. *Lev. xix. 18; Matt. xxii. 39; Rom. xiii. 9; Gal v. 14; James ii. 8.*

And the second is like. He does not say, equal with it, although the duties of the second table are of the same authority, and of the same necessity with the first, as no man can be saved without the love of God, so neither without the love of his neighbor.

32. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: 33. And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *his* neighbour as himself, *is* more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

[†]Deut. iv. 39; Isa. xlv. 6, 14, xlv. 9. [‡]1 Sam. xv. 22; Hos. vi. 6; Mic. vi. 6-8.

Well, construe with, thou hast said: for it is founded on the truth, as Luke iv. 25. *There is one God,* an absolute phrase repeated from verse 29, that is, from Moses. (Comp. Zech. xiv. 9.) *One God requires one heart and one love.* *Whole burnt offerings*—the most noble species of sacrifice.

34. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. *And no man after that durst ask him any question.*—*Matt. xxii. 46; Rom. iii. 19.*

When Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, i. e., intelligently. Whoever apprehends the spiritual nature of the law, especially in its contrast to outward forms of worship, is spiritually-minded—rational in a moral point of view—is in a fair way of turning away from self-righteousness, and of obtaining that knowledge of himself which is an indispensable condition of entering into the kingdom of God. What this scribe still lacked was the total surrender to his conviction, its practical carrying out in following Jesus. The impression made upon him was an earnest of Christ's final victory over His most respectable opponents. *Thou art not far, &c.* The sentiments expressed by the scribe, became a subject of Messiah's kingdom, and must have a happy influence to dispose the mind to examine the Gospel; on which account Jesus declared that this person was not far from the kingdom of God. *Durst, or rather, ventured, to ask him any questions.* It was not any stern prohibition, or terrible menace, denounced by our Lord, that frightened every one from further attempts this way, but the people saw how completely those were foiled who tried to ensnare Him with captious questions.

35. [†]And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David? 36. For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, *The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.* 37. David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly. *Matt. xxii. 41; Luke xx. 41. ‡2 Sam. xxiii. 2. §Ps. cx. 1.*

See on Matt. xxii. 41-46.

"It is not to be forgotten that the prophetic Psalms are among the earliest discoveries, made of the exalted nature and proper dignity of Christ. The promise of

the blessing to come by the seed of Abraham showed the magnitude of the benefit (Gen. xxii. 17, 18); but not the personal glory of the Benefactor. In the Psalms, His personal attributes and *His Divine Sonship* invest the prophecy, and introduce the object of worship." (Ps. ii., xlv., ex.) *And the common people heard him gladly.* In good truth, says one, the more we know of Christianity and of the poor, the more deeply shall we be impressed with the exact adaptation of the one to the other, both in the substance of what it teaches, and in the manner of teaching. And the poor, it is carefully to be remembered, must ever constitute the great majority of those, to whom Christianity is addressed. (xiv. 7.)

33. ¶ And he said unto them in his doctrine, ^bBeware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and ^clove salutations in the market places, 39. And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: 40. ^dWhich devour widows' houses, and for a pretence, make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation, ^eChap. iv. 2. ^fMatt. xxiii. 1, &c.; Luke xx. 46, 47. ^gLuke xi. 43. ^hMatt. xxiii. 14.

Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, &c. Our Saviour here condemns, not civil salutations in the market place, not the chief seats in the synagogues, not the uppermost rooms at feasts, but their fond affecting of these things, and their ambitious aspiring after them. He condemns them for their gross hypocrisy in coloring over their covetousness with a pretence of religion, making long prayers in the temple and synagogues for widows, and thus persuading them to give bountifully to the common treasury for the temple, some part of which was employed for their maintenance. *Greater damnation, i. e.,* more tremendous suffering in the world of despair. *And for a pretence, &c.* In what triumphant measures, says an old writer, doth a Pharisee go from the altar! What a harmless thing is a cheat, after a sermon! What a sweet morsel is a widow's house after long prayers! What a piece of justice is oppression, after a fast! After so much ceremony, the blood of Abel himself, of the justest man alive, hath no voice. (Prov. vii. 14.) Nothing is more provoking to God, than the use of holy things without the conversion of the heart. (Mal. i. 14; Jer. ii. 4-11; Acts v. 5-10.)

41. ¶ And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

¹Luke xxi. 1. ²Kings xii. 9.

Sat, probably to rest. The treasury. This repository received the voluntary contributions of the worshipers, who came up to the feasts: and the money thrown into it was designed to purchase wood for the altar, salt, and other necessary things, not provided for another way. As Jesus saw the people put in their money, He knew the motives that actuated them all, and as each dropped his gift into the chest, the heart and disposition of the individual was open before Him. He knew whether he was sincere or not, and according to the sincerity of the act, and the peculiar disposition of the giver, so was it acceptable or unacceptable in the sight of Almighty God. Jesus still observes how much is contributed to His cause, and by whom.

42. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

A certain poor widow. Our Lord had just been launching reproofs against the proud who devoured widows' houses. As if from the dim distance, one of these widows seems to have appeared, whose house, perhaps, had been devoured, and in whose behalf our Lord had denounced the judgments of God. *Two mites.* A mite was the smallest of Jewish coins, about the value of one-fifth of a cent. It took its name from its extreme smallness, being derived from an adjective signifying *thin, subtle*, and applied, among other things, to that which consists of fine particles, as *dust, sand*, and metaphorically, to gentle breezes, whispering, murmuring sounds, &c. (See on Matt. v. 26.)

43. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ^athis poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: 44. For all they did cast in of their abundance: but she of her want did cast in all that she had, ^beven all her living.

¹2 Cor. viii. 12. ²Deut. xxiv. 6; 1 John iii. 17.

Hath cast more in. What is meant by the "more"? "He must," says one, "mean one of three things—either *financially, proportionally, or morally*. It cannot be the first. Is it the second? Does He mean to say that she put in "more" in *proportion* to her means? This was no doubt true. And it is frequently true that many who give sums too small to record in "reports," give *more* than those who lay down hundreds, or even thousands. The

Christian law of proportion in giving is violated in every Church. But we do not think this is the meaning here. An individual may give much "more" in proportion to others, and yet not *acceptably* to Christ. The third we take to be the meaning, it was more *morally*: she gave her heart and self with her mites. First, *this is more valuable in itself*. In fact, there is no real value in a gift, unless it is done with the heart. "Though I give my body to be burned," &c. Secondly, *this is more valuable in its influence*. He who gives his strongest desires and best sympathies to a cause, gives that which will do far more good, though he has not a fraction of money to bestow, than if he presented his thousands without heart. If the man's heart is with it, his *efforts, prayers, life*—the *totality* of his influence, will be ever helping it on. Let us remember, that the Lord Jesus never changes. The thing that we read of in this passage is the thing that is going on all over the world. "The eyes of the

Lord are in every place." (Prov. xv. 3.) Nothing is too little to escape His observation. No act is too trifling to be noted down in the book of His remembrance. He measures littleness and greatness by a very different measure from the measure of man. On no point, perhaps, do professed Christians come short so much as in the matter of giving money to God's cause. Thousands, it may be feared, know nothing whatever of "giving" as a Christian duty. The little giving that there is, is confined entirely to a select few in the Churches. Even among those who give, it may be boldly asserted, that the poor generally give far more in proportion to their means than the rich. These are plain facts which cannot be denied. The experience of all who collect for religious societies and Christian charities, will testify that they are correct and true. Let us judge ourselves in this matter of giving, that we may not be judged and condemned at the great day. (Prov. xi. 24.)

1. With what parable is this chapter introduced? 2. Who is represented by the "certain man?" 3. Who by the "servants?" 4. Who by the "son?" 5. For what purpose did the Pharisees and Herodians come to Jesus? 6. How did He answer their question? 7. What did the Sadducees say to Christ. 8. Explain His answer to them. 9. State the interview between the scribe and our Lord. 10. What caution did He give concerning the scribes? 11. What is said of "a certain poor widow?"

CHAPTER XIII.

1 *Christ foretelleth the destruction of the temple: 9 the persecutions for the gospel: 10 that the gospel must be preached to all nations: 14 that great calamities shall happen to the Jews: 21 and the manner of his coming to judgment: 32 the hour whereof being known to none, every man is to watch and pray, that he be not found unprovided, when he cometh to each one particularly by death.*

For the explanation of the chief things in this most important discourse of our Lord, see notes on Matthew xxiv. There is no doubt that part of it relates to the destruction of Jerusalem, and that part of it relates to the end of the world. This is the only way in which we can satisfactorily explain the interlacing phenomena of the two events.

AND as he went out out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings are here!

*Matt. xxiv. 1; Luke xxi. 5.

Master, see, &c. The reference was to the temple, the sacred building itself, and the courts. These buildings are spoken of by Gentiles and Jews in language of admiration. *Josephus* says that some of the stones were sixty-seven feet long, seven feet high, and nine feet broad. This is not in the least incredible, for in the ruins of Baalbec, Syria, are stones of similar dimensions. *Dr. Robinson* measured three of the latter, and found them severally sixty-four feet, sixty-three feet, and sixty-three feet eight inches long. Referring to the stones of

Baalbec, *Thomson* says: "How such blocks could be transported a mile over uneven ground to the temple, and elevated to their position on its platform, is yet an unsolved problem in the science of mechanical forces."

2. And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? ^bthere shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

^bMatt. xxiv. 2; Luke xix. 44.

There shall not be left, &c. This prophecy was literally fulfilled forty years after its utterance, fulfilled by Jewish fanatics and Roman soldiers in express violation of the orders of Titus, one of the most humane of the Roman emperors, who wished to save it. Now this prophecy was uttered in a time of profound peace, and when nobody even dreamed of the fulfillment by a man hated by His country, soon to be crucified as a criminal, without patronage, power, wealth or influence, and of whose history His enemies asked, "Whence hath this man learning?" This, then, was either fanaticism, or it was the absolute truth enunciated then and there by the God of all truth.

3. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately; 4. *Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?*

^cMatt. xxiv. 3; Luke xxi. 7.

Upon—The mountain. The wall of the temple was lower toward the Mount of Olives, so that the interior of the temple could be readily seen. *Peter, &c.* James and Peter were to die before the rest, and yet the subject concerns even them, still more John.

5. And Jesus answering them, began to say, *Take heed lest any man deceive you:* 6. *For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.*

^dMatt. xxiv. 45; Jer. xxix. 8; Eph. v. 6; 1 Thes. ii. 3.

Began to say. He had said little previously concerning these things. *Take heed lest any man deceive you.* A great number of deceivers is one of the signs of the end of the world. It is a terrible judgment upon men for them to believe that they are consulting a man of God who may instruct them, while they are consulting only a seducer who deceives them. Let us beg of God to preserve us from it. The expectation of new and extraordinary things is an occasion of which the devil generally makes an ill use in order to deceive men. An author of heresy

or schism, an usurper of Christ's authority, a minister without mission, these are all so many false Christs, whom we must carefully avoid as so many seducers. *For many shall come in my name, &c.* This part of the prophecy began soon to be fulfilled; for we learn from the ancient writers, and particularly from *Josephus*, that not long after our Lord's ascension several impostors appeared, some pretending to be the Messiah, and others to foretell future events. The first were those whom our Lord here says *should come in his name*, and were, therefore, *false Christs*. The others are alluded to in the eleventh verse, under the name of *false prophets*: "Many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many." Of the first sort were, as *Origen* informs us, one Dositheus, who said that he was the Christ foretold by Moses; and Simon Magus, who said he appeared among the Jews as the Son of God. Besides several others alluded to by *Josephus*.

7. And when ye shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars, be ye not troubled: for *such things* must needs be, but the end *shall not be yet.* 8. *For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginning of sorrows.*—Matt. xxiv. 8, on which see notes.

When ye shall hear of wars, &c. That there were in reality great disturbances and commotions in those times, that there were not only rumors of wars, but wars actually existing, and continued dissensions, insurrections, and massacres among the Jews, and other nations who dwelt in the same cities with them, is so fully attested by all the historians of that period, but more particularly by *Josephus*, that to produce all the dreadful events of that kind which he enumerates, would be to transcribe a great part of his history. It is equally certain, from the testimony of the same author, as well as from *Eusebius*, and several profane historians, that there were famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. It is added in the parallel place by Luke, "that fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven." And accordingly *Josephus*, in the preface to his history of the Jewish war, and in the history itself, enumerates a great variety of astonishing signs and prodigies, which he says preceded the calamities that impended over the Jews, and which he expressly

affirms, in perfect conformity to our Saviour's prediction, were signs manifestly intended to forbode their approaching destruction. And these accounts are confirmed by the Roman historian *Tacitus*, who says that many prodigies happened at that time; armies appeared to be engaging in the sky, arms were seen glittering in the air, the temple was illuminated with flames issuing from the clouds, the doors of the temple suddenly burst open, and a voice more than human was heard, "that the gods were departing;" and soon after a great motion, as if they were departing. *These are the beginning of sorrows, &c.* Terrible as all these omens seem, they are small compared to the miseries of the siege and downfall of the holy city.

9. ⁵ But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten; and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.

⁶Matt. x. 17; Rev. ii. 10.

Shall be beaten. (See Acts xxii. 19, xxvi. 11.) *For a testimony against, or rather, to them.* (Comp. notes on Matt. x. 18, xxiv. 14.)

10. And the gospel must first be published among all nations.—⁷Matt. xxiv. 14.

Paul, in his Epistles to the Colossians, speaks of the Gospel "being come into all the world, and preached to every creature under heaven." And we learn from the most authentic writers, and the most ancient records, that the Gospel was preached within thirty years after the death of Christ, in Idumea, Syria, and Mesopotamia, in Media and Parthia, and many parts of Asia Minor, in Egypt, Mauritania, Ethiopia, and other regions of Africa, in Greece and Italy, as far north as Scythia, and as far westward as Spain, and in England, where there is great reason to believe Christianity was planted in the days of the Apostles, and before the destruction of Jerusalem.

11. ¹But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.

²Matt. x. 19, on which see notes; also on Luke xxi. 15. ³Acts ii. 4.

But when, read, and when. Neither do ye premeditate. Not only have you no need of anxiety, but not even of premeditation. *Whatsoever shall be given you, &c.* If they were thus to be furnished with words by the Holy Spirit for preaching the Gospel

orally to a few persons in particular times and places, shall we imagine that they were not equally well qualified by the same Spirit for preaching the same Gospel in writing to all ages and countries in the world? (1 Cor. ii. 11, 13, 16.) *That speak ye*, the whole of it, and fearlessly, for with that view it is given you.

12. Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. 13. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

¹Mt. vii. 6; Matt. xxiv. 9, 10, x. 21; Luke xxi. 16, 17. ²Mt. xxiv. 9; Luke xxi. 17. ³Dan. xii. 12; Matt. x. 22; Rev. ii. 10.

Brother shall betray, &c. Grace teaches us to lay down our lives for the brethren, but corruption in general, and enmity to the Gospel in particular, teaches brother to take away the life of brother. *Hated of all men.* That the Apostles and primitive Christians were more hated and persecuted than any other religious sect of men is notorious. Faith and charity join us in the closest union with strangers and the most barbarous people, infidelity and hatred break even the strictest ties of nature. Observe how our Saviour comforts His disciples, that there would be an end of their sharp and bitter sufferings; assuring them that if their faith and patience did hold out *unto the end, they should be saved.* This is our comfort; our sufferings for Christ must be sharp, but they shall be short; if our sufferings for Christ end not in our life-time, they will end with our lives. Happy is that person who is hated for the sake either of the truth which he maintains, or of the virtue which he practices, and does not grow at all weary of being so! His cause is the cause of God. And what greater honor and happiness can we possibly have, than to be joined in the same cause with our Judge, who is at the same time the Holy One and the Almighty!

14. ¹But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains: 15. And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take anything out of his house: 16. And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment.

²Matt. xxiv. 15. ³Dan. ix. 27. ⁴Luke xxi. 21.

The Roman army is here called an *abomination*, because upon their standards were depicted the images of their emperor and the tutelary gods, whom they worshipped:

and it is well known that idols were held by the Jews in the utmost abhorrence, and the very name they gave them was the expression here made use of, *an abomination*. The word *desolation* is added for an obvious reason, because this mighty army brought ruin and desolation upon Jerusalem. *Him that is on the housetop . . . him that is in the field*. Strong expressions to awaken the disciples to promptness, and even haste in the crisis that will come. They should not be taken too literally; yet, if at the approach of the Roman armies one chanced to be on the roof of his house—the roofs were flat—he might and probably would have found literal compliance with the command necessary. As houses were then built, one could have escaped without being under the necessity of going down into and through the house. One might have run over *many* roofs till he came near to a gate of the city. *Anything*. Not a single article, but things generally. Better lose all for the sake of escaping.

17. "But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 18. And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. 19. For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be."

¹Luke xxi. 23, 29. ²Dan. ix. 23; Joel ii. 2; Matt. xxiv. 21.

Woe . . . with child . . . give suck. Both the Jewish and the Christian female. The former would find their sufferings redoubled in the miseries of their offspring, the latter would find redoubled the difficulty of escape.

20. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.

As, says a modern and excellent commentator, Titus had so invested the place that no provisions could be brought in from the surrounding region, famine soon made the most dreadful ravages, and together with internal seditions, by which thousands were butchered in the city, caused it to fall in the short space of four months. When Titus invested the upper city, which was so steep as to forbid its being taken without raising banks against it, the Jews of their own accord abandoned the town, which *Josephus* says, "could never have been taken by force, nor indeed in any other way than by famine." So infatuated was their course, that the same historian considers them

"ejected from these towers by God Himself." All these things were a part of God's determination to shorten these days "for the elect's sake." *No flesh should be saved*; literally, *there could not be saved all flesh i. e., no flesh, or not one man could be saved*. Had the siege been prolonged, and the Roman armies tarried any length of time in Palestine, all the inhabitants would have perished. *The elect's sake*. This, without doubt, refers to Christians, not only those then living in Palestine, but such as in future were to be gathered in from the Jews (Rom. xi. 15), and which promise depended upon their continued existence as a nation. We are not to suppose that all the Christians in Jerusalem and Judea made good their escape (v. 16). Many of the sick, aged, infirm and poor, must of necessity have remained behind. Some would also stay, whose zeal and courage would not permit them to fly, or who were desirous of preaching the gospel to their countrymen, in this time of their extremity. These would all have perished had the siege been prolonged.

21. "And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ, or lo, he is there; believe him not. 22. For false Christs, and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce if it were possible, even the elect."—¹Matt. xxiv. 23; Luke xvii. 23.

Lo, here, &c. As a man that is dying hath many fantasies, even so the world declining shall have manifold errors. (1 John ii. 18). *Shall shew*, rather, *do*. *To seduce*—from the right path. *If it were possible*, literally, *if possible*. Great difficulty, and not absolute impossibility, is here implied. It is a truth beyond dispute that through divine grace the elect will be kept from apostacy, yet there is nothing in the nature of the case to forbid the supposition that they may sometimes be deceived in respect to the true character of those who assume to be religious teachers. A ripe Christian, who is wise in things pertaining to truth and righteousness is, however, quick to detect signs of imposition and hypocrisy.

23. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.—²Peter iii. 17.

Take ye heed. Beware of new tenets, they are like new wines: they fume up to men's minds, and make them light and giddy. (Acts ii. 13; Col. ii. 18.) It is not so indifferent a thing as some would make

it, what opinion a man is of. For it seems a man may be damned for his evil opinions, as well as his evil practices, inasmuch that heresies are reckoned amongst the grossest sins. (Gal. v. 20, 21.)

24. "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light; 25. And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken." 26. "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. 27. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

"Dan. vii. 10; Zeph. i. 15; Matt. xxiv. 29. "Dan. vii. 13, 14; Matt. xvi. 27; Acts i. 11; 1 Thes. iv. 16; 2 Thes. i. 7, 10; Rev. i. 7.

But in those days, after that tribulation, &c. All before the beginning of this paragraph describes the ruin of the Jewish state; all subsequent to that beginning predicts the judgment day. Did but this report of our Lord's discourse alone exist, not the slightest difficulty would exist in its interpretation. All the difficulty in fact arises in Matt. xxiv. 29, being the parallel passage to the first verse of this paragraph; and all the difficulty in that verse arises from the word "immediately."

Mark says that the "sun shall be darkened," etc., "in those days, after that tribulation." Making allowance for prophetic perspective and for the intentional obscurity, the phrase "those days" may bring us down to the last period of time. It thus stands in contrast with the phrase "these things" in the Apostle's question. The period of the destruction and the period of the advent stand, as the Lord intended, in stupendous contrast.

If we ask, When shall the second advent take place? Mark answers, It is in THOSE DAYS which are *after that* (Jewish) *tribulation*. If we ask, In what part of THOSE DAYS? Matthew will answer, *Immediately after the* (mundane) *tribulation of THOSE DAYS*.

We have then this parallel: a tribulation including the city's destruction, a tribulation ending in the world's judgment.

That a tribulation is to precede the second advent is the clear doctrine of Scripture. Thus, in Rev. xx. 7-10, at the close of the millennial thousand years, Satan, who had been bound during that period, is let loose, and with his armies besieges the camp of the saints just before the appearance of the judgment throne. And in 2 Peter iii: "In the last days scoffers shall come," etc. Of

this truth the Jewish tradition gives a shadowing, in the doctrine that a desperate tribulation shall precede Messiah's advent. "The Jews (as *Kuinoel* observes) expected that great calamities would precede the advent of the Messiah; yet at the time when these calamities should have reached their height they hoped that he would unexpectedly appear."

And shall gather together his elect. He will send His angels to gather His chosen together from all places. This shall be done before the living shall be taken up to meet the Lord. (1 Cor. xv. 51; 1 Thes. iv. 16.) *From the four winds*, that is, from the four quarters of the globe—east, west, north and south. The Jews expressed those quarters by the winds blowing from them. (See Ezek. xxxvii. 9; also Isa. xliii. 5, 6.

On verses 28-33 see notes on Matt. xxiv. 32-34.

28. "Now learn a parable of the fig tree: When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near: 29. So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors. 30. Verily I say unto you, That this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done. 31. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. 32. But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

"Matt. xxiv. 32; Luke xxi. 29, &c. "Isa. xl. 8.

Now learn a parable of the fig tree. "Now from the fig tree learn the parable," or the high lesson which this teaches. *Putteth forth leaves*—"its leaves." *When ye shall see these things come to pass*, rather, "coming to pass," *know that it*, "the kingdom of God," *is nigh, even at the doors*, that is, the full manifestation of it. *This generation shall not pass*, &c. If we regard this as meaning that the prediction respecting Jerusalem would be fulfilled within the limits of the generation then current, the fact entirely corresponds, for the whole was fulfilled in the destruction accomplished by Titus. But the expression has also a far deeper significance. The Holy Seed is the subsistence or establishment of the earth. When their number is completed, time shall end, and this visible world shall be set on fire. (1 Sam. ii. 8-10.) *Heaven and earth*, &c. This solemn declaration, following immediately, as it does, upon the *passing away of this generation* (the Jews then living), seems to carry on our thoughts to another generation—"the generation of God's children" (Ps. liii. 14), that was to

abide forever. *Origen* comments upon the text, "The generation of the Church will survive the world; but all other generations, especially that of *the tribes of the earth* will *pass away*." Thus we are led from the contemplation of the destruction of Jerusalem to the far more transcendent vision of the final judgment and end of the world—the two subjects of this momentous prophecy; and from what has unquestionably been already fulfilled, we are to believe and to expect that which is to come.

Neither the Son. (Verse 32.) This Christ speaks in His human nature, and in His prophetic capacity. This point was not made known to Him by the Spirit, nor was He commissioned to reveal it. The union of Divine nature with human, in the person of Messiah, does not involve the communication of omniscience to Christ's human mind any more than omnipresence to His body. It seems a reasonable opinion, that the communication of supernatural knowledge to the human mind of Jesus Christ was made, as occasions were seen by Divine wisdom to require. In various passages we find things affirmed of the Messiah which can belong only to His superior nature. It is not then extraordinary if we find that asserted of Him *here* which can attach only to His dependent and limited capacity. Everything that could be said of man is said of Christ, sin excepted, and everything that can be said of God, is said of Christ. He was God and yet He grew in wisdom (Luke ii. 52), and if so, it is possible that there were things in the future that He did not know. How the Infinite can be finite, how the Omniscient cannot know, how Omnipotence can be weakness, we cannot understand; but the Bible announces the fact and we should embrace it as a truth clearly revealed, though not luminous—a mystery which we shall know hereafter, but cannot know now.

33. *Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

*Matt. xxiv. 42; Luke xii. 40; Rom. xiii. 11; 1 Thes. v. 6.

Take ye heed, &c. This direction implies the most intense watchfulness and prayer. The reason is given in the next clause, viz.: their ignorance of the time of their Lord's coming. An old writer says: "I

puzzle myself about the prophecies, especially the Apocalypse, and am often prying into futurity, but do not advert enough to what I may certainly know without a prophecy; what and where I shall be within a few years at the most, if I suffer sin to keep possession of me, if I do not abhor and cast it from me in the fear of God, if I do not "pluck out the right eye, and cut off the right hand," if I do not humble myself deeply before God, cry earnestly for mercy and yield myself to Him unfeignedly and with the utmost sincerity of intention for newness of heart and spirit." (Phil. iii. 13-15.)

34. *b*For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work; and commanded the porter to watch.

Note, I. The church on earth is Christ's *house*, or dwelling, (1) because He is the foundation stone of it; (2) because He is the builder; (3) because His friends are here. II. Although the church on earth be Christ's house, yet He is not here, He is risen, (1) He has gone to take possession of heaven in our name; (2) He has gone to intercede for us; (3) He has gone to prepare a place for us. III. All Christ's people are His *servants*, and have their work assigned them. (1) Ministers are servants. They are stewards, and as such should rightly divide the Word of life, giving to every one of the family his portion of meat in due season. They are *porters*. It is the duty of ministers to stand at the door and invite every sinner in. (2) All Christians are servants. Some people think that ministers only have to work for Christ; but see here: "He gave to every man his work." IV. Christ is coming back again, and we know not when. The whole Bible bears witness that the Master of the house shall return and that He will come suddenly. Our faith is incomplete if we do not live in the daily faith of a coming Saviour.

35. *Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:

*Matt. xxiv. 42, 44.

The Jews computed their hours from six in the morning to six in the evening. The night was divided into four watches, as here indicated. The first was at even and continued from six till nine. The

second commenced at nine and ended at twelve, or midnight. The third, or the time of cock crowing, lasted from twelve to three; the morning watch closed at six. It is the indispensable duty, and ought to be the indefatigable endeavor of every Christian, to stand upon his guard in a prepared readiness for Christ's appearance, both for His coming to them, and for their going to Him. There is a two-fold readiness for Christ's coming, namely, habitual and actual. An habitual readiness is a readiness of the state and condition; actual readiness is the readiness of the person, when we are furnished with all the virtues and graces of a good life, when our lamps are burning, and our loins girded, our souls furnished with all the graces of the Holy Spirit, our lives fruitful in good works.

36. Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

Lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping, i. e., remiss in duty, inattentive to His commands, and in a state of worldly-mindedness. Remissness and negligence, as well as the greater sins, are often the occasion of our being surprised by death. A porter asleep exposes the house to be robbed, and well deserves to be punished. A Christian, whose faith is not watchful,

exposes his own heart to the enemy of his salvation, and to those who are continually watching in order to steal away all the valuable things which God has laid up there, as in His own house.

37. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

The Lord's people in every age are always to be in condition to welcome the last day with its terror, to be able to appear with good courage before the presence of the Son of man in His judgment. For that purpose a constant watchfulness is needed before all things; a continual arousing of their faculties out of the illusion of spiritual sloth, which conceives that existing Christian attainments are good enough, out of the illusion of ease, which thinks that present circumstances are permanent, into the aspiration and the holy fear with which the advent of Christ reasonably fills Christians. Further, there is needed a continually renewing refreshment of eye and heart by means of this expectation, a continually renewed revival in the heart of the death of Christ, of His cross, of the judgment, of His Spirit, and an exclusion from the heart of everything which might establish in it a new spiritual sloth, lust and fear, and contradict the life in the death of Christ.

1. What prophecy did Jesus utter respecting the temple? 2. What question was Jesus asked privately? 3. What was his reply? 4. What is meant by "the abomination of desolation?" 5. What is said about false Christs and false prophets? 6. What in reference to the coming of the Son of man? 7. What application is made of the parable of the fig tree? 8. What is said of "that day and that hour?" 9. How are we to understand the words "neither the Son?" 10. To what is the Son of man compared? 11. What exhortation is based on our ignorance of the time of His coming? 12. What is it to "watch?"

CHAPTER XIV.

1 *A conspiracy against Christ.* 3 *Precious ointment is poured on his head by a woman.* 10 *Judas selleth his Master for money.* 12 *Christ himself foretelleth how he shall be betrayed of one of his disciples.* 22 *after the passover prepared, and eaten, instituteth his supper.* 26 *declareth aforehand the flight of all his disciples, and Peter's denial.* 43 *Judas betrayeth him with a kiss.* 46 *He is apprehended in the garden,* 53 *falsely accused, and impiously condemned of the Jews' council.* 65 *shamefully abused by them.* 66 *and thrice denied of Peter.*

AFTER two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. 2. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people.

^aMatt. xxvi. 2; Luke xxii. 1; John xi. 55, x i. 1.

The passover. This is said literally, as in verse 12, "for the feast of unleavened bread" is added. That is to say, *on the following day.* The chief priests and the scribes, &c. The whole Jewish sanhedrim, or general council, conspired to contrive the destruction of the innocent Jesus. *By craft.* Satan makes use of the subtilty of crafty men, and abuses their parts as well as their power, for his own purposes and designs, he sends no fools on his errands. *Not on the feast day, &c.* The only objection to carrying out their nefarious design was, that it might occasion a tumult among the people, there being such a mighty concourse at that time in Jerusalem. But Judas making them a proffer, they readily comply with the motion, and resolve to take the first opportunity to put our Saviour to death.

3. ^bAnd being in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.

^bMatt. xxvi. 6; John xii. 1, 3; see Luke vii. 37.

On verses 3-9 see on Matt. xxvi. 6-13.

Bethany. A village on the east of the Mount of Olives, adjoining Bethphage. *Simon the leper.* Three of the Evangelists are particular in the mention of a cure of leprosy by our Lord at an early period of his ministry. (Matt. viii. 2; Mark i. 40; Luke v. 12.) *A woman.* This must not be confounded with that anointing of our Lord mentioned by Luke, vii. 36-50. Woman is here again before man, as is so often the case in the gospel history. *An alabaster box.* The perfumes then and still most in request in the East, were preserved either in little boxes of gold, or what was far more common, in little oval, narrow-necked phials of the finest white

alabaster, a name which it received from its extraordinary resemblance to the precious stone of that name, though it was itself a marble of a very valuable description, found in the quarries of upper Egypt, or in the Libanus of Syria. In such immense quantities was this costly treasure obtained there, that long before the time of Christ, alabaster was in such general use that the name was universally applied to boxes of perfume, whatever was the material of which they consisted. *Spikenard,* genuine nard. The nard perfume was a compound of all the most valued perfumes of antiquity, among which were the malabatharum, costus, animum, myrrha, and balsam. *Very precious.* Spikenard was regarded by the ancients as the most precious of ointments.

Brake the box—the narrow neck of the small phial or flask. She did not wish to keep or hold back any thing: offered up all, gave all away. Every thing which is given to God is acceptable to Him, when it is charity which gives it. Zeal and love for Jesus Christ have commendable excesses. Great expense in external magnificence designed to honor Him, would most commonly be better employed in feeding His members, but there are some extraordinary occasions on which a sort of profuseness cannot be blamed. It belongs to Him who gives this love, to inform us when and how far we are permitted to gratify it.

4. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? 5. For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. 6. And they murmured against her.

^cEcc. iv. 4. ^dJohn vi. 43; 1 Cor. x. 10; Phil. ii. 14.

There were some. Mark presents, without a doubt, the most accurate historic picture. John defines most sharply the motive. Matthew gives the specially practical historic form. *Three hundred pence.* The denarius or penny was equal to about fifteen cents of our money. *They murmured against her*—they scolded her, or addressed her harshly. "It is indecent" (say the Jerusalem Talmudists), "for a scholar of the wise man to smell of spices." "From this opinion, everywhere received among them," says *Lightfoot*, "you may more

aptly understand why the other disciples, as well as Judas, 'who kept the bag,' were indignant. He out of covetousness—they not liking such effeminate niceties as were used in bride-chambers—should be used towards their Master. But Christ, taking off the envy of what was done, applies this anointing to His burial, both in His intention, and in the intention of the woman." If a man devotes his time, money and affections without reserve to the pursuit of earthly things, the world does not blame him. But if he devotes himself and all he has to Christ, they can scarcely find words to express their sense of his folly. Let charges like these not disturb us, let us rather pity those who make them. Our position in the world may be lowly, but let us, like Mary, do what we can.

6. And Jesus said, "Let her alone, why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me." *Isa. liv. 17; 2 Cor. x. 18.*

Jesus first rebukes the murmurers, and then justifies the action, pronouncing it good, because it flowed from a principle of love to Him.

7. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good; but me ye have not always.—*Deut. xv. 11.*

God has no need of us to feed the poor; no need of the widow to feed Elias. He could still have fed him with ravens. He could have created sufficient for all men, or so few men, as all should have been sufficient for them. He would not, He ordered there should be ever "poor in the land." (*Deut. xv. 11.*) Why? To prove them, and to prove us by them, that He, who feeds us, might feed them by us; that our superfluities might be their necessities; that they of their patience in waiting, and we of our liberality in supporting, might both together of Him that made us both receive a reward—they with us, in our bosoms there, as here, a good sight in heaven and a good sight in earth. (*Luke xvi. 23.*) For surely there shall never be a rich man in heaven without a Lazarus in his bosom. Therefore we have need of them as they have need of us, yet, that, we make theirs, remains ours still. (*2 Cor. ix. 6-10; Heb. xiii. 1, 2.*)

8. She hath done what she could; she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.

She hath done what she could, she has testified her gratitude and respect toward

me, according to the best of her ability, in my present circumstances. What an eulogy was that which Jesus pronounced upon Mary! *She is come aforehand, &c.* Jesus had before predicted his humiliation, even unto death on the cross; He now adds the prediction of His burial, a remarkable fact, considering on the one hand the manner of His death, and on the other the expectations He had given His disciples reason to entertain of His rising from the dead. The two great truths of the Gospel are expressed by the anointing and burial of Jesus. In His being buried, His work of humiliation was ended, and in His being anointed, there was given an example of that free and generous devotedness whereby the savor of His name is to be diffused in every place, and a preparation made for His glorious return, as the Messiah, the "King of kings and Lord of lords."

9. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

It brings no small authority to the predictions of the New Testament that, when many of them were made, there appeared no likelihood that they should ever be made good. When a poor Virgin, that was betrothed to a carpenter, confidently pronounces that "all ages should call her Blessed," what probability was there that what she said would ever come to pass? And when another private woman, then living in a village, had it foretold her that a censured action of hers should be reported, *through the whole world*, to her praise, what sober man, that were not a prophet, would venture to lose his credit by making such a promise? And therefore, since we see such unlikely predictions actually accomplished, it may well convince an unbiassed man, that the authors of them were really endowed with a true prophetic spirit; and that the events, by that foretold, were not effects of chance or policy, but of Divine Providence.

10. ¶ And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them. 11. And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

Matt. xxvi. 14, on which see Notes. Luke xxii. 3, 4.

And Judas Iscariot, &c. Observe, 1. The

person betraying our blessed Redeemer—Judas—a professor, a preacher, an Apostle, and *one of the twelve*. 2. The heinous nature of the sin of Judas: he betrayed Jesus, Jesus his Maker, Jesus his Master. Sometimes the vilest sins and most horrid impieties are committed by those who make a high profession of religion. 3. The occasion of this sin—the inordinate love of money. It does not appear that Judas had any particular malice, spite, or ill-will, against our Saviour, but a base and unworthy spirit of covetousness possessed him, and this made him sell his Master. Covetousness is the root-sin. (See Luke xii. 15).

12. ^bAnd the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover? 13. And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; follow him. 14. And whosoever he shall go in, say ye to the good man of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? 15. And he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us. 16. And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. 17. ^cAnd in the evening he cometh with the twelve. 18. And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, ^dOne of you which eateth with me shall betray me. 19. And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, *Is it I?* and another said, *Is it I?* 20. And he answered and said unto them, *It is one of the twelve, that dispatch with me in the dish.* 21. ^eThe Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

^bMatt. xxvi. 17, &c.; Luke xxii. 7. ^cRev. iii. 20. ^dProv. xvi. 1. ^eMatt. xxvi. 20, &c.; xxii. 9, iv. 13, 14; John vi. 29, xiii. 10, 11. ^fMatt. xxvi. 24; Luke xxii. 22. ^gActs i. 25.

On verses 12-21 see on Matt. xxvi. 17-24.

They killed the passover. The Jews killed it, according to the law, and therefore the disciples did so. *There shall meet you.* A wonderful sign in relation to the place where the *last* Paschal Supper, the *first* "Lord's Supper," was to be eaten. 1. That a person shall meet them; 2. A man; 3. Alone, 4. Immediately; 5. Bearing a vessel, 6. Containing water, 7. Going to the house which the disciples sought. An *honest employment*, however humble, is worthy of the attention of God, and even a man bearing a *pitcher of water* is marked in all his steps. This man was employed in carrying home the water which was to be used for baking the unleavened bread on the following day, for on that day it was not lawful to carry any; hence they were obliged to bring it on the preceding evening.

And he will show you a large upper room, &c. In this room they were to make ready. The upper room was not the worst room in the house, but really the best. It was a room sequestered from the tumult, the din, and the disturbance of a populous city. *And found as he had said unto them.* The knowledge, power and wisdom of Jesus appear in all His works. He makes them at this time more particularly known to the Apostles, on purpose to strengthen their faith and confidence, to prepare them for temptation, and to induce them the more easily to believe the mystery he was going to celebrate in their presence. *Made ready the passover—* They were not only to secure the *room*, but procure the *lamb*, which had been first inspected by the priests, have it killed and the blood sprinkled at the foot of the altar, and take it to the house. They were to obtain the *bread* and *wine* and the bitter herbs. The two disciples were Peter and John; and no doubt it was with wondering sadness that they performed the faithful office.

In the evening, when the stillness of the night invites to solemn thoughts, after we have collected our straggling ideas and suffered not a reflection to stir, but what either looks upward to God, or inward upon ourselves, upon the state of our minds; then let us scan each action of the day, fervently entreat God's pardon for what we have done amiss, and the gracious assistance of His Spirit for the future; and after having adjusted accounts between our Maker and ourselves, commit ourselves to His care for the night. (Gen. iii. 8; Ps. iv. 9, cxxxii. 3.) "Our Lord Jesus on that evening gave us the example of five great virtues: that is of humility, in washing their feet; of love, in the type of the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, and in the discourse, which is filled with precepts of love; of patience, in bearing with His betrayer, and with those many revilers, when he was taken and carried away as a thief; of obedience, in going to suffering and death at the command of His Father; of prayer, in praying three times in the garden. Let us strive to imitate Him in these virtues. (Matt. xi. 29; 1 Peter ii. 21; Rom. viii. 29.)"

What a sorrowful moment it was to the affectionate disciples when the Lord said, *One of you which eateth with me, shall betray me!* Each anxiously inquired, "Is it I?" It was right in them to ask this question, rather than to say, "Is it Peter?" "Is it John?" "Is it James?" Not one was so ungenerous as to fix his suspicion upon his fellow. This is the spirit we ought to cultivate. Are we not more apt to suspect our fellows than to distrust ourselves? No doubt each of the Apostles felt in his heart that *he* could not betray his Master, but then each believed the Lord knew his heart better than he knew it himself. "God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things." (1 John iii. 21.) Did *Judas* believe that God knew all things when he asked, "Is it I?" Surely he must have hoped that he had deceived his Master as well as his fellow-disciples. *Good were it for that man, &c.* More terrible words cannot be imagined. They prove that the lost spirits can never be released from hell, for if at *any* period (however remote) they were to enter heaven, it *would* be good for them *in the end* that they had been born. If among Christ's friends there was a secret foe, there were many secret friends among His foes. The traitor proceeds to complete his transgression, and Jesus proceeds to the institution of the Sacrament of the Supper.

22. ¶ And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.
 ¶ Matt. xxvi. 26; Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. xi. 23.

On verses 22-25 see on Matt. xxvi. 26-7.

Our Lord, having eaten the passover with His disciples the evening on which He was betrayed, instituted the sacred Supper, to be a memorial of His sufferings, a sign of His presence with the Church, and a seal of the new covenant which He was to confirm the next day with His blood. How tender is the assurance it conveys of His love to a sinful world. It teaches us, not only that He has died for us, but that, in the greatness of His mercy, He has established a memorial by which our faith and love may be constantly deepened and enlarged. He has remembered that we are but dust, that our belief would be easily shaken, our hopes dissi-

pated, and our cheerfulness destroyed. And, tenderly stooping to our infirmities, He has not trusted the recollection of the event on which our salvation depends to our mere memory, but has Himself erected an unchanging monument of it. Here, to the eye of faith, he again and again suffers, "the Just for the unjust, that He may bring us to God." How much, then, ought this sacrament to endear to them that compassionate Redeemer, who is thus studious of their happiness, and affectionately considerate of the infirmities of their nature; who thus bends over them in tender sympathy, as the parent over his infant child; who thus provides against the sluggishness of their feelings, the waywardness of their hearts, and the shortness of their memories; who thus opposes sensible things to sensible things, and supplies, amidst the objects which surround and detach them from God, an object to win them back again, and constrain them by a holy violence to love "Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us."

And as they did eat, i. e., toward the end of the supper. Took bread, literally, the bread used at the paschal feast. And blessed, i. e., invoked his Father's blessing upon it. And brake it, &c. This is the manner in which bread was distributed at their common meals when one presided, the cakes being thin and brittle, and knives not being in use, nor, indeed, convenient for the purpose. *This is my body. . . . This is my blood.* (v. 23.) Papists appeal to these words of institution in defense of their doctrine of transubstantiation, and affirm that they must be understood in their obvious and literal sense. "This is my body," they say, must mean, "This is truly my body," and "This is my blood," "This is truly my blood." Yet, they will not contend that other passages of Scripture, in which the phraseology is similar, should be subject to the same rigid interpretation. They never suppose that, when our Lord said, "I am the vine," "I am the way," "I am the door," He meant us to understand that He is literally a vine, a way, and a door, but really conceded that we should put a spiritual sense upon such passages. It belongs, there-

fore, to them to assign a satisfactory reason why the same liberty should not be granted in explaining the words of institution. It may indeed be more justly claimed in the present than in any other case, because the words confessedly relate to a sacrament, in which symbols are employed, and nothing is more natural than to give the name of the thing signified to the sign. Moses said of the paschal lamb, "It is the Lord's passover" (Ex. xii. 11), just as our Saviour said of the bread, "This is my body." The Apostle Paul called the symbol of our Saviour's body bread, not only before but also after consecration. (1 Cor. xi. 26-28.)

23. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it.

When he had given thanks. The Lord's Supper was instituted with *blessing* and *giving of thanks*; the gifts of common providence are to be so received (1 Tim. iv. 4, 5), much more the gifts of special grace. At His other meals, Jesus was wont to *bless*, and *give thanks* (chap. vi. 41, viii. 7), so remarkably, that He was known by it. (Luke xxiv. 30, 31.) And He did the same at this meal.

24. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

The Lord's Supper was to be a memorial of His death, and therefore He brake the bread, to show how it pleased the Lord to *bruise Him*, and He called the wine, which is the blood of the grape, the *blood of the New Testament*. The death of Christ was a bloody death, and frequent mention is made of the *blood*, the *precious blood*, as the price of our redemption. It is called "the blood of the New Testament," for the covenant of grace became a *testament*, and of force, by the death of Christ, the Testator. (Heb. ix. 16.) It is said to be *shed for many*, to justify *many* (Isa. xliii. 12), to bring *many* sons to glory. (Heb. ii. 10.) It was sufficient for *many*, it has been of use to *many*; a great multitude which no man could number, had *washed their robes*, and *made them white in the blood of the Lamb* (Rev. vii. 9, 14), and still it is a *fountain opened*. How comforting is this to repenting sinners, that the blood of Christ is *shed for many*! And if for *many*, why not for *me*? If for the chief of sinners, then *why not for me*?

25. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

That interpretation of this verse seems to be most free from objections which refers the wine spoken of here, to the *joys and communion* of heaven, which are often represented under the imagery of a feast. Wine thus emblematic of this heavenly communion, would be drank new (*i. e.*, in a far higher and more spiritual sense) with Him in His Father's kingdom, when they entered upon their heavenly inheritance. The words *fruit of the vine* are here put for *wine*, and this declaration being made at the close of the feast, when the cup was about to be passed around, He naturally and appropriately uses the drinking of wine, as a figure to show that his life was soon to end, and that He would never on earth again partake with them of such a feast as they were then celebrating, but that the reality of this symbolical representation would be enjoyed by them all in His Father's kingdom in heaven. *That day* is to be taken in the general sense of *time*, and its actual reference to each believer is the time of his admission to the upper sanctuary at the hour of death.

26. ¶ And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. 27. ¶ And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, ¶ I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

¶ Matt. xxvi. 30, on which see notes. ¶ Matt. xxvi. 31. ¶ Zech. xlii. 7. ¶ Chap. xvi. 7.

And when they had sung a hymn, &c. The Psalms the Jews used at the end of the passover began with the one hundred and thirteenth, and ended with the one hundred and eighteenth. Was the hymn here used one of *these*? Or was it any one else of the compositions of David, "the sweet psalmist of Israel?" Or was it the words of any other pious poet? We cannot determine. Singing is a Christian ordinance, it is sanctioned by our Lord's own example. As this singing was immediately *preceded* by the administration of His own Supper, we learn that singing should accompany this sacred ordinance. As it was *followed* by His entrance into Gethsemane, we learn, 1. That the prospect of suffering should not prevent our joy and praise. 2. That religious ordinances and engagements should not lead us to dispense with retirement.

29. "But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet *will* not I. 30. And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, *even* in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. 31. But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

^aMatt. xxvi. 33, 34, on which see notes; Luke xxii. 33, 34; John xiii. 37, 38. ^b2 Kings viii. 13; Jer. x. 23, xvii. 9.

Although all, &c. To presume upon our own strength, to prefer ourselves before others, and not to hearken to admonitions, are three branches of pride, and three occasions of very grievous falls. How little does man know himself, if he believes he can have any dependence upon his own heart! Christ is our own strength, when we rely upon Him, but He is only an occasion of our falling, when we do not put our whole confidence in His strength.

Verily I say unto thee, That this day, &c. Our Lord who knew Peter much better than he did himself, saw that his declaration, though perfectly honest, "sprang more from a swell of strongly excited generous emotion, than from a firmly grounded will," thus announced to him in plain terms, that, in the course of a very few hours, he should deny with oaths and execrations, Him for whom he is now declaring, and declaring truly, that he is willing to make any sacrifice. The slight variations in the different accounts given by the the Evangelists are easily reconciled. With regard to the time of the predicted event, Jesus intimated two things: that all denials should take place ere the period called the cock-crowing had passed, a period more fixed in Judea, where there is little difference in the length of the days as compared with our country, and that the cock, which Peter should hear, should not crow twice till he had a third time denied Christ. It was the fact that immediately on his third denial the cock did crow a second time, along with the look from his suffering Master, which brought so strongly before Peter's mind the omniscience and the kindness of Him whom he had so basely denied, turned the tide in his mind and heart, and converted him from a falsifier and blasphemer into a thoroughly penitent believer.

32. And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

^aMatt. xxvi. 36; Luke xxii. 39; John xviii. 1.

Gethsemane—or "oil valley," at the foot of the Mount of Olives. *Sit ye here, &c.*

Leaving eight of the disciples near the entrance of the garden, our Saviour is found to withdraw with the three most favored of their number.

33. And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy: 34. And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.

Peter James John. The wisdom of God usually proportions our temptations to our respective degrees of strength. He gradually inures His weaker children to the cross, and frequently permits them to view for a time the conflicts of others, before they themselves are engaged in the battle. The weakest He stations at a distance; those who are somewhat stronger He takes along with Him, and in some measure admits to a "fellowship of His sufferings." (Gen. xxxiii. 2, 3; 2 Kings x. 10; Isa. xxvii. 8.) *Began, &c.* As if all His former sorrows were as nothing in comparison of this fullness, or as if He was now only entering upon a course of suffering for sin, such as man's continued unbelief and ingratitude would prolong from age to age, and so it is written of Him. (Matt. xi. 20.)

35. And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. 36. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee: take away this cup from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt.

^aRom. viii. 13; Gal. iv. 6. ^bHeb. v. 7. ^cJohn v. 30, vi. 38.

Abba, Father, &c. Our blessed Saviour had not, as yet, experienced bodily sufferings at man's hands, and though what awaited Him at man's hands throughout that dreadful night and day, might well occasion some natural shrinking of His human nature, yet we may be sure that the cup which He saw prepared for Him, was one which human malice alone could never have mixed. The weight of God's just and terrible indignation against sin then lay upon Him. It was Jehovah's sword which then awoke to smite Him, and, though strengthened for the coming conflict by the angel sent down upon that blessed errand, yet He foresaw that He should be left alone to combat with that power of darkness, whose malice and blasphemous suggestions He had experienced during His temptation in the wilderness. We cannot pretend to comprehend the nature of that Divine infliction,

or the manner of those assaults of evil spirits, at the near approach of which He underwent this mysterious agony of soul and body, but we may be sure that the burden thus borne by Him, was unspeakably heavier than any which man's malice and cruelty could inflict. He was about to bear the punishment due to God's justice for man's sins, and so heavy was the burden, that with all His love of sinners, and His willingness to suffer, He seems to ask whether no other way of salvation were possible, meekly submitting His will to that of His Heavenly Father. We should consider the part which our own sins had in causing these sufferings of the Lord Jesus. Each of us should consider they were endured for his sake, as much as if he were the only one for whom Christ thus travailed; in that agony each of us should see the measure of Christ's love for himself. (See on Matt. xxvi. 36-46.)

37. And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst thou not watch one hour?

Saith unto Peter, whom He especially addresses, since he had a short time before, with every asseveration, strongly declared, that he would willingly encounter all calamities, nay, even death itself, with Jesus. Observe, too, He calls him not Peter, i. e., *rock (constant)*, but Simon. Peter ought to have been thoroughly sensible that he had promised too much upon his own strength, since he found himself overcome even by sleep. God permits the lesser faults, on purpose to cure men of presumption; but when they take no warning thereby, He suffers them to have grievous falls.

38. Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.

^aRom. vii. 23; Gal. v. 17.

After His reprehension, Christ subjoins an exhortation, *Watch ye, &c.*, and adds a forcible reason, *The spirit is willing, &c.* Thence learn that the holiest and best resolved Christians, who have willing spirits for Christ and His service, should, in view of the weakness of the flesh, or frailty of human nature, watch and pray, and thus guard themselves against temptation.

39. And again he went away, and prayed and spake the same words.

The simplicity and plainness of Christ in His prayers is an important lesson, and of great use and advantage. A Christian who prays to God is not an orator, who would persuade by his eloquence, but a beggar, who would move to compassion by his poverty and humility. These speak plainly and without ornament, and Jesus speaks thus to God, because He has clothed Himself with our humility and poverty.

40. And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither twist they what to answer him.—Rom. iii. 19.

When he returned. "Wherefore," says an old writer, "did the Lord so often break off that prayer of His, which was of such mighty consequence? In my opinion, it was to teach us, that our prayers are most perfect when intermixed with anxious concern for the welfare of our neighbors." *Asleep again.* It is a dangerous thing to give way to spiritual sloth. The disciples, who had not aroused themselves at Christ's first exhortation, became the more drowsy and sunk into deeper sleep. Sloth and a disinclination to good insinuate themselves, like intoxicating poison, and gradually deprive the mind of all thought and reflection. (Verses 68, 70, 71; Prov. vi. 9-11.)

41. And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42. ^aRise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

^aJohn xiii. 1. ^bMatt. xxvi. 46; John xviii. 3.

Sleep on now, &c. The ironical meaning, as conveyed by Matthew, is altered by Luke into a reproof: "Why sleep ye?" Mark presents an intermediate view; first irony, then the call to awake. *It is enough,* that is, all is over. This expression intimated that the time when they might have been of use to Him, by their counsel and comfort, was now lost; and that He was in a manner already in the hands of His enemies. *Lo, he that betrayeth, &c.* They opened their eyes to see how much more vigilant he was who served the devil, than themselves, who were in the service of God. (Luke xvi. 8). "The power of faith," says *Chrysostom*, "is secure in dangers, it is endangered by security. (Verse 67.)

43. ¶ And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

^aMatt. xxvi. 47, on which see notes; Luke xxii. 47; John xviii. 3.

One of the twelve. The sufferings of the Church, like those of her Redeemer, generally begin at home; her open enemies can do her no harm, until her pretended friends have delivered her into their hands; and, unnatural as it may seem, they, who have waxed fat upon her bounty, are sometimes the first to "lift up the heel" against her. (John xiii. 29; Acts xx. 30; Rev. ii. 2.)

44. And he that had betrayed him had given them a token, saying, ^kWhomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: take him, and lead him away safely.

^{k2} Sam. xx. 9, 10; Ps. lv. 20, 21; Prov. xxvii. 6.

See on Matt. xxvi. 48.

As those who came to apprehend Jesus were strangers to Him, and as it was now night, and there were several persons with Him, a signal was the more necessary. It is probable that our Lord, in great condescension and love, had been used, according to the Jewish custom, to permit His disciples to salute Him, when they returned to Him after having been some time absent. The hint, *lead him safely away*, may intimate Judas' suspicion that Jesus might miraculously escape, as on former occasions (Luke iv. 30; John viii. 59, x. 39), though He had expressly declared the contrary (Matt. xxvi. 24), or it may perhaps mean, that notwithstanding the wickedness of the traitor, he was desirous that his rude assailants might do his innocent Master no injury.

45. And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, Master; and kissed him.

See on Matt. xxvi. 49.

Master, Master. Not merely an exclamation of excitement, but also of hypocritical reverence carried to its greatest height. *And kissed him.* It is noticeable, that upon the spot where Jesus was seized by the band, Titus, the Roman commander, pitched his camp forty years after. The Turks, however, have walled the place where Judas kissed Christ, as an accursed spot.

46. And they laid their hands on him, and took him. 47. And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. 48. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me? 49. I was daily with you in the temple, teaching, and ye took me not: but ^athe Scriptures must be fulfilled. 50. ^aAnd they all forsook him, and fled.

^a Matt. xxvi. 55, on which see notes, Luke xxii. 52. ^a Psa. lxxv. 6; Isa. liii. 7, &c.; Luke xxii. 37, xxiv. 44. ^a Psa. lxxviii. 8; verse 27.

A servant of the high priest. His name was Malchus. Simon Peter drew the sword. Concerning the miracle which

followed, see the note on Luke xxii. 51. *Are ye come out, &c.* These wretches, observing that, throughout His prolonged sufferings, Jesus had complained of no other injury done to Him, than this, that when they came to apprehend Him as a criminal in the garden, they had approached Him as a thief, determined to treat Him in this way which seemed to grieve Him most. Hence, not satisfied with having ranked Him beneath Barabbas, a thief of the worst description, they made thieves His companions to Calvary, and between thieves they lifted Him to the cross. "As men," says *Beza*, "had knowingly and willingly deserted their Creator, become traitors against Him, and robbed Him of his glory, so Christ willingly making satisfaction for the unjust, being deserted by His disciples, and betrayed by one whom He had admitted to the most familiar acquaintance with Him, is apprehended like a robber, that the punishment might answer to the sin, and we, the real traitors, deserters, and sacrilegious robbers, might be rescued from the snare of the devil." *But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.* It is not the Scripture which makes the necessity of fulfillment, but the will of God, revealed in the prophets, causes the fulfillment of the Scriptures. The darkness, likewise, stands beneath God's light. *And they all forsook him, and fled.* Nothing is the cause of greater mortification to Christ, than to be betrayed and sold by one friend, to be denied by another, and to be forsaken by all the rest, being so worthy as He was to be constantly loved.

51. And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: 52. And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

And there followed him a certain young man, &c. There are many who have become known to us only on account of their having had something to do with Jesus. We should never have heard of this young man, if he had not followed Him this terrible night. It was a moment never to be forgotten, when he heard the tumult, and determined to go and see what it was. It appears that He loved the Lord, and desired to be with Him in the hour of danger and disgrace. But when the enemies laid hold on him his

courage failed, and leaving his covering in their hands he fled for his life. This circumstance gives us a lively idea of the terror that prevailed among the friends of Jesus. Those who had a little while before clung closely to His side, were now afraid to be known as His disciples. Many suppose that the "young man" in question was no other than the Evangelist Mark himself. It is, however, impossible to determine, and therefore idle to inquire, who this was. "It seems," says *Alford*, "to have been some attached disciple of the Lord (probably well known to the readers of Mark), who had gone to rest and had been aroused by the intelligence. The disciples were not laid hold of; this person, perhaps, was throwing some obstacles in the way of the removal of Jesus, or he may have been laid hold of merely in wantonness from His unusual gait."

A linen cloth—an article of dress which was used at night, and also in summer, as a substitute for the ordinary mantle, or outside garment. *His naked body*. The word "*naked*" may here express, as it does in other places (see Isa. xx. 23; John xxi. 7), that the young man was almost naked. Being aroused by the tumult, he did not wait to dress himself in the ordinary manner, but merely threw this linen cloth over what dress he had on. *And he left*, literally, *and having left*. In attempting to lay hold on him, they grasped only the loose folds of the linen cloth. Letting this remain with them, he fled away and escaped, either not being pursued, or taking advantage of his knowledge of the place, in the darkness of the night, to elude his pursuers.

The *Rev. Henry Melvill, B. D.*, in his sermon on verses 51 and 52, says: "We have shown you, that, except in describing the dress of this young man, the Evangelists nowhere mention the sindon, but where they have to speak of the raiment, in which Christ was consigned to the grave. This is surely very remarkable. It is as though to force us to connect, in some way, the appearance, the mysterious appearance of the young man so strangely attired, with the burial of Christ, to compel us to assign it a prophetic or typical

character, in place of passing it over as an incident, from which little can be learned. As Christ is led to trial, and, therefore, virtually, to crucifixion, He is followed by a young man having nothing on his naked body but the vesture in which, after having been crucified, Christ would be laid by Joseph in the tomb. The same parties who have seized Christ, lay hold on this young man, and try to detain him. But though he is but one against a multitude, he escapes from their hands—he escapes, but he escapes naked, leaving the grave-clothes behind him. Is not this Christ, who, when He had put on the grave-clothes, was not to be kept in the grave by all the malice and power of His enemies, but who sprang from the grasp of the tomb, leaving in it the raiment in which He had been bound up for burial?"

53. † "And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes. 54. And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire. 55. And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; and found none. 56. For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together."

† Matt. xxvi. 57, on which see notes; Luke xxii. 54; John xviii. 13. † Matt. xxvi. 59. † 1 Peter iii. 16, 18. † Ps. xxvii. 12.

He sat with the servants. Often an error is easier among such as those who are less feared, than among the great. It is not safe traveling upon the confines of what is lawful and of what is sinful. He that to-day will go toward sin, as far as he thinks he may, is in danger of going to-morrow further than he should. It is not easy to be safe in walking upon the brink of a precipice. (Prov. iv. 14, 15, xix. 16; Gen. xxxix. 10; 2 Sam. xi. 2.) *Warmed himself*. It was by the light that Peter was discovered, who otherwise would have been less exposed. Often while the body is fostered, the soul is neglected. *At the fire*. The nights in Palestine are intensely cold during the Paschal season. *Sought for witness, &c.* It is in the power of every man to preserve his probity; but no man living has it in his power to say, that he can preserve his reputation, while there are so many evil tongues in the world, ready to blast the fairest character, and so many open ears, ready to receive their reports. (Ex. xxiii. 1; Prov. xxvi. 20-22; 1 Peter iv. 8.)

But their witness agreed not together. Truth

—'tis a plain, straight, open road; falsehood—'tis a dark, deep, devious, winding labyrinth, where it is very hard for its accomplices not to lose the one the other; nay, not to lose themselves in it. 'Tis impossible for falsehood to be so consistent, so true to itself, as not in something to give itself the lie. (Job xxvii. 4; Matt. xii. 34-37.)

57. And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, 58. We heard him say, *I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. 59. But neither so did their witness agree together. 60. *And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? 61. But he held his peace, and answered nothing. *Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? 62. And Jesus said, I am; *and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. *Chap. xv. 29; John ii. 19. *Matt. xxvi. 62, on which see notes. *Isa. liii. 7. *Matt. xxvi. 63. *Matt. xxiv. 30, xxvi. 64; Luke xxii. 69.

Neither so did their witness agree together. Perhaps one testified that He had said that He was able to destroy the temple, and the other that He would actually destroy it. Some understand this expression as meaning that the testimony was insufficient. *Answerest thou nothing? What is it which &c.* Two distinct questions. *The Blessed.* An ordinary Hebrew expression for the Deity. (See Luke i. 68; Rom. i. 25.) *And Jesus said, I am.* Seldom in the course of His ministry did our Lord announce Himself as the Messiah. But here, in the great and trying moment, when questioned by the Jewish nation, in the person of their high priest, solemnly, *Are you the MESSIAH?* to the Jewish nation he returns the solemn reply, *I am.*

63. Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? 64. Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all *condemned him to be guilty of death. 65. And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophesy: And the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands. *Isa. xxxvi. 22, xxxvii. 1; Jer. xxxvi. 23, 24; Acts xiv. 13, 14. *1 Kings xxi. 9, 13; John v. 18, viii. 58, 59, x. 31, 33, xix. 7.

Rent his clothes—tore all his clothing, except that which was next his body. Persons of respectability, and travelers, sometimes, wore two articles of under-clothing. (See on Matt. xxvi. 65.) *Some began to spit on him, &c.* These wretched miscreants, who spat upon the face of Him who is described as "the Brightness of (the Father's) glory, and the express image of His person" (Heb. i. 3), had been beheld long before by the keen eye of prophecy. They occupy a distinct place

in Isaiah's solemn picture of the humiliation of the Son of man: "He hid not His face from the shame and the spitting."

66. *And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest. 67. And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. 68. But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch, and the cock crew.

*Matt. xxvi. 69, on which see notes; Luke xxii. 55; John xviii. 18.

Beneath. This is in opposition to the hall of trial, which was higher. *I know not, or, it is unknown to me, not understood.* *Into the porch, or, according to Matthew, the entrance-hall.* It is the same idea.

69. *And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them. 70. And he denied it again. *And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto. 71. But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak. 72. *And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

*Matt. xxvi. 71, on which see notes; Lev. xxii. 58; John xviii. 25. *Matt. xxvi. 73; Luke xxii. 59; John xviii. 26. *Acts ii. 7. *Matt. xxvi. 75.

And a (the) maid. As soon as she noticed him, began to say, as the other had begun. *For thou art a Galilean.* His broad dialect betrayed him. It is evident that Peter failed to convince these persons of his not belonging to the party of Jesus, and that, in their estimation, he was guilty of falsehood. It is hardly supposable that he did not show signs of conscious guilt, when thus repeatedly charged with being one of Jesus' followers.

And when he thought thereon he wept. *Dod-drige* supposes that this is intended to express, not only the immediate sensibility of Peter, but his feeling through life, and that he always wept at the thought of his vile and ungrateful conduct. His sin was certainly very aggravated, and, with all his failings, he was a man of very tender affections, and great ingenuousness. Let us never be ashamed or afraid of such tears as Peter shed. Nothing is so becoming and reasonable. Other grief may be excused, but this can be justified. Other sorrow may render us amiable in the eyes of our fellow-creatures, but this is extolled of God. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." This brings us within the reach of the promises: "They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy,"

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." It is not easy, or perhaps possible, to make others comprehend this—but there is a pleasure even in the frame itself, and they who are the subjects of it well know that their happiest moments are their most tender ones, and, with *Augustine*, they can bless God for the "grace of tears." Here is proof of our being under the renewing of the Holy Ghost. If the heart of stone was not taken away, how could I feel and grieve? And

if there was nothing in me but nature, how could I feel and grieve for sin? There is nothing more useful in the divine life than this disposition. It endears the Saviour and His atonement, and His righteousness, and His intercession, and His grace, and makes its possessor cautious and circumspect; in this temper of mind he cannot expose himself to temptation, to trifle with sin, but be always watchful and prayerful. Blessed is the man that feareth always.

1. What occurred in the house of Simon the leper? 2. What objection was made to it? 3. Where did Christ send two of His disciples? 4. For what purpose? 5. What took place "in the evening?" 6. What is said of the institution of the Lord's Supper? 7. What was done before they went to the Mount of Olives? 8. What occurred in Gethsemane? 9. Explain verse 36. 10. In what state did Christ find His disciples when He came to them. 11. What did He say to them? 12. What particulars of the betrayal are given? 13. What is said about "a certain young man?" 14. What is said of Peter's denial of Jesus? 15. What, of his repentance?

CHAPTER XV.

1 *Jesus brought bound, and accused before Pilate.* 15 *Upon the clamour of the common people, the murderer Barabbas is loosed, and Jesus delivered up to be crucified.* 17 *He is crowned with thorns, 19 spit on, and mocked: 21 fainteth in bearing his cross: 27 hangeth between two thieves: 29 suffreth the triumphing reproaches of the Jews: 39 but confessed by the centurion to be the Son of God: 43 and is honourably buried by Joseph.*

AND straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.

^aPs. ii. 2; ^bMatt. xxvii. 1, 2.

The events of this chapter are explained more fully in Matthew xxvii.

In the morning, &c. The meetings of the Jewish sanhedrim could not be held till morning, as the courts of the temple were shut at night. Nor was it lawful to put any man to death on the passover. So the council of Jews, fearing the people too much to retain our Lord in prison, and not daring to proceed with the execution, delivered him to Pilate, on charge of sedition, that He might be put to death immediately, and according to the Roman custom. *Theophylact* observes: "The Jews delivered up our Lord to the Romans, and they, for that sin, were themselves given up into the hands of the Romans."

2. ^bAnd Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering, said unto him, Thou sayest it. 3. And the chief priests accused him of many things; but he answered nothing. 4. ^cAnd Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee. 5. ^dBut Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled. ^eMatt. xxvii. 11. ^fMatt. xxvii. 13. ^gIsa. liii. 7; John xix. 9.

Thou sayest it, or, it is as thou sayest. But he answered nothing. Jesus answered

Pilate, but would not answer the chief priests a word before Pilate, probably for these reasons: because His innocence was such as needed no apology; because their calumnies and accusations were so notoriously false, that they needed no confutation; to show His contempt of death; to teach us by His example to despise the false accusations of malicious men, and to teach us patience and submission, when for His sake we are slandered and traduced.

6. Now ^hat that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. ⁱMatt. xxvii. 15; John xviii. 39.

There was no law to oblige Pilate to this, but as acts of grace are generally popular things, this seems to have been first voluntarily used by the Romans, to please their tributaries, and by custom was in a manner established.

7. And there was one named Barabbas, *which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.* 8. And the multitude crying aloud began to desire *him to do as he had ever done unto them.*

Bound with them, &c. This shows that he belonged to a band of murderers, of whom he was most likely the leader. *In the insurrection*—in which he had been captured—one of the numberless Jewish insurrections, not known more exactly. As this charge was most offensive to Pilate, he would willingly punish Barabbas.

9. But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? 10. For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.

The King of the Jews—an ironical use of an opponent's words. Let us take warning of the fatal effects of *envy*, as shown in the conduct of the priests. They delivered up our Lord, and persecuted Him to death from envy—envy at His superior holiness, which put them to shame, at His wonderful works, which they could not equal, at His growing influence, which threatened to bring theirs to nothing. How anxious should we be to root out this basest of passions, which is excited in the heart by the sight of superior excellence! Be watchful against it, and if you find a secret pain when any outshine you in piety or success (much more if you are tempted to disparage those who thus surpass you), pray earnestly that you be not given up to this truly devilish temper.

11. But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. 12. And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do *unto him* whom ye call the King of the Jews? 13. And they cried out again, Crucify him. 14. Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.—Matt. xxvii. 20; Acts iii. 14.

Moved the people, more literally, excited, instigated. An active and urgent influence is denoted by the word. The cross was in the form of a †, corresponding to the human form with the arms spread. It was early adopted by the Romans and other nations as a means of inflicting torture and death upon the human body. It was among the striking occurrences of this great transaction, that this mode of death extended him upon a representation of a human form, and presents him to our view with his outspread arms as if to embrace the human race.

Let us take warning against that base disposition which speaks well of a person

while he is prosperous, and joins others in decrying him as soon as he is afflicted. The fickle multitude which joined in the cries of Hosanna, when there seemed a prospect of the Lord's triumph, preferred a robber and murderer to Him, when they saw Him deserted, "stricken, smitten of God and afflicted." So hollow and fleeting is popular applause, such a disposition is there in man's breast to favor and fawn upon those who are rising to join in trampling upon the fallen. One characteristic of such as shall rest upon God's holy hill is, that in their eyes a vile person is contemned, but they honor "them who fear the Lord." The outward prosperity of a wicked man does not alter their feeling toward him, and the misfortunes which befall the good are to them an additional reason for favoring and honoring them in their adversity.

15. ¶ And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

To content, literally, to satisfy, i. e., to remove all grounds of complaint, and render himself popular with the people. *Scourge him.* The Romans usually scourged the criminals whom they condemned to be crucified. Hence, Pilate delivered Jesus to be scourged in order to be crucified, but not before he had made efforts to rescue Him from His enemies. Let us never forget the patient sufferer of all these cruel outrages; and when, we find the multitude choosing Barabbas instead of Him, let us be reminded to examine whether there be no evil way, no unrighteous or self-indulgent habit, which we are preferring to Him, who bore all this so patiently for our sakes.*

*We annex here, in a note, a most singular document, entitled the *Death Warrant of Christ: Sentence rendered by Pontius Pilate, acting Governor of Lower Galilee, stating that Jesus of Nazareth shall suffer death on the cross.*

"In the year seventeen of the empire Tiberius Cæsar, and the 25th day of March, the city of holy Jerusalem, Anna and Caiaphas being priests, sacrificators of the people of God, Pontius Pilate, Governor of Lower Galilee, sitting on the presidential chair of the Pretory, condemns Jesus of Nazareth to die on the cross between two thieves—the great and notorious evidence of the people saying—

1. Jesus is a seducer.

2. He is seditious.

3. He is an enemy of the law.

4. He calls himself falsely the Son of God.

5. He calls himself falsely the King of Israel.

6. He entered into the temple, followed by a multitude bearing palm branches in their hands.

Order the first centurion, Quillus Cornelius, to lead him to the place of execution.

16. ^bAnd the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Pretorium; and they called together the whole band. 17. And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head. 18. And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! 19. And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him. 20. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.—^bMatt. xxvii. 27.

No pity was awakened in the hearts of the Roman *soldiers*, by the sight of the Redeemer's sufferings. After the scourging was over, they led Jesus away *into the hall, i. e.*, into the palace-court, which we may easily suppose was surrounded by the neighboring buildings of the governor's palace, forming a kind of barracks. *The whole band*—the entire cohort, one-tenth of a Roman legion. The number of the cohort varied, however, from three hundred to a thousand. Calling this cohort five hundred, there could not have been, in the court and around the building, less than a thousand persons, all thirsting for the blood of their victim. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the number was much larger.

And they clothed him, &c. A scarlet military mantle (see on Matt. xxvii. 28) was made to represent the imperial purple, hence the designation *purple*, as Mark and John describe the robe. And because this is the symbolic import of the robe, there is no discrepancy. The scarlet military cloak no more required to be a real purple, than the crown of thorns required to be a real crown, or the reed a real sceptre, for the whole transaction was an ironical drama, and such an one, too, that the infamous abuse might be readily perceived through the pretended glorification. *A crown of thorns.* Still making themselves

merry over the innocent one, the soldiers weave a crown of thorns, and put it on His head. It is impossible to decide which of the many kinds of thorn that grew in Palestine was used. This crown was put upon Jesus partly to mock Him, and partly to cause Him pain. Some of His faithful followers have thought of this crown while enduring suffering for His sake. When a crown not made of *thorns*, but of *paper*, and painted with the figures of three devils, was placed on the head of the martyr John Huss, he said, "I am glad to wear this crown of ignominy, for the sake of Him who wore a crown of thorns." He felt that the Saviour's torments were sharper than his own; he felt, also, that it was for *his* sake that the thorns pierced the Saviour's brow. Yes! it was for *us* that Jesus wore a crown of thorns. No evil thought had ever proceeded from His Divine mind. It was to atone for *our* offenses that the blood trickled down His sacred cheeks. He who suffered all these pangs, and bore all these insults, was *God*, the God who made us, who gives us health, who upholds the worlds! What must *sin* be to require such an atonement! It must be infinitely evil. And what must *Jesus* be, to be willing to offer this atonement! He must be infinitely good. The day is coming, when He will appear adorned with *many* crowns, but not *one* of them composed of thorns. Then all shall worship Him, not in cruel mockery, but with deep awe, and call Him *Lord*, to the glory of God the Father.

And they smote him on the head. On this an ancient writer says: "Thou, who didst submit Thy glorious head to be wounded, pardon thereby whatever by the wilfulness of my head I have done amiss. Thou, who didst suffer Thy hands to be perforated, pardon thereby whatsoever I have done amiss by unlawful touch, by unlawful execution. Thou, who didst allow Thy precious side to be pierced, pardon thereby whatsoever I have done amiss in the heat of passion by unlawful imaginations. Thou, who didst permit Thy blessed feet to be nailed down, pardon thereby whatsoever I have done amiss in the progress of my footsteps, ever swift to evil. Thou, who didst give Thy whole body to be stretched

Forbid to any person whomsoever, either poor or rich, to oppose the death of Jesus.

The witnesses that signed the condemnation of Jesus are, viz.: 1. Daniel Robani, a Pharisee; 2. Joannas Barobabiel; 3. Raphael Robani; 4. Capet a citizen.

Jesus shall go out of the city of Jerusalem by the gate of Struenns."

The above sentence is engraved on a copper plate; on one side are written these words: "A similar plate is sent to each tribe." It was found in an antique vase of white marble, while excavating in the ancient city of Aquila, in the Kingdom of Naples, in the year 1820, and was discovered by the Commissaries of Arts, attached to the French armies. At the expedition of Naples, it was found enclosed in a box of ebony, in the sacristy of the Chartrom—the vase in the chapel of Caserta. The French translation was made by the members of the Commission of Arts. The original is in the Hebrew language. The Chartrom requested earnestly that the plate might not be taken away from them. The request was granted as a reward for the sacrifice they had made for the army. M. Denon, one of the savans, caused a plate to be made of the same metal, on which he had engraved the above sentence. At the sale of his collection of antiquities, &c., it was bought by Lord Howard for 2,390 francs.

upon the cross, pardon thereby whatsoever sins I have committed by the co-operation of all my members. (Mi. v. 1.)"

21. ¹And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.

¹Matt. xxvii. 32; Luke xxiii. 26, on which see notes.

And they compel one Simon, a Cyrenian, &c. It does not appear that Simon was unwilling to bear the cross, for the choice was not given to him. Simon will never be forgotten, because he was the Saviour's cross-bearer. How many angels in heaven would joyfully have taken his place, if they could have obtained permission! We may well believe that there are some on earth who *would*, if they *might*, have borne their Lord's burden, and shared His reproach. Though our Lord is not *now* fainting beneath the weight of His cross, His name is still despised, and His people are persecuted. He delights to see us willing to bear shame for His sake. Some have humbled themselves to the very dust that they might please Him. *Dober*, the Moravian missionary, intended to sell himself for a slave, that he might teach the negroes the way of salvation. Circumstances prevented him fulfilling his intention, but if he had, would he have degraded himself? To bear the cross of Jesus, and to share His reproach, is reckoned in heaven more honorable than to govern kingdoms, or to discover worlds. Whether Simon knew it or not, no monarch on his throne occupied a place of such distinction as he did when bearing the cross of the Nazarene. *Cyrene* was a city of Africa, and contained many Jews. *Alexander and Rufus* are mentioned, because well known among the disciples (see Rom. xvi. 13), and this is a strong proof that the facts recorded are true, for the appeal was sufficient to detect any fallacy.

22. ¹And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull. 23. ¹And they gave him to drink, wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.

¹Matt. xxvii. 33; Luke xxiii. 33. ¹Matt. xxvii. 34.

They bring. Not merely lead. *Golgotha.* A small hill on a greater hill or mount, north-west of Jerusalem, so called from its form, or because criminals were executed there. *Wine mingled with myrrh*, termed by Matthew, *vinegar*. Mark speaks of more ingredients in the drink than Matthew, and hence uses different words to

denote the same thing. Vinegar was usually made of wine, or of the juice of grapes. *Received it not.* Jesus must drain the cup of suffering to the very dregs, and therefore will not partake of the opiate now offered to His lips.

24. And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.—¹Ps. xxii. 18; Luke xxiii. 34.

They parted his garments. Our Saviour had not much to leave; how affectingly His poverty appears at His death. It was but His garments the soldiers *could* divide, there was nothing more. They might have been woven by the fingers of love, but they were all that He had. And it may be, believer, that thou hast reached the end of life's journey with little else than the clothes that cover thee. Think not of these, however, but of the shining raiment thou art speedily to receive from the hand of Him who, though He was rich; yet for thy sake became poor, that we, through His poverty, might be made rich, who wandered here in nakedness and sorrow, a forlorn outcast, that we might reach a mansion of bliss and be clothed in a robe of righteousness, by which we should be qualified for the very presence of God and the enjoyment of His love forever.

25. And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.—¹See Matt. xxvii. 45; John xix. 14.

The third hour—nine o'clock in the morning. *They crucified him.* "The meek and lowly Man who permitted them to place the cross upon His back, permitted them also to stretch His hands and feet upon it, and with the hammer and the rugged nails to fix them there. O mysterious love! O meek, yet Almighty Saviour! how was it that no ray of Thy Godhead escaped in the midst of such cruelty, to wither and to blast forever the wicked hands which sought Thy death? O wondrous love! which held Thy power in check, and kept Thee passive as a lamb beneath the wounds which drained Thy life away! O holiness! how dear wast thou to the heart of Jesus! Rather than see thy garments stained by sin, He gives His blood! O justice! how precious to the Lamb of God wast thou! Rather than thou shouldst waive thy righteous claims, unholy men shall nail His body to

the tree; and inch by inch He will die, and calmly, slowly, 'mid sweat, and wounds, and blood, and darkness, and agonies unutterable, and death, He will pay into thy hands the utmost which thy law demands. And thou, too, mercy! how closely to the heart of Jesus didst thou cleave, rather than part with thee; His heart shall bleed, that with the purple tide thy hand might lend a balm to heal the wounds of men."

26. And the superscription of his accusation was written over, **THE KING OF THE JEWS.**
 *Matt. xxvii. 37; John xix. 19; Luke xxiii. 38.

The superscription of his accusation. By the Romans, the title of the crimes for which criminals were condemned, were either carried before them, or affixed to the instrument of their punishment. There were three inscriptions, or rather one, with slight variations, in three languages: Hebrew, Greek and Latin. Matthew is supposed to have given the Hebrew; John the Greek; and Mark the Latin. It was written in Latin for the majesty of the Roman empire; in Greek for the information of the Hellenists, who used that, as indeed most of the Roman provinces did. Hebrew was the *vulgar language* of the place. Can this be the King of Israel, on the cross, dying the death of a malefactor? Is this "a king?" Retrace the ancient Levitical service, and behold in the sacred songs and prophetic language of the Old Testament, that which shall throw light upon the appalling scene. Light thy torch in the Psalms of David, in which thou hearest a great King complain and say, "They pierced my hands and my feet. They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink," and yet he remains a King. Listen to the prophet Isaiah, speaking of One who, though He was "wounded for our iniquities," yet "the government was upon his shoulder, and of his peaceful kingdom there shall be no end." Read the words of Zechariah, "Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow!" and hear the forerunner in the wilderness, exclaiming, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!"

27. And with him they crucify two thieves, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.
 *Matt. xxvii. 38; Luke xxiii. 33, on which see notes.

No men who ever lived *died* in such re-

markable circumstances as these two thieves. They were *crucified* with Christ. We know not whether they had ever seen Jesus before that morning, when they accompanied Him to Calvary, and were compelled to pass many hours close to His side. What a different use each made of this precious though painful opportunity! One asked merely to be released from the pangs of the cross. He thought not of *eternal* misery. But the other thief asked, *not* to be released from *present* suffering, but to be admitted into *eternal* life.

28. And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, ¶ And he was numbered with the transgressors. 29. And they that passed by rallied on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, 30. Save thyself, and come down from the cross. 31. Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save. 32. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.

¶ Isa. liii. 12. *Ps. xxii. 7. *John ii. 19. *Matt. xxvii. 41.

Numbered with the transgressors. (See Isa. liii. 12.) *Let Christ the King of Israel*, let the Messiah, *the king*, &c.—words uttered in derision.

¶ 33. And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land, until the ninth hour. 34. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, ¶ Eloi, Eloi, lama, sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? 35. And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias. 36. And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down. 37. ¶ And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

*Matt. xxvii. 45; Luke xxiii. 44. *Ps. xxii. 1; Matt. xxvii. 46. *Matt. xxvii. 48; John xix. 29. *Ps. lxix. 21. *Matt. xxvii. 50; John xix. 30.

There was darkness over the whole land. The anger of God, as avenging our sins on our Surety, was attested by this horror of darkness. Most commentators understand the expression as relating to Jerusalem and all the neighboring country. While the sun enlightened the rest of the earth, and even at the noon-day this one corner of the world, in which so horrible a crime was being perpetrated, was covered with the thickest darkness. The passover, at which time Christ was crucified, was at the full of the moon, when it is impossible for a natural eclipse of the sun to take place. *Eloi, Eloi*, &c. Consider how the mysterious complaint, which these words embody, is the very burden of the twenty-second Psalm, from which the words are quoted. (See verses nine and eleven of that Psalm.) It is, indeed, a complaint of perpetual recurrence in the book of

Psalms, as if this most terrible calamity of all, and perhaps the most mysterious of the sufferings of the Son of Man, had been constantly presented to the mind of the inspired Psalmist. (See Ps. x. 1, xxvii. 9, xxxv. 22, &c.) *And some of them that stood by, &c.* On examination, it will appear that all the insults endured by our Lord on the cross were during the first three hours. After this the multitude of the Jews sympathized with Him, they ran to assist Him, and expected Elias to minister to Him. May not this change of conduct have arisen from the awful darkness having awakened them to a degree of reflection? *Cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.*

"The things wonderfully observable in the death of our Saviour," says *Sir Matthew Hale*, "are many; first, that it was a voluntary delivering up of His spirit; this is that, He said. And truly this voluntary delivering up of His soul was well nigh as great an evidence of His divinity, as His resuming it again. (Eccl. viii. 8; John x. 18; Gal. ii. 20; Ti. ii. 14.)

³⁸ And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.—^bMatt. xxvii. 51.

There were two veils of the temple, one at the entrance into the holy place, the other between the holy place and the sanctuary, called "*the inner veil*," to distinguish it from a curtain which was hung at the entrance of the holy place. It is particularly described (Ex. xxvi. 31-3), and is the veil here intended. It was of the strongest contexture, the richest materials, and the finest workmanship. *Was rent in twain, &c.* With regard to the unbelieving Jews, this was a very melancholy event. Hitherto God had dwelt in the temple, within the Holy of Holies, over the ark of the covenant, and there manifested His presence in a peculiar manner. Hence this place was accounted so sacred, that no mortal eye was to look into it, and for this end, God had directed this thick veil to be made. But now, God having rent it Himself, thus, as it were, opened the door of the Holy of Holies, that every one might look into it. He thereby intended to signify, that, from a just indignation and displeasure against the wickedness of His people and their

priests, in putting the Lord of the temple to death, He would from that time leave this His dwelling (Matt. xxiii. 38), and profane His Sanctuary, by giving it up to the eyes and hands of unbelievers. But to the faithful this rending of the veil is a joyful type, representing that an entrance was then opened to them into the Sanctuary which is not made with hands. Hitherto the flesh of Jesus Christ, by the imputation of our sins to Him, had hung before it as a veil. But when this veil was rent at the separation of His soul and body by death, and Jesus Christ, the true High Priest, had Himself, with His own blood, entered into the holy place, *i. e.*, into heaven; the way to the throne of grace is cleared of all obstacles; heaven is laid open, and the covering which hung before the mysteries of the Levitical worship is removed. (Isa. xxv. 7.) The Church militant on earth, which was prefigured by the Sanctuary, and the Church triumphant in heaven, the antitype of the Holy of Holies, are now united with each other—the wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, namely, the ceremonial law, together with the whole Levitical economy, is thrown down. (Heb. x. 19-22.)

³⁹ ¶ And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

^cMatt. xxvii. 54; Luke xxiii. 47, on which see notes.

So cried out. This may refer either to the words themselves, spoken by our dying Lord, or to the "loud voice" with which He uttered them, for both attested His Divinity; both attested His innocence, in regard to that charge of blasphemy, for which He was condemned in the Jewish court. His addressing God twice on the cross as His Father (Luke xxiii. 34), shewed that He maintained to the last the justice of His claim to be "the Son of God;" and then the full-toned loudness of voice with which He cried out, gave evidence of being the Lord of life, having "life in Himself."

Truly this man was the Son of God. This testimony of the centurion was confirmed by that of the infidel *Rousseau*. "Where is the man," says he, "where the philosopher, who could so live and so die, without weakness and without ostentation? When Plato describes his imaginary good

man, loaded with all the punishments of guilt, yet meriting the highest rewards of virtue, he describes exactly the character of Jesus Christ; the resemblance was so striking, that all the Fathers perceived it. What prepossession, what blindness, must it be to compare the son of Sophroniscus to the Son of Mary! What an infinite disproportion there is between them! Socrates, dying without pain or ignominy, easily supported his character to the last, and if his death, however easy, had not crowned his life, it might have been doubted whether Socrates, with all his wisdom, was anything more than a mere sophist. He invented, it is said, the theory of morals. Others, however, had before put them in practice, he had only to say, therefore, what they had done, and to reduce their examples to precepts. Aristides had been just before Socrates defined justice; Leonidas had given up his life for his country before Socrates declared patriotism to be a duty; the Spartans were a sober people before Socrates recommended sobriety; before he had even defined virtue, Greece abounded in virtuous men. But where could Jesus learn, among his cotemporaries, that pure and sublime morality, of which He only hath given us both precept and example? The greatest wisdom was made known amongst the most bigoted fanaticism, and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues did honor to the vilest people on earth. The death of Socrates, peaceably philosophizing with his friends, appears the most agreeable that could be wished for; that of Jesus expiring in the midst of agonizing pains, abused, insulted, and accused by a whole nation, is the most horrible that could be feared. Socrates, in receiving the cup of poison, blessed, indeed, the weeping executioner who administered it, but Jesus, in the midst of excruciating tortures, prayed for His merciless tormentors." And hear his last words. "Yes," says this infidel, "if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God."

40. ^aThere were also women looking on *as far off*: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joseph, and of Salome; 41. Who also, when he was in Galilee, ^ffollowed him,

and ministered unto him; and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem. ^aMatt. xxvii. 55; Luke xxiii. 49. ^bPs. xxxviii. 11. ^cLuke viii. 2, 3.

The mother of Joseph, is probably the person whom John calls *Mary, the wife of Cleophas. Salome*. Probably the same as "the mother of Zebedee's children," in the parallel passage in Matt. xxvii. 56. *Looking on as far off*. The best defence against sin at any time is the remembrance of Christ's sufferings. Not only at the sacrament, but, wherever we are, this remembrance is an excellent shield in the day of battle. Art thou walking, art thou standing, art thou sitting, art thou going out, or coming in? Set a bleeding Saviour before thee. When "sinners entice thee," think of thy Saviour's wounds; when thou art tempted to overreach or defraud thy neighbor in any matter, think of the bitter cup thy Master drank off; when any lust, any vain desire rises in thy mind, think of thy dear Redeemer's groans; when thy flesh grows weary of a duty, remember who suffered on the cross; when thou art tempted to be indifferent in religion and faint in thy mind, look upon Him who made His soul an offering for sin, for thy sin; when thou art loth to overcome, think of Him who "by His death overcame him that had the power of death;" when impatient thoughts assault thy mind, think of "the Lamb, that before His shearers was dumb;" and, surely, under this sad scene, thou wilt not dare to sin. (1 Peter iv. 1, 2; Heb. xii. 1-4.)

42. ^fAnd now, when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, 43. Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.—^aMatt. xxvii. 57; Luke xxiii. 50. ^bLuke ii. 25, 33.

When the even was come. The Jews spoke of two evenings; the first was considered as commencing from the *ninth hour*, that is, in our reckoning, *three o'clock*, afternoon; the second, from the *twelfth hour* or *sunset*. It is probably the former of these that is meant here and in Matt. xxvii. 45, for at six the preparation ended and the Sabbath began, when they durst no longer be so employed. Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the council that had condemned Jesus, but had not consented to their unrighteous sentence. (Luke xxiii. 51.) He, like Nicodemus, who was also one of the sanhedrim, waited for the con-

solation of Israel. Both these honorable persons believed in Jesus, but had not yet openly confessed Him, from dread of the indignation of the Jewish rulers. They, however, acknowledged their attachment to Him at His death—they joined in honoring His burial. Nicodemus brought spices to embalm Him. (John xix. 38, 39.) Joseph went *boldly* to Pilate, with whom he was, no doubt, acquainted, and begged the body of Jesus, to protect it from further insults, and to bury it in a decent and honorable manner. Though he had nothing to fear from the Roman governor, he had everything to dread from his fellow-counselors. It was, therefore, a courageous act for this noble senator thus publicly to own his regard for Jesus in the midst of infamy.

44. And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling *unto him* the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. 45. And when he knew *it* of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. 46. And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen; and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre. 47. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus beheld where he was laid.

¹Matt. xxvii. 59, 60; John xix. 40, on which see notes.

If, or rather according to the meaning of the original word in some cases, *that he were already dead*. We have strong reason to think that this is the meaning here, from the question put to the centurion, whether he had been *any while*, not *already dead*. When he *knew*—that Jesus was really dead. *He gave*—the body of the crucified had been at the disposal of the judge. Therefore the body, which was to be kept free from corruption, was at the disposal of a heathen. Marvelous! Joseph would probably have paid for it a large sum.

And laid him in a sepulchre, &c. All that was done to Jesus was done to Him as a *public* person. He was the Surety for His people. He *died*, because *their* sins were imputed to *Him*. They shall never die, because *His* righteousness is imputed to them. What a glorious exchange! Who would have made such an exchange but the compassionate Son of God? Why should the believer fear to descend into the tomb, since Christ has taken away his guilt? In the prospect of death he may say, in the words of a Christian poet:

"The place where once *thy* body lay,
The place it did perfume,
There will I drop my breathless clay,
And rest within *thy* tomb."

"Jesus teaching at Nazareth, or preaching on the Mount of the Beatitudes, or even transfigured on Mount Tabor" says an eminent theologian, "will not suffice us. Christ crucified must be the object of our affections. Therefore ascend to Him on the spiritual ladder of sorrow for sin, longing for mercy and belief in the efficacy of His sufferings and death. Detach Him from the accursed tree, and deposit Him in your hearts, as your only consolation in life and death. That it is the real saving love to Jesus which burns within us, and not a mere caricature of it, may be best ascertained by its being first enkindled by the sight of Him, bleeding and dying on the cross, and then embracing Him as the ever-living One. He, on the contrary, who turns away from the dead Christ, and imagines that the living Christ, going about doing good, teaching, and setting an example, suffices him, miscalculates, and on the day of His coming, notwithstanding His greeting of 'Rabbi! Rabbi!' will hear from His lips the awful words, 'I know not whence thou art, I never knew thee.'" And Mary Magdalene, &c. The infinite wisdom of God foresaw the objection of unbelievers and infidels, and provided against them. Did the Son of God really die? Did He really rise again? Might there not have been some delusion as to the reality of His death? Might there not have been imposition or deception, as to the reality of His resurrection? All these, and many more objections, would doubtless have been raised, if opportunity had been given. But He who knows the end from the beginning, prevented the possibility of such objections being made. By His overruling Providence, He ordered things so that the death and burial of Jesus were placed beyond a doubt. Pilate gives consent to His burial. A loving disciple wraps the body in linen, and lays it in a new tomb hewn out of a rock, "wherein was never man yet laid." The chief priests themselves set a guard over the place where His body was deposited. Jews and Gentiles, friends and enemies, all alike testify to the great fact that Christ

did really and actually die, and was laid in a grave. It is a fact that can never be questioned. He was really "bruised." He really "suffered." He really "died." He was really "buried." Let us mark this well. It deserves recollection.

1. To whom was Jesus delivered by His enemies? 2. What did Pilate ask Him? 3. What effect had Christ's silence on Pilate? 4. What is said of Barabbas? 5. Why did Pilate release Barabbas? 6. What treatment did Jesus receive from the soldiers? 7. Who was compelled to bear His cross? 8. What occurred at Golgotha? 9. Who were crucified with Jesus? 10. How was He mocked on the cross? 11. What did He cry with a loud voice? 12. What followed? 13. What is said of the centurion? 14. What of the women? 15. What did Joseph of Arimathea do?

CHAPTER XVI.

1. *An angel declareth the resurrection of Christ to three women.* 9. *Christ himself appeareth to Mary Magdalene:* 12 *to two going into the country:* 14 *then to the apostles,* 15 *whom he sendeth forth to preach the gospel:* 19 *and ascendeth into heaven.*

AND when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

^aMatt. xxviii. 1, &c.; Luke xxiv. 1, &c.; John xx. 1, on which see notes. ^bLuke xxiii. 56.

The Sabbath. We are going to spend a Sabbath in eternity. The Christian will require as much of the Sabbath spirit (Rev. i. 10) as he can. And, in proportion to a man's real piety in every age of the Church, he will be found to have been a reverent observer of the Sabbath day. *Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome.* These three women had watched the Lord while hanging upon His cross, and now they come together to visit His tomb. Their attachment to Him united them to each other. Two of these women were mothers—the mothers of Apostles. Mary was the mother of James and Jude, the relations of the Lord, and Salome was the mother of James and John, two of His most favored friends. How was it that none of these four Apostles accompanied their mothers to the sepulchre? Why did they suffer weak women to go alone, while it was yet dark, to a place where they were exposed to the assaults of enemies? Surely these mothers exceeded their sons in love to their Lord. A woman was the first to eat the forbidden fruit. It was merciful in God to permit her to be the first to visit the sacred tomb.

2. ^cAnd very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.—^dLuke xxiv. 1; John xx. 1.

These women sought Christ in the first day of the week, and first hour of the day, but many defer to seek the Lord until the last week of their life, the last day of the week, the last hour of the day, the last minute of the hour. Let us awake from sin with David, early; rise with Samuel, early; with Abraham send away Hagar, early; with Christ and His audience come to the Church, early, and seek the Lord with these holy women, early. (John viii. 2; Ps. lvii. 9; 1 Sam. xv. 12; Gen. xxi. 14.)

3. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

The great difficulty which occurred to the minds of the women, and which formed their conversation by the way, was the removal of the stone from the door of the sepulchre, for it was very large. Doubtless they were convinced that if this were overcome all would be well, and they should find their Lord. They were equally mistaken in both these expectations. The stone was no impediment, for it was already removed, and yet they did not find the Saviour. How often, in passing through life, do the same results occur? We view from a distance difficulties which we never expect to overcome, some events that will be too much for our fortitude, some trial that will be too great for our faith, yet as the day of trouble approaches, the difficulty has subsided, or the provi-

dence of God has made it easy, or all that we feared to do is done for us, and the stone which the utmost efforts of our strength could not have stirred, some unseen hand has rolled away.

4. And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

When our Saviour came the third day out of His grave, it was done early in the morning; the stone was rolled away, and no noise was heard—all was transacted with a profound silence. The resurrection of Lazarus was preceded by "a loud voice." The Angel, at the Great Day, shall summon the dead with "the sound of a trumpet." Was it, then, because the Son of God would have His resurrection an article of our faith, and faith is of "things not seen?" It may be so; but, withal, He made it His business to conceal His own glory, and to honor and advance us. (1 Kings vi. 7; Josh. vi. 10.)

5. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

^aLuke xxiv. 3; John xxii. 11, 12.

Young man—a man in form, but an angel in nature. The resurrection of the dead, as the Apostle declares (Eph. iv.), will be "unto the fullness of the measure of the stature of Christ;" that is, in the season of *youth*, which needs no further development, and which is free from all defect, complete in every respect, having fullness of strength. (Rev. xxi. 4.) *Sitting on the right side*—at their right hand as they entered the inner chamber. *A long white garment*. The heavenly messenger was clad in robes of purity and splendor. *They were affrighted*, as was natural, at sight of so resplendent a personage.

6. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. 7. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. 8. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they anything to any man; for they were afraid.

^aMatt. xxviii. 5, 6, 7, on which see notes. ^bMatt. xxvi. 32; chap. xiv. 28. ^cSee Matt. xxviii. 8; Luke xxiv. 9.

Jesus of Nazareth. The Jews had given this name to Christ by way of reproach (Matt. ii. 23), but as it was under this name that He was crucified (John xix. 19), the angel here, and the Apostles after, have given him the same name. *He is risen*, &c. He is not, said the angel, where

they laid Him, where you left Him. Death hath lost its prey, and the grave has lost its prisoner. Observe, it is not said, He is not here, for He is raised; but, *He is risen*. The word imports the active power of Christ, or the self-quickening principle by which Christ raised Himself from the dead. (Acts i. 3.) It was the divine nature or Godhead of Christ, which raised the human nature from death to life. Others were raised from the grave by Christ's power, but He raised Himself by His own power. *Behold*—to prove to the women the certainty of Christ's resurrection, the angel appealed to their senses.

And Peter. How much of love and mercy was there in this mention of the Apostle who had thrice denied his Lord! and who may well be thought, at this very time, to have been swallowed up with sorrow—to have felt that he was "not meet to be called an Apostle." Jesus, who is "touched with our infirmities," has pardoned the weakness of His repentant servant, has still a commission to entrust him with, and will enable him to show, by a life of faithfulness, that the grace bestowed on him had not been bestowed in vain. Observe, that for his further comfort and assurance, to him was vouchsafed a special appearance of his risen Lord. (Luke xxiv. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 5.) *Before you into Galilee*. Mark records the angel's announcement of the appearance in Galilee; but concerning the appearance itself, he is silent. (See on Matt. xxviii. 7 and 16.)

Fled from the sepulchre. We may suppose that most probably the women did glance at the spot vacated by the risen Lord. The vacuity, and the consciousness of an angel's presence, filled them with awe. *Neither said they anything to any man*—that is, on their way they addressed no bystander, but hastened to fulfill the message of the angel to the disciples.

9. Now when Jesus was risen early, the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

^aJohn xx. 14. ^bLuke viii. 2; see on Matt. xxviii. 9.

Was risen early. We have no means of knowing the precise hour in which our Lord rose from the dead. It must have been long enough before the visit of the

women, to give time for the guard to recover from their swoon of terror, and leave for the city. *First day of the week—Sunday.* Hence this day of the week was called the Lord's day, by John, in Rev. i. 9. It is therefore recognized by inspiration as the sacred day in the Christian week. The day of the Saviour's sepulchral repose was the last of Jewish Sabbaths. The first day of the week has from that time to this, succeeded to the honors of the fourth commandment. To *Mary Magdalene.* (See verse 1.) "My soul," said *Austin*, "if thou at any time lose the presence of thy God, seek Him with diligence and perseverance; seek Him with prayers, and sighs, and tears, and be sure, at last, thou shalt find Him with joy. He hides not Himself that we may not find Him, but that we may seek Him, and be thereafter more fearful to lose Him. Despair not; He again will show Himself; only go on, and seek Him still with hope, and thou shalt be sure to find Him at last with joy. (Cant. ii. 14; Luke ii. 43-46.)"

10. ¹And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

²Luke xxiv. 10; John xx. 18.

Them that had been with him, i. e., His disciples. Mourned and wept. Because they had lost their Lord and Master, and had basely abandoned Him in His extremity. To Christ, the Incarnate God, our relations are wholly personal. He is not a notional abstraction, nor an idea of the mind enthroned in a logical vacuum. We are bound to Him by all our deepest, strongest, most personal feelings, by our personal consciousness of sin, by our personal need of redemption, by gratitude for personal forgiveness, by love, on account of love, shown directly, personally, to ourselves. (Gal. ii. 20; 2 Cor. v. 14; 1 Peter ii. 3, 7.)

11. And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

¹Luke xxiv. 11.

Believed not. They had not forgotten, nor did they truly disbelieve their Lord's predictions. But in their dejection of mind they had lost the realizing power and could not grasp the fact. (See on verse 13.)

12. ¹After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. 13. And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them.

²Luke xxiv. 13. ³Luke xvi. 31; John xx. 8, 25.

Neither believed they them. Lange accounts

for the doubts of the disciples in the following manner: The eleven disciples had undoubtedly learned by this time that Jesus had appeared unto Peter, whose testimony they could not reject. But now the two disciples returned from Emmaus with the news that He had appeared unto them on the way to Emmaus. Having no conception as yet of this new wonderful mode of Christ's existence—He appearing now here, now at another place—new doubts arise. Moreover, some of the eleven may have thought: Why should He have appeared unto the two disciples at Emmaus, earlier than unto us, His Apostles, at Jerusalem? They conceived, therefore, of His appearance as that of His spirit, and were affrighted when Jesus appeared in their midst, supposing that they saw a spirit (Luke xxiv. 37), so that the Lord has to convince them first of all of the reality of His body. *Their doubting* is the confirmation of *our faith*; and the more difficulty they showed in believing Christ's resurrection, the greater reason have we to believe it. For the testimony of those who believed not themselves, till after unquestionable conviction, is the more credible on that account.

14. ¹Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

²Luke xxiv. 36; 1 Cor. xv. 5.

Upbraided them, &c. It is humbling to think, that even after our Lord's resurrection, His disciples should have given Him occasion to upbraid them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, in not fully believing the evidence which they had of that glorious fact. These reproaches, however, were not His last words. He was too compassionate to leave His disciples with words of reproof. In the act of blessing those whom He had loved and kept so faithfully, He left the world. (See Luke xxiv. 50, 51.)

15. ¹And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

²Matt. xxviii. 19; John xv. 16. ³Col. i. 23.

Go ye, &c. The Apostles had received from the Lord the richest blessings. They had been great receivers of grace; they were, therefore, to be munificent givers. They had been saved themselves freely by His grace—He asks them to go forth and

prove themselves active benefactors to all the rest of mankind. No man receives a blessing to be absorbed in himself—God sanctions no monopoly in religion. All we have, we have as stewards, and what we have, we are commanded largely and liberally to devote to the glory of God, and to the good of all over whom we have any influence. No man liveth unto himself; every man, by being a Christian, becomes necessarily and everywhere a missionary. The commission thus given to the Apostles is substantially the same as that stated in Matt. xxviii. 19, on which see notes. It is altogether probable, that on more occasions than one, and in various forms of expression, Jesus especially enjoined on His Apostles their official duty. These words were, of course, also addressed to all preachers of the Word, who are, therein, successors to the Apostles.

All the world. Observe the largeness of the commission thus given. (See Matt. xviii. 19; Luke xxiv. 27; Acts i. 8.) These injunctions stand in remarkable contrast with the commission which the Twelve received from their Lord during the days of His earthly ministry. (Matt. x. 5, 6.) Clime and country, latitude and longitude, were no elements which they could regard. Wherever there was an ear to hear, there was a claim upon their beneficence, and a call to discharge their duties. Hitherto the Jews alone enjoyed the Gospel; now, that which was a lamp to a land was to be hung up like the sun in the sky—the light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel.

Preach the gospel. Proclaim the glad news of salvation through Christ. The preacher and the preaching are divine institutions. They are established by Christ, and shall last till the world shall end. All other moral means of converting the world to righteousness—the press, the Sabbath-school, the voluntary societies, social prayer meetings, &c., are auxiliary to the preacher and the preaching of the Word.

To every creature, literally, to the whole creation. No one was to be overlooked. To all of every age and nation, pardon for sin was to be offered, on condition of their repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. By these words the missionary office is bound

upon the Church through all ages, till every part of the earth shall have been evangelized.

16. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; *but he that believeth not shall be damned.
*John iii. 18, 36; Acts ii. 38, xvi. 30; Rom. x. 9, 1 Peter iii. 21. *John xii. 48.

Believeth and is baptized. Baptism is here put for the external signature of the inner faith of the heart, just as “confessing with the mouth” is, in Rom. x. 10; and there also as here this *outward* manifestation, as the proper fruit of faith, is not repeated in what follows. (Rom. x. 11.) In view of this declaration of our Lord, how can men avoid the conclusion that baptism is necessary, when it may be had? That outward baptism, which seems to be here intended, is not absolutely necessary to salvation, the case of the penitent thief plainly shows. He went to Paradise unbaptized. That outward baptism alone often confers no benefit, the case of Simon Magus plainly shows. Although baptized, he remained in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity.” (Acts iii. 23.) But that baptism is a matter of entire indifference, and need not be used at all, is an assertion which is evidently at variance with our Lord’s words in this place. “Baptism,” says *Scott*, “is the outward sign of regeneration; and it is also that profession of faith in Christ, which is required of all who embrace Christianity. (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Acts ii. 37–40; Rom. x. 5–11; 1 Peter iii. 21, 22.) But if men truly believe in Christ—profess openly faith in Him, and partake of His sanctifying Spirit, they will doubtless be saved, even should they have no opportunity of being baptized with water, or should they fall into any mistake, about the external mode of administering that ordinance; and if men both believe and are baptized, it does not follow, from the order of the words in the text, that the *baptism* is invalid, because it was previous to *believing*, for no sect of Christians rebaptize those who have been baptized in their own way, because it afterward appears that they were not true believers at the time, though it be hoped that they have since become so.”

But he that believeth not, &c. This has reference to those who hear the preached

Gospel. All others are to be judged in accordance with the principle laid down in Rom. ii. 12. The belief here required as essential to salvation, has special reference to Christ as the Saviour and Redeemer of men, but embraces all the declarations of God's Word, which lie around this great central truth, such as human depravity, the extent and spirituality of the Divine law, the need of regeneration through the Spirit, the retributions of eternity, and the like.

Saved damned. These awful issues of the reception or rejection of the Gospel, though often recorded in other connections, are given in this connection only by Mark, as also the "signs" enumerated in verse 18. Those who believe the Gospel, and give themselves to Christ, and to God in Christ as their God in covenant, and evidence by their adherence to this covenant their sincerity, shall be saved from the guilt and power of sin, it shall not *rule* nor *ruin* them. Those who do not this, cannot expect any other way of salvation, but must perish; they *shall be damned*, by the sentence of a despised Gospel added to that of a broken law. Eternal damnation is manifestly intended. (See Matt. xxv. 45, 46; 2 Thess. i. 5-10; Rev. xx. 11-15.) The two damning sins under the Gospel are unbelief and hypocrisy, not receiving Christ for their Lord and Saviour by some, or doing this feignedly by others. Happy are they in whom the preaching of the Gospel produces such a faith as is the parent and principle of obedience.

17. And these signs shall follow them that believe: 'In my name shall they cast out devils; *they shall speak with new tongues; 18. *They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; †they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

*Luke x. 17; Acts v. 16, viii. 7, xvi. 18, x̄v. 12. †Acts ii. 4, x. 46, xix. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 10, 28. *Luke x. 19; Acts xxviii. 5. †Acts v. 15, 16, ix. 17, xxviii. 8; James v. 14, 15.

These signs shall follow, &c. (See Acts x. 46, xix. 6; Luke x. 19; comp. Acts xxviii. 5; 1 Cor. xii. 9; James v. 14, 15.) What was obviously meant was, that these signs should follow the first promulgators of the Gospel, till Christianity was clearly vindicated, by unequivocal proofs to be from God, and having done the great work for which they were intended, these signs and miracles should cease and be withdrawn.

Some insist that there ought to be miracles in the Church now. But it should be remembered that a ceaseless miracle would be a ceaseless contradiction. The miracle now is, that the grass should grow, that the trees should bud, and that the flowers should blossom in summer, but if winter were to be the season for flowers, and fruit, and corn, and summer to be the season of snow, and frost, and hail, then the continuance of this would make it cease to be a miracle. If anybody by speaking a word could cure a withered hand, unloose the tongue of the dumb, unstop the ears of the deaf, or open the eyes of the blind, it would cease to be a miracle, for the continuance of such a phenomenon would make it cease to be wonderful at all. A ceaseless miracle, therefore, is no miracle at all, and to assume that there shall be miracles always, or constant contradictions to the ordinary laws of nature, would be to suppose what would bring all things into confusion, and cease to subserve, because ceasing to be miraculous, the great ends for which miracles were intended. But at the beginning of a new dispensation a miracle was important.

To the question, "Do *no* such signs as those here spoken of follow them that believe?" one replies: "Let us be well persuaded that the mighty works under discussion are daily enacted by the faithful—surely although invisibly, and indeed, after a very lofty fashion also. Evil inclinations overcome, and wicked imaginations effectually repressed; a divine theme (the language of heaven) constantly engaging 'the best members that we have,' intercourse with sinners, and familiarity with a sinful world, yet no harm incurred; with the eye polluting sights encountered, by the ear noxious discourse drinking, yet (by God's mercy) without defilement; ministrations to sick souls, and their consequent recovery—what are all these glorious privileges of Christian men but daily fulfillments of the Divine promise concerning what 'signs' should 'follow them that believe?'"

And if they drink any deadly thing, &c. The art of poisoning was almost cultivated as a science, and it might be expected that their enemies would endeavor in this way

to destroy them. By these particulars, doubtless, the Saviour conveys a *general promise*, pledging to His disciples, amidst the trials and dangers of their mission, the *protection* of that *Almighty One*, by whom "the hairs of their head were all numbered," and without whom "not a sparrow falleth to the ground."

19. So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

*Acts i. 2, 3. *Luke xxiv. 51. *Ps. cx. 1; Acts vii. 55.

After the Lord had spoken unto them. The Evangelist does not mean to say that our Lord ascended to heaven immediately after He had spoken the words recorded from verse 14; he evidently sums up, in a brief manner, the Lord's last instructions. *He was received up into heaven.* The account of the ascension is in every point to be supplemented by that of Luke, with whom Mark stands in no contradiction. Although Matthew and John give no account of our Lord's ascension, the fact is clearly indicated by them. The declaration of the Saviour, recorded at the close of Matthew's Gospel, that all power in heaven and on earth is given unto Him, necessarily implies that He was going to ascend to heaven and seat Himself at the right hand of His Heavenly Father. In John's Gospel we read that the Saviour says to Mary of Magdala, after His resurrection, that He would ascend unto His Father. His ascension is also foretold in John vi. 62, where the Saviour says that the Son of Man would go up again where He had been before. The fact of the ascension is, likewise, testified by the Apostle Peter. (1 Peter iii. 22; Acts. ii. 33, v. 31.) Equally pointed and distinct are the words of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (ix. 24; x. 12). Another witness is the Apostle Paul. His conversion was founded on the appearance of the glorified Christ from heaven. Add to this what the Apostle says in various passages. (Eph. ii. 6; iv. 8, Phil. ii. 6-10; 1 Tim. iii. 16.) The ascension of our Lord is, indeed, necessarily involved in His resurrection, for the latter was a return, not to His former state of existence on earth, but to the glory which He had with the Father before His incarnation.

And sat on the right hand of God. An

account, resting partly upon the direct vision of the disciples (Acts i. 19), partly upon a revelation (Acts i. 11), partly upon the words of Christ (John. xiv. 3), and upon the lively inference of faith, especially from the events occurring at Pentecost. (Acts ii. 33.) The fact is itself, on the one hand, local, that is, the being seated upon that throne of glory where the self-revelations of God take place, and in the midst of that majesty whence the manifestations of His power proceed; and, upon the other hand, is symbolic of Christ's royal dominion. (Phil. ii. 10.)

20. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

*Acts v. 12; 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5; Heb. ii. 4.

Went forth. They no longer sat and mourned and wept (verse 10). They were like heroes, and quitted themselves like men. They were afraid of no danger, and braved all deaths. Such was the Pentecostal power with which they were endued from on high. *Preached everywhere.* The book of the Acts of the Apostles furnishes the illustration of this verse. It is the concurrent testimony of the early writers of the Church, that the Apostles (including Paul, who was added to their number), and their fellow-laborers, preached the Gospel throughout the habitable world, at least that portion of it which was then known and accessible.

The Lord—the Lord Jesus. This Divine title is applied to Jesus by Mark himself, in this and the preceding verses only. It is a most important link of connection with the Acts of the Apostles, where He who directed all the movements of the infant Church, is perpetually styled "THE LORD," thus illustrating His own promise for the founding and building up of the Church, "Lo, I am with you alway."

The Lord working with them—through them as instruments. This points at the inward operation of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of men. It is sweet and prosperous, working in fellowship with Christ and His Holy Spirit. He directs His ministers, assists them, guides their lips, influences their minds, quickens their affections, sets home their instructions, and crowns all their endeavors with His blessing.

And confirmed the word, &c. This confirmation resulted partly from the miracles, which were wrought upon the *bodies* of people, which were divine seals to the Christian doctrine, and partly from the influence it had upon the *minds* of the people, through the operation of the Spirit of God. (See Heb. ii. 4.) These were properly *signs following* the Word—the reformation of the world, the destruction of idolatry, the conversion of sinners, the com-

fort of saints, and these signs still follow it.

Amen. Each of the Evangelists, in turn, concludes his Gospel with a word, solemnly asserting the living truth of the inspired record, a word of devout affirmation, which, as it were, sets the seal of the Spirit on every syllable that has gone before, and which declares the Evangelist to be—like “the AMEN” of whom he writes—a “faithful and true witness.”

1. Who came very early in the morning to the sepulchre? 2. On what day did they come? 3. For what purpose? 4. What did they say? 5. What did they see? 6. What was said to them as they entered into the sepulchre? 7. What did they then do? 8. To whom did the risen Saviour appear first? 9. What course did she pursue? 10. When did Christ again appear? 11. When did He appear unto the eleven? 12. What command did He give them? 13. What did He promise them? 14. What took place after Jesus had spoken to them? 15. Explain the word “*Amen*.”

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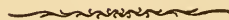
THE GOSPELS AND ACTS,

FOR

PULPIT, SUNDAY-SCHOOL, AND FAMILY.

JOHN.

ALFRED NEVIN, L.B., D.D.



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PREFACE

TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

PERSONAL HISTORY.

John, the younger brother of James, who with him was called to the Apostleship, was the son of Zebedee and of Salome. His father was a fisherman, living at Bethsaida, in Galilee, on the borders of the lake of Gennesaret. The family appear to have been in easy circumstances, at least we find that Zebedee employed hired servants (Mark i. 20), and that Salome was among the women who contributed to the maintenance of Jesus. (Matt. xxvii. 56.)

John was probably one of those disciples of the Baptist who, hearing his remarkable testimony to Jesus, followed the new teacher to his residence, and abode with him the rest of the day. (i. 35-39.) Then was made on the mind of the susceptible son of Zebedee an impression never to be effaced. He doubtless accompanied Jesus to Galilee, and was one of the party present at the marriage at Cana. (ii. 2.) And when Jesus again visited Judea, the little band who had attached themselves to Him attended His steps, and passed with Him on His return in the way from Jerusalem through Samaria. (iv. 3, 4.) It is difficult to trace chronologically the course of events; but most probably when, after His Judean ministry, our Lord was again in Galilee, rejected at Nazareth and removing to Capernaum, John and his brother, like Peter and Andrew, resumed their ordinary occupation. And it was when so engaged that they received the special call (Matt. iv. 18-22; Mark i. 16-20; Luke v. 1-11), to be continually with Jesus, which was supplemented by their appointment as Apostles. (Matt. x. 2; Mark iii. 16, 17; Luke vi. 13, 14.) Afterward, we find John one of the especially-favored three who witnessed the Lord's shining glory and His agonizing grief, and before whom, apart from the rest, His most wonderful works were performed. (Matt. xvii. 1-9, xxvi. 36-45; Mark v. 35-43, ix. 2-10, xiv. 32-42; Luke viii. 49-56, ix. 28-36.) John it was who was sent with Peter to prepare the last supper (xxii. 8), and John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, reclined next Him at the meal, and at Peter's hasty nod put the question, most likely in a whisper, "Lord, who is it that shall betray thee?" (John xiii. 23-26.)

NATURAL TEMPERAMENT.

In regard to the natural temperament of John, it is quite evident that he was bold, ardent, impetuous, one who scorned falsehood and hypocrisy, and was ever ready to give expression to his sentiments in the most simple and straightforward terms. It was probably these characteristics which formed the basis of his friendship and intimacy with Peter. Kindred spirits they were, although in moral heroism, especially during the earlier days of their Apostleship, John was greatly the superior of his friend. We see no evidence which Tholuck and some others find, that John's dispo-

sition and turn was of a feminine cast. On the very contrary, while he possessed an open, frank, loving disposition, it was evidently connected with all that was bold, energetic and man-like. It is thought by some expositors, that the epithet *Boanerges, sons of thunder*, was bestowed upon John and James on account of their impetuous spirit, although not without reason others interpret it as predictive of their bold and powerful style of preaching. John's sincerity and frankness, which permitted no concealment of his opinions, or compromise with any form of error, is abundantly manifested in his writings, especially in his epistles. Every portion of them is pervaded by his tender and loving spirit, and yet for plain, direct, out-spoken, burning denunciation against those who would seek to depreciate the glory of his Lord and turn away believers from the truth, they have no parallel in all God's Word, not even in the most denunciatory of the prophetic writings. On the one hand John proclaims with startling severity the claims of doctrinal truth, and the duties of the teacher; on the other, he stands out in the majesty of a sacred office, clothed in something of the dress of the old theocracy. The two views involve no contradiction, but rather exhibit the wide range of that divine love which cherishes every element of truth with the most watchful care, because it is of infinite moment for the well-being of men.

We cannot prevail on ourselves to omit the following interesting anecdote which has been so often told, but which never loses its freshness: "When John was far advanced in age he was too feeble to walk to the meetings. He suffered himself then to be carried in by his disciples. Being unable to speak much, he continually repeated the words, 'Little children, love one another.' And when he was asked why he always repeated these words alone, he replied, 'Because such is the commandment of the Lord, and because it is sufficient, if this is done.'"

As John followed Christ to judgment and death, he received from the cross the charge to receive the mother of the Lord as her own son. (John xix. 27.) After the ascension he remained at Jerusalem with the other Apostles. He was with Peter at the working of his first miracle, and afterward he went with him to Samaria. (Acts i. 13, viii. 14.) At the time of Paul's first visit to Jerusalem John was absent from the city, but on a later occasion Paul describes him as one of "the pillars of the Church." (Gal. i. 18, ii. 9.) At what time, and under what circumstances, he left Jerusalem is wholly unknown; but tradition is unanimous in placing the scene of his after-labors at Ephesus. His residence there must have taken place after Paul's departure, but this is all that can be affirmed with certainty. It is generally agreed that he was banished to Patmos during his stay at Ephesus, but the time of his exile is very variously given. The legend of his sufferings at Rome, which was soon embellished and widely circulated, is quite untrustworthy, and the details of his death at Ephesus are equally fabulous, though it is allowed on all hands that he lived to extreme old age.

GENUINENESS AND AUTHENTICITY.

Some attempts, says an eminent scholar, have been made by modern critics to prove that this work was not from the pen of the Apostle John. They have chosen to suppose that there was an irreconcilable difference between the Gentile and the Jewish types of Christianity, represented by Paul and Peter respectively; and certain books of the New Testament they think were written to bridge over this difference. The fourth Gospel they consider one of them; and they have invented in their wisdom the hypothesis that, about the middle of the second century, a Gentile Christian composed it under the name of the Apostle, to recommend love as higher than faith and to show how the Jewish system was fulfilled in Christ, the true paschal lamb. The Church, according to their notion, was easily deceived, and hailed the production as the genuine work of John. But surely most men will think that it is the critics who are credulous and easily deceived. For, to glance at the external evidence, not only have we the testimony of Jerome and Eusebius in the fourth century after Christ, but in the beginning of the third and end of the second we find

the leading writers in various parts of the Christian world recording their belief of the authenticity of John's Gospel. Of these Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria and Irenæus may be specified. The last named writer, in whose lifetime the forgery, if real, must have been committed, was acquainted with the state of the Church in the east and the west; he had known Polycarp, John's disciple, and may therefore be taken as a most competent witness. Now he declares that in his time the fourth Gospel was universally received, and has an argument about the four Gospels—just so many and no more—being the necessary pillars of the truth. How is this compatible with the theory that the work had just been fraudulently concocted? There are yet earlier testimonies. Justin Martyr, born in John's lifetime (about 89 A. D.), quotes this Gospel. Further, it is found in the Peshito-Syriac version and in the Muratorian canon; and additional proof may be obtained even from the early heretics. More it is impossible to say on this part of the question here; but it may fairly be asked, "if it was possible for a history of Christ, falsely pretending to be from the pen of the Apostle John, to be brought forward twenty, thirty, or forty years after his death, be introduced into all the Churches east and west, taking its place everywhere in the public services of the Sabbath? Was there no one to ask where this new Gospel came from, and where it had lain concealed? Was there no one of the many who had personally known John to expose the gigantic imposture, or even to raise a note of surprise at the unexpected appearance of so important a document of which they had never heard before? How was the populous Church at Ephesus brought to accept this work on the very spot where John had lived and died?"

We may reasonably conclude from a consideration of the external evidence that fraud was a moral impossibility. This conclusion is strengthened by a view of the internal evidence. For there are repeatedly assertions made that John was the author (John xix. 35, xxi. 24), and, even if we admit, as has been imagined, that the last chapter is a later appendix, the testimony is not thereby weakened. There is also the graphic minuteness of detail, with the many touches clearly indicative of an eye-witness, of which xiii. 22 may be taken as an example. The structure of this Gospel, too, is far different from what we should suppose a forger would have devised. The variations from the other Gospels bespeak an independent witness: a forger would have servilely followed them; and the wonderful discourses recorded of our Lord, the loftiness of His character portrayed, the emphatic maintaining of His Deity, are all such as the beloved disciple, looking back under the light of Christ's glorification to the days and months of his familiar earthly converse with Him, may well be supposed to have most diligently pondered, and to have been most anxious to record for the Church's guidance and consolation; while a forger would have been utterly incompetent for such a delineation, and his attempt would have proved a glaring failure. Indeed, looking only at this book as a composition, and discovering the Master's hand that penned it, we may well ask, if John was not the author, who was that greater than John who has produced such a marvelous work, and yet has left no name or trace of his existence? Besides, from its tone and character it is incredible that it should have been composed in the second century. Let any one who doubts this read along with it the apostolic and immediately-succeeding fathers, and see the mighty difference between them and this writer.

Renan, in what he designates the *Vie de Jesus*, but what has been more fitly called "The Romance of the Life of Jesus," alleges that there are in the Gospel of John certain indications of a metaphysical turn of thinking, savoring of the Gnostic spirit of speculation, which cannot be regarded as natural to a fisherman of Galilee, or likely to have found expression in his writings. To this it is sufficient to reply that John had long been residing at Ephesus, where the Gnostic tendency began early to show itself, that while there he could not but be familiar with its workings, that nothing was more likely, *à priori*, than that he should, incidentally, as it were, pronounce his judgment upon them, and that unless we take it for granted that there is no such

thing as the inspiration from above, we can consider nothing more likely than that, in treating of the loftiest themes, his language should rise fully to the occasion.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THIS AND THE THREE EARLIER GOSPELS.

The first three Evangelists, until they come to the final journey to Jerusalem, narrate only what occurred in Galilee, whereas John's narrative, to the extent of six-sevenths of its space, has Jerusalem for its scene. Again, the three Galilean Gospels (as we may call them) have many miracles, many parables in common; told sometimes in almost identical words, as though they had derived their narrative from the often-repeated oral teaching of the self-same eye-witnesses (and this may well be the explanation). John, on the contrary, relates no parables, and has but one miracle in common with the rest. Again, the three relate chiefly our Lord's popular discourses concerning His kingdom; John for the most part His conversations with the Apostles or controversies with the Jews about His own Person and Mission. But the difference in style is still more striking. The three write a plain narrative, making no comment, never speaking in their own person (except in Luke's brief preface); John writes authoritatively, theologically, enforcing his own explanation of the facts which he relates.

These contrasts, which so widely separate the fourth Gospel from the rest, are at once explained by the fact which the early Church traditions unanimously affirm, that John wrote thirty years later than the rest, for a generation of men who had grown up in the Christian faith, and been familiar from childhood with that more popular cycle of Apostolic teaching which the three earlier Evangelists had embodied in their Gospels.

DESIGN OF THIS GOSPEL.

The object which this Evangelist had in view is very clearly stated in chapters i. 1-18 and xx. 31. His design appears to have been to convey to the world just and adequate notions of the real nature, office and character of the Divine Redeemer. For this purpose are especially recorded those passages of our Saviour's life which most clearly displayed His Divine power and authority, and those discourses in which He spoke most plainly of His own nature, of the work given to Him by the Father, and the efficacy of His death as an atonement for the sins of the world. And it is from this Gospel that the most numerous and decisive proofs of our Lord's deity are derived. Yet no Evangelist has portrayed the softer lineaments of our Lord's humanity with more delicacy and beauty, or disclosed more of the inmost affections and feelings of the Saviour's heart.

It is an old and still prevalent opinion that John wrote his Gospel to supply the omissions of the other three, but no such impression is conveyed by the Gospel itself, which is as far as possible from having the appearance of a mere series of supplemental notes to previously existing writings. Indeed, if this had been the Apostle's purpose, it cannot be said that he has in any adequate way fulfilled it. Nor is there any ground for believing that it was a *polemical* object which chiefly prompted him to write this Gospel, though such has often been suggested. Thus *Irenæus* says that the Gospel was written against the errors of Cerinthus. *Jerome* adds, the Ebionites, and later writers have maintained that the Gnostics or the Doketæ are the parties against whom the polemic of the Apostle is here directed. All this, however, is mere supposition, for which there is no real basis. Doubtless in what John has written there is that which furnishes a full refutation of all Ebionite, Gnostic and Doketic heresy, but that to confute these was the *design* of the Apostle, as these writers affirm, cannot be proven. At the same time, though he may have had no intention of formally confuting any existing heresy, it is more than probable that he was stimulated to seek, by means of this record, to counteract certain tendencies which he saw rising in the Church, and by which the followers of Christ might be seduced from that simple faith in Him by which alone the true life could be enjoyed. Still this must be

regarded, at the utmost, as furnishing only the occasion, not the design, of his writing.

Two-thirds of this Gospel are new, the most important additions being in chapters xiii., xvii. and xi. Regarding the twenty-first chapter as a sort of a postscript to the whole, but a postscript from the Apostle's own pen, it winds up the narrative of the thrilling events it records with some interesting and important notices. The last time when Peter and his associates were engaged in their old employment of fishermen, the Lord making what was nearly the last of His interviews with them so nearly resembling what had occurred in one of His earliest, the ardent love of Peter, the thrice-repeated tender questioning and thrice-repeated charge to feed the flock, the semi-prophetic hints as regards John himself and half-implicit reproof of the curiosity of Peter, these form the touching postscript to this most interesting of all the Gospels.

PLACE AND TIME AT WHICH IT WAS WRITTEN.

Ephesus and Patmos are the two places mentioned by early writers; and the weight of evidence seems to preponderate in favor of Ephesus. The Apostle's sojourn at Ephesus probably began after Paul's Epistles to Timothy were written, *i. e.*, after A. D. 66. Eusebius specifies the fourteenth year of Domitian, *i. e.*, A. D. 95, as the year of the banishment to Patmos. Probably the date of the Gospel may lie about midway between these two, about A. D. 78. But some place it after the Apocalypse.

LANGUAGE IN WHICH IT WAS WRITTEN.

It is the unanimous testimony of tradition that this Gospel was written in Greek, for Gentile readers. Although it abounds in Hebraisms, yet it approaches nearer to classic Greek than any of the other Gospels. This shows that John must have lived in Asia Minor some time before its composition. Unfavorable criticisms have been made upon his frequent employment of the Greek connectives for *but* and *then*. But a careful examination will show that these particles are in hardly a single instance needlessly or incorrectly used. His short and pithy sentences enabled him to dispense with the use of many connectives, which in writings like those of Paul would be found in great abundance. The frequent use of the slightly adversative *but* was the natural result of his emphatic, energetic style, which abounds in antitheses, sudden turns of thought, rapid and unexpected transitions, and the introduction of new points and aspects of the subject under discussion. As to the employment of the Greek prepositions, I know of no writer, not purely Hellenistic, who uses them with more discrimination and effect than John. On the whole we think that none of the New Testament writers approached nearer to classic Greek, than did John.

The language of John (as has been well observed) presents peculiarities, both in words and constructions, which mutually illustrate one another. In both an extreme simplicity and an apparent sameness cover a depth of meaning, which upon a nearer view is felt to be inexhaustible. The simplicity springs from the contemplation of Christianity in its most fundamental relations, the sameness from the distinct regard of the subject in each separate light, by which every step in the narrative is, as it were, isolated, instead of being merged in one complex whole.

The introduction to the Gospel furnishes the most complete illustration of its characteristic vocabulary. "The Word," "the Life," "the Light," "the Darkness," "the Truth," "the World," "Glory," "Grace," are terms which at once place the reader beyond the scene of a limited, earthly conflict, and raise his thoughts to the unseen and the eternal. The conflict of good and evil is presented in an image which conveys in final distinctness the idea of absolute antagonism. The Incarnation itself is regarded as the great climax of the revelations of Him in whom all things "were," and by whom all things "became."

STYLE.

The simplicity, the directness, the particularity of the emphasis of John's style, give his writings a marvelous power, which is not, perhaps, felt at first. Yet his words seem to hang about the reader till he is forced to remember them. Each great truth

sounds like the burden of a strain, ever falling upon the ear with a calm persistency which secures attention. And apart from forms of expression with which all are early familiarized, there is no book in the Bible which has furnished so many figures of the Person and Work of Christ which have passed into the common use of Christians, as the Gospel of John. "I am the head of life," "I am the light of the world," "I am the good Shepherd," "I am the vine," are words which have guided the thoughts of believers from the first ages.

"The style and spirit of John's writings," says *Dr. Whedon*, "possess peculiarities differencing them from any other specimens in all literature, sacred or profane. There is a *sameness* which pervades his Gospel, Epistles and Apocalypse, yet a *difference* in each from the other. The most remarkable phenomenon in his Gospel is, that whether Jesus, the Baptist, or our John himself, is speaker, the style is *remarkably the same*. Hence it has been boldly inferred that John is the real and sole author of the discourses he puts in the mouth of both. There is also a round of terms, most of which occur indeed in the other Scriptures, but are of very emphatic and frequent use in his Gospel. Such terms are, *light, life, testimony, glorify, only-begotten*. The solution of these facts may appear from the following considerations:

"The character and style of the Lord Jesus Himself were, as we may say, many-sided. He had many different styles and strains of discourse. With one of these styles of thought and spirit the spirit of John was deeply in unison. Discourses of that strain were so congenial to his temperament as to fill his heart, and indelibly impress his memory; to model his mind, and to form his vocabulary and style. That class of discourses he selects for his Gospel. So in a far lower degree we have often seen some eminent preacher stamp his own style upon a whole train of pupils. But never was this impression so powerfully imparted as in this supreme instance. The impress of the Lord's style of discourse reigns through all that John in his Gospel writes. Glimpses, however, of the same spirit appear in the other Gospels. But so entirely is John's style formed by his Master's influence, that when he proceeds to give the general substance of the Baptist's testimony, in a free version, the style is eminently both John-like and Jesus-like. That style appears in all its deepest intensity in the discourses of Jesus; and yet we are obliged to believe that of those divine discourses the pen of John vainly struggles to give the full, deep, continuous flow. They are but *spirited indications* of what the Lord really and fully discoursed; giving us conceptions that they shadowed truths higher than we can fully conceive. But from these discourses, as sources, the same spirit breathes through the whole Gospel: mostly in the Baptist's testimony; less in John's own narrative style; and least of all in the dialogue, where it sometimes nearly disappears. The dialogues are eminently dramatic, natural, and strikingly characteristic of the particular speakers. The conclusion is, not that John makes Jesus talk in his own style, but that Jesus has breathed a style into the entirety of John."

OPINIONS OF CLAUDIUS AND THOLUCK.

The following remarks of *Claudius*, cited by *Tholuck* (Introduction p. 22), are so beautiful and apposite, that I take pleasure in making a full quotation of his words: "I love best of all to read in St. John. There is in him something so perfectly wonderful—dusk and night, and the quick lightning throbbing through them. The soft clouds of evening, and behind the mass the big, full moon bodily!—something so sad, so high, so full of presage, that one can never weary of it. When I read John, it always seems to me that I see him before me, reclining at the Last Supper on the bosom of his Lord, as if his angel held the light for me, and at certain parts would place his arm around me and whisper something in my ear. I am far from understanding all I read, yet often John's idea seems to hover before me in the distance; and even when I look into a place that is entirely dark, I have a presension of a great and glorious sense, which I shall some day understand, and hence I catch

so eagerly at every new exposition of the Gospel of John. 'Tis true, most of them only ruffle the evening clouds, and never trouble the moon behind them." In the same spirit *Tholuck* himself remarks of this wondrous Gospel: "The noble simplicity on the one side, on the other the hovering nature and the dim mystery of the narration, the tone of grief and longing, with the light of love shedding its tremulous beam on the whole, these impart to the Gospel a charm, a peculiar originality to which, out of the writings of John, no parallel can be found." (See notes on John xxi. 24.)

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- 19-28. John the Baptist's humility—the blindness of the unconverted Jews.
- 29-34. Christ the Lamb of God—Christ the taker away of sin—Christ He that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.
- 35-42. The good done by testifying of Christ—the good believers may do to others.
- 43-51. Souls led by various ways—Christ in the Old Testament Scriptures—Philip's advice to Nathanael—High character of Nathanael.
- II. 1-11. Matrimony an honorable estate—the lawfulness of mirth and rejoicing—Christ's almighty power.
- 12-25. Irreverent use of holy places rebuked—words of Christ long remembered—Christ's perfect knowledge of man's heart.
- III. 1-8. The beginnings of some Christians very feeble—the necessity of the new birth—the Spirit's operation like the wind.
- 9-21. Spiritual ignorance—God's love the source of salvation—Christ's death the means of providing salvation—faith the instrument which makes salvation ours.
- 22-36. Jealousy and party-spirit—true humility—Christ's dignity set forth—salvation a present thing.
- IV. 1-6. Baptism, and its true position—our Lord's human nature.
- 7-26. Christ's tact and condescension—Christ's readiness to give—the excellence of Christ's gifts—the necessity of conviction of sin—the uselessness of formal religion—Christ's kindness to great sinners.
- 27-30. Christ's dealings marvelous—grace an absorbing principle—true converts zealous to do good.
- 31-42. Christ's zeal to do good—encouragement to those who labor for Christ—men led to Christ in various ways.
- 43-54. The rich have afflictions—the young may be sick and die—affliction a blessing—Christ's word as good as His presence.

- V. 1-15. The misery caused by sin—the compassion of Christ—the lessons that recovery should teach.
 16-23. Some works lawful on the Sabbath—the dignity and majesty of Christ.
 24-29. Hearing Christ the way to salvation—the privileges of true believers—Christ's power to give life—the final resurrection of all the dead.
 30-39. The honor Christ puts on His servants—the honor Christ puts on miracles—the honor Christ puts on the Scriptures.
 40-47. The reason why many are lost—one principal cause of unbelief—Christ's testimony to Moses.
- VI. 1-14. Christ's almighty power—the office of ministers—the sufficiency of the Gospel for all mankind.
 15-21. Christ's humility—the trials of Christ's disciples—Christ's power over the waters.
 22-27. Christ's knowledge of man's heart—what Christ forbids—what Christ advises—what Christ promises.
 28-34. The ignorance of natural man—the honor Christ puts on faith—the high privileges of Christ's hearers over those of the Jews in the wilderness.
 35-40. Christ the bread of life—none cast out—the Father's will about all who come to Christ.
 41-51. Christ's lowly condition an offense to some—man's natural impotence—salvation a present thing.
 52-59. The true meaning of eating Christ's body and drinking Christ's blood.
 60-65. Some of Christ's sayings hard—danger of putting carnal meanings on spiritual words—Christ's perfect knowledge of hearts.
 66-71. Backsliding an old sin—Peter's noble declaration—the little benefit some get from religious privileges.
- VII. 1-13. Hardness and unbelief of man—reason why many hate Christ—various opinions about Christ.
 14-24. Honest obedience the way to spiritual knowledge—a self-exalting spirit in ministers deprecated—the danger of hasty judgments.
 25-36. Blindness of unbelieving Jews—God's overruling hand over His enemies—miserable end of unbelievers.
 37-39. A case supposed—a remedy proposed—a promise held out.
 40-53. Uselessness of mere head-knowledge—singular greatness of our Lord's gifts as a teacher—the work of grace in the heart sometimes gradual.
- VIII. 1-11. The power of conscience—the nature of true repentance.
 12-20. Christ the light of the world—promise to those who follow Christ—Christ's exposure of His enemies' ignorance.
 21-30. Christ may be sought in vain—difference between Christ and the wicked—the awful end of unbelief.
 31-36. Importance of steady perseverance in religion—nature of true slavery—nature of true liberty.
 37-47. Ignorant self-righteousness of natural man—true marks of spiritual sonship—reality and character of the devil.
 48-59. Blasphemous language addressed to our Lord—encouragement to believers—Abraham's knowledge of Christ—Christ's pre-existence.
- IX. 1-12. Sin the cause of sorrow in this world—the importance of using opportunities—different means used by Christ in working miracles—Christ's almighty power.
 13-25. Jewish ignorance of right use of Sabbath—desperate lengths to which prejudice leads men—seeing and feeling an irresistible evidence.
 26-41. Poor men sometimes wiser than the rich—cruelty of unconverted men—danger of knowledge if not rightly used.

- X. 1-9. Picture of a false minister—picture of true Christians—picture of Christ Himself.
- 10-18. Object for which Christ came into the world—Christ's office as a Shepherd—Christ's death a voluntary act.
- 19-30. Christ the innocent cause of strifes and controversies—name given by Christ to true Christians—the vast privileges of true Christians.
- 31-42. Wickedness of human nature—honor put on Scripture by Christ—importance attached by Christ to His miracles.
- XI. 1-6. True Christians may be ill as well as others—Christ is the best Friend in time of need—Christ loves all true Christians, however varying in temperament—Christ knows best the time to help.
- 7-16. Christ's ways with His people sometimes mysterious—Christ's tender language about His people—natural temperament shows itself in all believers.
- 17-29. Mixture of grace and weakness in believers—need of having clear views of Christ's person, office and power.
- 30-37. Blessing bestowed on sympathy—depth of sympathy in Christ for His people.
- 38-46. Christ's words about the stone over the grave of Lazarus—Christ's words addressed to Martha when she doubted—Christ's words to God the Father—Christ's words addressed to Lazarus in his grave.
- 47-57. Wickedness of man's natural heart—blind ignorance of God's enemies—importance often attached by bad men to ceremonial.
- XII. 1-11. Abounding proofs of the truth of Christ's miracles—discouragement Christ's friends meet with from man—man's hardness and unbelief.
- 12-19. Christ's sufferings entirely voluntary—prophecies about Christ's first advent minutely fulfilled.
- 20-26. Death the way to spiritual life—Christ's servants must follow Him.
- 27-33. Man's sin imputed to Christ—Christ's internal conflict—God's voice heard from heaven—Christ's prophecy about His being lifted up.
- 34-43. Duty of using present opportunities—hardness of man's heart—power of the love of this world.
- 44-50. Dignity of Christ—certainty of a judgment to come.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST.

On the order of some of our Lord's miracles and parables, the data being scanty, considerable difference obtains.

MIRACLES.	WHERE WROUGHT.	WHERE RECORDED.
Water made wine, ...	Caná,	John ii. 1-11.
Traders cast out of the temple, ...	Jerusalem,	John ii. 13-17.
Nobleman's son healed, ...	Caná,	John iv. 46-54.
First miraculous draught of fishes, ...	Sea of Galilee,	Luke v. 1-11.
Leprosy healed, ...	Capernaum,	Matt. viii. 2-4; Mark i. 40-45; Luke v. 12-15.
Centurion's servant healed, ...	Capernaum,	Matt. viii. 5-13; Luke vii. 1-10.
Widow's son raised to life, ...	Nain,	Luke vii. 11-17.
Demoniac healed, ...	Capernaum,	Mark i. 21-28; Luke iv. 31-37.
Peter's mother-in-law healed, ...	Capernaum,	Matt. viii. 14, 15; Mark i. 29-31; Luke iv. 38, 39.
Paralytic healed, ...	Capernaum,	Matt. ix. 2-8; Mark ii. 1-12; Luke v. 17-26.
Impotent man healed, ...	Jerusalem,	John v. 1-16.
Man with withered hand healed, ...	Galilee,	Matt. xii. 10-14; Mark iii. 1-6; Luke vi. 6-11.
Blind and dumb demoniac healed, ...	Galilee,	Matt. xii. 22-24; Luke xi. 14.
Tempest stilled, ...	Sea of Galilee,	Matt. viii. 23-27; Mark iv. 35-41; Luke viii. 22-25.
Demoniacs dispossessed, ...	Gadara,	Matt. viii. 28-34; Mark v. 1-20.
Jairus' daughter raised to life, ...	Capernaum,	Matt. ix. 18-26; Mark v. 22-24; Luke viii. 41-56.
Issue of blood healed, ...	Near Capernaum,	Matt. ix. 27-31.
Two blind men restored to sight, ...	Capernaum,	Matt. ix. 32-34. [10-17; John vi. 5-14.
Dumb demoniac healed, ...	Capernaum,	Matt. ix. 35-38; Mark vi. 31-44; Luke ix. 37-43.
Five thousand miraculously fed, ...	Decapolis,	Matt. xiv. 13-21; Mark vi. 31-44; Luke ix. 10-17.
Jesus walks on the sea, ...	Sea of Galilee,	Matt. xiv. 22-33; Mark vi. 45-52; John vi. 15-21.
Syro-Phœnician's daughter healed, ...	Coasts of Tyre and Sidon,	Matt. xv. 21-28; Mark vii. 24-30.
Deaf and dumb man healed, ...	Decapolis,	Mark vii. 31-37.
Four thousand fed, ...	Decapolis,	Matt. xv. 32-39; Mark viii. 1-9.
Blind man restored to sight, ...	Bethsaida,	Mark viii. 22-26.
Demoniac and lunatic boy healed, ...	Near Cesarea Philippi,	Matt. xvii. 14-21; Mark ix. 14-29; Luke ix. 37-43.
Miraculous provision of tribute, ...	Capernaum,	Matt. xvii. 24-27.
The eyes of one born blind opened, ...	Jerusalem,	John ix. 1-41.
Woman, of 18 years' infirmity, cured, ...	[Perea.]	Luke xiii. 10-17.
Dropsical man healed, ...	[Perea.]	Luke xiv. 1-6.
Ten lepers cleansed, ...	Borders of Samaria,	Luke xviii. 11-19.
Lazarus raised to life, ...	Bethany,	John xi. 1-46.
Two blind beggars restored to sight, ...	Jericho,	Matt. xx. 29-34; Mark x. 46-52; Luke viii. 35-43.
Barren fig tree blighted, ...	Bethany,	Matt. xxi. 12, 13, 18, 19; Mark xi. 12-24.
Buyers and sellers again cast out, ...	Jerusalem,	Luke xix. 45, 46.
Malchus' ear healed, ...	Gethsemane,	Matt. xxvi. 51-54; Mark xiv. 47-49; Luke xxii. 53.
Second draught of fishes, ...	Sea of Galilee,	John xxi. 1-14. [xxii. 50, 51; John xviii. 10, 11.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE PARABLES OF CHRIST.

PARABLES.	WHERE SPOKEN.	WHERE RECORDED.
The two debtors, ...	[Capernaum.]	Luke vii. 40-43.
The strong man armed, ...	Galilee,	Matt. xii. 29; Mark iii. 27; Luke xi. 21, 22.
The unclean spirit, ...	Galilee,	Matt. xii. 43-45; Luke xi. 24-26.
The sower, ...	Sea-shore of Galilee,	Matt. xiii. 3-9, 18-23; Mark iv. 2-9, 14-20.
The tares and wheat, ...	Sea-shore of Galilee,	Matt. xiii. 24-30, 36-43. [Luke viii. 5-8, 11-15.
The mustard seed, ...	Sea-shore of Galilee,	Matt. xiii. 31, 32; Mark iv. 30-32; Luke xiii. 18, 19.
The seed growing secretly, ...	Sea-shore of Galilee,	Mark iv. 26-29.
The leaven, ...	Sea-shore of Galilee,	Matt. xiii. 33; Luke xiii. 20, 21.
The hid treasure, ...	Sea-shore of Galilee,	Matt. xiii. 44.
The pearl of great price, ...	Sea-shore of Galilee,	Matt. xiii. 45, 46.
The draw net, ...	Sea-shore of Galilee,	Matt. xiii. 47-50.
The unmerciful servant, ...	Capernaum,	Matt. xviii. 21-35.
The good Samaritan, ...	Near Jerusalem,	Luke x. 29-37.
The friend at midnight, ...	Near Jerusalem,	Luke xi. 5-8.
The rich fool, ...	Galilee,	Luke xii. 16-21.
The barren fig tree, ...	Galilee,	Luke xiii. 6-9.
The great supper, ...	Perea,	Luke xiv. 15-24.
The lost sheep, ...	Perea,	Matt. xviii. 12-14; Luke xv. 3-7.
The lost piece of money, ...	Perea,	Luke xv. 8-10.
The prodigal son, ...	Perea,	Luke xv. 11-32.
The good shepherd, ...	Jerusalem,	John x. 1-18.
The unjust steward, ...	Perea,	Luke xvi. 1-8.
The rich man and Lazarus, ...	Perea,	Luke xvi. 19-31.
The profitable servants, ...	Perea,	Luke xvii. 7-10.
The importunate widow, ...	Perea,	Luke xviii. 1-8.
The Pharisees and publicans, ...	Perea,	Luke xviii. 9-14.
The laborers in the vineyard, ...	Perea,	Matt. xx. 1-16.
The pounds, ...	Jericho,	Luke xix. 11-27.
The two sons, ...	Jerusalem,	Matt. xxi. 28-32.
The wicked husbandmen, ...	Jerusalem,	Matt. xxi. 33-44; Mark xii. 1-12; Luke xx. 9-13.
The marriage of the king's son, ...	Jerusalem,	Matt. xxii. 1-14.
The ten virgins, ...	Mount of Olives,	Matt. xxv. 1-13.
The talents, ...	Mount of Olives,	Matt. xxv. 14-30.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

CHAPTER I.

¹ *The divinity, humanity and office of Jesus Christ.* 15 *The testimony of John.* 39 *The calling of Andrew, Peter, &c.*

IN the beginning ^awas the Word, and the Word was ^bwith God, and the Word was God.
^aCol. i. 17; 1 John i. 1; Rev. i. 2 and xix. 13. ^bChap. xvii. 5; 1 John i. 2. ^cPhil. ii. 6; 1 John v. 7.

In the beginning—of all time and created existence, for this Word gave it being (verses 3, 10), therefore “before the world was” (chap. xvii. 5, 24), or, *from all eternity*. John does not say, as Moses (Gen. i. 1), “In the beginning God created the Word,” but, “In the beginning *was* the Word.” Our conception cannot grasp an infinite range of time. When we wish therefore to speak of eternity, we fix a beginning, which we call *original* beginning. *The Word*. This term, in its application to our Lord, has two senses. It is, 1. *Personal*. It signifies reason or wisdom. In this sense it indicates Christ’s infinite intelligence. He is the Wisdom of God, “the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person,” answering in this and every other perfection of His nature, as exactly to all the attributes of God, as the impression upon the wax to the seal. 2. The term is *official*. It is by speech that wisdom is declared to others. For this reason, also, Christ is called the Word, the Speech, the Mouth of God. Mediately He spake to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He hath spoken to us by the Son. *And the Word was with God*, literal Greek, *was to God*. The Eternal Word was inherent to, *in, with*, God. Christ as God is a person distinct from the Father, yet undivided and inseparable from the Father in His essence, with whom He eternally co-exists, and this is another

evidence of His Godhead. *And the Word was God*, therefore co-equal and one with Him. No scheme of doctrine can explain and harmonize this passage but that which admits a distinction of persons in the unity of one Godhead. Here we have plainly declared to us the essential Divinity of Christ. He *was* God, one of the Three Persons in the eternal and adorable Godhead.

² ^aThe same was in the beginning with God.
^bGen. i. 2.

The same. Mark the emphasis—the same Word, of whom He speaks, the same Jesus whom they had seen, at whose feet they had sat, who had been “despised and rejected of men,” a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. *Was in the beginning*, &c. This is a repetition of the sentiment contained in the preceding verse, with the additional thought that the intimate union of the Word with God existed before time began. As the writer was about to ascribe to the Word a creative work (verse 3), and in verse 14 an incarnation and sojourn on earth, it seemed proper in view of this wondrous union of the Logos with humanity to reaffirm His distinct personality and pre-existent nature. Here the word *God* is to be taken in the sense of *the Father*, which it has in the second clause of verse 1. The knowledge of Christ as God is a truth to be much and often inculcated upon believers and which they ought to study again and again.

³ ^aAll things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
^bPs. xxxiii. 6; verse 10; Eph. iii. 9; Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 2; Rev. iv. 11.

We are here taught that this Word, who was God, created the universe. Bearing in mind the title here applied to

our Lord (verse 1), we shall see the beauty and recognize the application of such passages as Ps. xxxiii. 6; Heb. i. 1, 2; see, also, Col. i. 15-19. The Apostle directly applies to Christ expressions in the Psalms which were addressed to the Supreme God. (Comp. Heb. i. 10 with Ps. cii. 24, 25.) *All things were made by him.* This is a denial of the *eternity* and *non-creation* of matter, which was held by the whole thinking world *outside of Judaism and Christianity*; or, rather, its proper *creation* was never so much as dreamt of save by those who enjoyed *revealed religion*. Christ, as Creator, is clearly excluded from being of the number of creatures. How can it be questioned that He who created the universe is truly and properly Divine? The Bible everywhere appeals to creative power as the peculiar and distinguishing prerogative of the Supreme God, and attributes it solely to Jehovah. (See Gen. ii. 2, 3; Ex. xx. 11; Isa. xlv. 24; Jer. x. 12; Ps. viii. 3, 4, cii. 25; Isa. xl. 26, 28.) *Without him, i. e.,* apart or separate from Him. The Apostle (Col. i. 16), distinctly ascribes the work of creation to the Son. Nor, in doing this, does he exclude the agency of the Father and the Holy Spirit. Creation was the work of the triune God, but the Son was the immediate and prominent Agent in wielding the three-fold energy of the whole Divine nature. This verse teaches us whose we are. It also affords encouragement to every penitent who is seeking forgiveness. When we see that He who died for us is properly God, we perceive value in His atonement on which we may rest.

4. ^aIn him was life, and the life was the light of men. (^bChap. v. 26; ^c1 John v. 11. ^dChap. viii. 12, ix. 5 and xii. 35, 36.

Here Christ, in His spiritual, Divine nature, is declared to be the source of all life (chap. v. 26), the word *life* being understood in its most comprehensive sense. Having just been spoken of as the Creator of all things, He is now declared to have been the Source or Author of all life, natural and spiritual. *The life was the light of men.* All that in men which is *true light*—knowledge, integrity, intelligent, willing subjection to God, love to Him and to their fellow-creatures, wisdom, purity, holy joy, rational happiness—all this

"light of men" has its fountain in the essential original "life" of "the Word." (1 John i. 5-7; Ps. xxxvi. 9.) Christ is "God manifest." He is the *Word*, God heard; He is the *Light*, God seen; He is the *Life*, God felt. Eternal life proceeds from Him as its original source. He has obtained and earned it for us. He gives it to all who believe in Him.

5. ^aAnd the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.—^bChap. iii. 19.

The light—that just spoken of. *Darkness* here refers most obviously to the spiritual ignorance and alienation from God, which characterize the whole race of man, until enlightened by the rays of Divine truth. (Isa. ix. 2; Matt. iv. 14-16, xii. 41.) *Comprehended it not*, that is, did not apprehend it, or regard its dictates in such a manner as to secure the blessings to which it would have led. This shining and rejecting existed in all ages, but specially during the incarnation of which John is about to write. The light came pregnant with blessings, but it received not the welcome which from men lying in darkness it should have received. The reception of the Gospel is often sadly disappointing. (Isa. liii. 1; John iii. 19.)

6. ^aThere was a man sent from God, whose name was John.—^bMal. iii. 1; Matt. iii. 1; Luke iii. 2.

There was a man. Having spoken to us at the outset of God the Word, the Evangelist, proceeding on his road, comes to the herald of the Word, his namesake John. Verses 6-8 are in a manner parenthetical, their general design being apparently to prevent any mistake which might arise in regard to the character and mission of John. *Sent from God.* And so sent he has a grand *going forth*, but what is it compared to the eternal goings forth of the Logos?

7. ^aThe same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. ^bActs xix. 4.

For a witness. The *subject* of his testimony was Christ the Light. This shows how subordinate was the position and office of John, compared with that of Christ; he was only a herald and witness of the Messiah. Yet such was the dignity of the Logos (verses 1-5), that to be His herald or forerunner was one of the greatest honors which could be conferred upon man. *That all men, &c.* The aim of John's

testimony was, that through his preaching men might betake themselves to that Light, and be led to believe in Christ. He sought not his own glory. God makes men the instruments of turning the hearts of their fellow-creatures to Himself.

8. He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light.

Not that Light. He was the morning star, but he received not his light from himself. It was the grace of Him, whose forerunner he was, which blazed and shone forth in him.

Note, 1. The ministry of men is a special means by which Christ shines to the world, and helps the world to know Him. 2. Ministers of Christ must not run unsent, but ought to have a calling from God. 3. The chief end of a ministry is, to point out Christ in His excellencies and value to lost men, to declare Him in His person, offices and benefits, how He should be believed in, served or suffered for. 4. No one is excluded from being allowed to believe in Christ, who has the offer. Jesus is to be held forth as the common refuge of all His people, of whatever kindred or nation, for John "came for a witness, that all men might believe."

9. *That* was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

¹Verse 4; Isa. xlix. 6; 1 John ii. 8.

True Light, or original Light, the source of spiritual illumination. Other lights were figurative and derived. Christ is, moreover, the true Light, as opposed to the false light of heathen philosophy, the typical light of the old economy, and those false prophets and false Christs who had arisen, or should afterward arise. *Which lighteth*, &c. Observe two things: 1. *The fact.* The Saviour imparts light—the light of reason. All its powers, capacities and discoveries are from Him. The light of revelation—all the rays of Divine truth emanate from Him. The light of grace—man "by nature is in an awful state of darkness, and will remain so till Christ the Sun of Righteousness rises on the benighted mind. 2. *The universality of it.* We must not take this literally. It intimates the general diffusion of this blessing of light—that it is imparted to men of all climes and kindreds; that it is accessible to all, without distinction, who choose to

be guided by it. As there is only *one* sun in the sky to give us light, so there is only *one* Saviour to save us. We can no more infer from this expression that Christ gives every individual a measure of spiritual light, than from the one just before (verse 7), that every man actually "believeth in Christ" through John's testimony: both inferences are alike contrary to Scripture and to facts.

10. He was in the world, and *the world* was made by him, and the world knew him not.

²Verse 3; Heb. i. 2 and xi. 3.

In the world. The reference here is not so much to Christ's personal presence among men, in the days of His flesh, as to those manifestations of Him which, from the beginning of the world, had furnished them with the means of knowing Him, and which, therefore, rendered their ignorance inexcusable: such as the revelation of Him as the woman's seed, the sacrifices which were appointed to prefigure His atonement, and which, though perverted, were never discontinued, even among the heathen, the selection of the seed of Abraham, and their miraculous settlement in Canaan, which would necessarily proclaim the Messiah (who was a prominent feature of their religion) through every nation, &c., &c., &c. Not only was He in the world, so as to render their ignorance of Him inexcusable, but *the world itself* was made by Him. When Jesus became incarnate, it was an event which ought to have excited universal inquiry, and to have induced all men everywhere to repent; but, instead of this, *the world knew him not*, i. e., did not recognize and acknowledge Him as the Messiah, or one sent of God. The love of the world hinders men from knowing Him who made it—though He made it only to make Himself known!

11. ²He came unto his own, and his own received him not.—³Acts iii. 25.

To his own. Jesus was in the world, and therefore within the reach of inquiry, but *He came* to the seed of Abraham, knocking, as it were, at their door for admission. This simple expression may serve to confirm the truth, that all the manifestations of God, made by Him to His ancient people, were made in the person of His Son. (1 Cor. x. 9; Heb. xi. 26.) *Received him not.* The world are accused of igno-

rance, but *they* of unbelief, for *receiving him* not, though a merely negative form of speech, yet is expressive of a positive refusal of Him. Sufficient marks of Divinity appeared in Jesus to convince the meek and teachable, the child-like souls that were ready to submit their prejudices to His teaching, and consider fairly His claims to their faith and obedience; yet so veiled was His Divine nature under the form of a servant, as to escape the notice of those who were too proud to learn of One so lowly, too prejudiced to attend to One so different from what they had expected, too worldly to regard One who had no worldly claims to honor, too carnal to listen to One who called them to self-denial and mortification of sin.

12. But *as many as received him*, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even to them that believe on his name.*

^aIsa. lvi. 5; Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iii. 26; 2 Peter i. 4; 1 John iii. 1.

As many, &c. Though the world in general knew not Christ, and though the body of His own nation rejected Him, yet there were some, partly Jews and partly Gentiles, who received Him. To *receive Christ*, is equivalent with *believing on His name*. The word supposes Him to be God's free gift. The act presupposes a sense of sin and of our exposedness to the just displeasure of God. It also implies the renunciation of everything which stands in opposition to Christ, or comes in competition with Him. To receive Christ requires not only that He be received by *all in us*, but that we have respect to *all in Him*—receive Him for all the purposes for which He is given. *Power* implies not only right and privilege, but power to attain the filial relation here spoken of. *The sons of God*. The *regeneration* and *adoption* of believers are here affirmed. The first gives them a new nature, the second adds to them a new name. This filial relation implies: 1. Access to God as our own God and Father. 2. Access to all the ordinances of God's house, and to the fellowship of His people. 3. A part in the first resurrection. 4. An interest in the eternal inheritance.

13. ^aWhich were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
^bChap. iii. 5; James i. 18; 1 Peter i. 23.

In this new family of the sons of God,

"there is neither Jew nor Greek;" that is, admission into it depends not upon the circumstances of a man's birth. *Born*. This doubtless refers to the *new birth*, or to the great change in the sinner's mind, called regeneration, or conversion. *Not of blood*—not as being, by nature, descended from Abraham. (Matt. iii. 9.) *Nor of the will of the flesh*—not of the individual's own will. *Nor of the will of man*—not by the power nor will of friends, teacher, or parents. (John iii. 3, 5, 8; Rom. ix. 16; Phil. ii. 13; Eph. ii. 10; James i. 18; 1 Peter i. 3.) *But of God*—by the free grace of God. Regeneration is God's own work, who employs His word as the seed (1 Peter i. 23), sending His ministers as instruments to sow this seed (Gal. iv. 19), and who quickeneth this seed by the Spirit, who is the immediate worker of regeneration in order of operation (John iii. 6, 8), and so, whatever excellency regenerate men may have, they are still bound to acknowledge that grace prevented them and made them to differ from others, for they "were born," not of anything, "but of God." Grace runs not in the blood, piety is not hereditary. Religious parents propagate corruption, not regeneration. No man by the utmost improvement of nature can raise himself up to the privilege of adoption, and be the author and efficient cause of his own regeneration.

^a14. ^aAnd the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.
^bMatt. i. 16, 20; Luke i. 31, 35 and ii. 7; 1 Tim. iii. 16.
^cRom. i. 3; Gal. iv. 4. ^dHeb. ii. 11, 14, 16, 17. ^eChap. ii. 11 and xi. 40; 2 Peter i. 17. ^fCol. i. 19 and ii. 3, 9.

Christ, as *the Word*, was the Speech, the Mouth of God. (See on verse 1.) But more than teaching was wanted, something which should give us an interest in the truths revealed by Christ, and make them available to us. Without this these truths had been a splendid vision, the noblest exercise for the intellect, but nothing more. We are, therefore, taught that *the Word was made flesh*, &c. Christ took not on Him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham, the nature of man. There was such a union of Divinity with humanity, that the incarnate God was verily God and verily man, having two distinct and complete natures ineffably united in one Person.

Of course He did not assume our nature as it is corrupted with sin by the fall, for He was separated from sinners. (Heb. vii. 26.) *And dwelt among us.* If Christ's body had been only a phantom and apparition, in all probability it would have suddenly disappeared (Judg. xiii. 15-21); but He "dwelt among us," and conversed familiarly with men for a long time, and gave them sufficient opportunity to know that He had a true and real body of flesh. (1 John i. 1, 2.) Christ so put on our nature, when He was *made flesh*, as never to desert it again: He carried it through the agonies of death, and delivered it from the power of the grave, and dwells in it forever in His throne of glory. What words can declare, what mind can conceive, the honor and dignity this way conferred upon our nature?

And we beheld his glory. Others beheld it not, but His disciples did. Allusion is here made to the tabernacle in the wilderness, within which was the Shechinah, or cloud of the Divine glory. It is affirmed of this glory, 1. That it was *the glory as of the only begotten of the Father*. In other words, it was Divine glory, for the term "only begotten" is used to express Christ's Divine nature, as the Divine and eternal Son of God. 2. That it was *full of grace and truth*. It was a glory, not like that of Sinai, but softened and filled in every part and in all its manifestations, by grace and truth. In other words, in the glory of Christ were embodied and exemplified, not only the will and counsels, but the grace, the kindness, the compassion of God.

15. *John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, *He that cometh after me is preferred before me, *for he was before me. *Verse 32; chap. iii. 32 and v. 33. *Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 7; Luke iii. 16; verses 27, 30. *Chap. viii. 58; Col. i. 17.

Bare witness. There was a man who saw this glory (verse 14), and pointed Jesus out to others. His name was John the Baptist. *This was he of whom I spake.* He spake of Him long before he saw Him. Jesus was six months younger than John, therefore John said He came *after* him. Yet He was before him, for He was with His Father before He came into the world—before him in dignity of person and of office, as being the eternal God. As Christ is still above, and preferred before, the

most eminent of ministers, however He abased Himself in the days of His flesh, and subjected Himself to fulfill all righteousness, so it is the duty, and will be the practice of faithful ministers and honest Christians, to abase themselves that Christ may be exalted, and to guard against any respect that may encroach upon His honor.

16. And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. *Chap. iii. 34; Eph. i. 6, 7, 8; Col. ii. 9, 10.

The Evangelist had said (verse 14) that Christ was *full of grace and truth*. Of that fullness he now says that all the disciples received grace answering or correspondent to that which is in Christ Jesus; that is, they derive from Christ, from His abundant truth and mercy, grace to understand the plan of salvation, to preach the Gospel, and to live lives of holiness. This declaration had not an exclusive reference to the Apostles, but is to be extended to all Christians. *Grace for grace.* Correspondent to His grace of "wisdom," Christ, as our Prophet, gives us "understanding;" correspondent to His "counsels," He, as our King, bestows upon us "might," or power to do His will, and, correspondent to His "knowledge," or the acquaintance with God, into which He, as a Priest, introduces us, He imparts "the fear of the Lord," a holy, reverential confidence in Him. (Isa. xi. 2.)

Observe, 1. All men, even the best of Christ's servants, are by nature, and of themselves, empty of anything that is good, for they must receive of Christ's fullness. 2. Whatever any receive of Christ, it comes of grace, and not of merit. 3. Christ is not only the storehouse from whose fullness grace flows to believers, but the procuring cause thereof also, grace being given to them because of His redemption and righteousness made theirs of free grace, and because His gracious acceptance with the Father as Mediator includes all His people in and with Him. (Rom. v. 15, 17; Eph. i. 6.) 4. Whatever believers receive from Christ, yet He remains still full. As the sea diminishes not by rivers coming from it, and as the sun does not wear away nor lose light by giving light to all, so Christ is still the same for fullness, notwithstanding what He communicates.

17. For ^athe law was given by Moses, ^bbut ^cgrace and truth came by Jesus Christ.
^aEx. xx. 1, &c.; Deut. iv. 44 and v. 1. ^bRom. iii. 24 and v. 21.

The law, the system of religion communicated in the Old Testament, the dispensation established by the agency of Moses. *Grace and truth*, the true love of God. The law of Moses and the Gospel of Christ are here contrasted, in order to illustrate the succession of the Divine benefits. The people of God, in ancient times, enjoyed a rich blessing under the Mosaic dispensation, but a far richer blessing came when that dispensation was superseded by the clearer manifestation of God's saving love through Jesus Christ. (Comp. Heb. i. 1, 2.) The "grace" of the Gospel is here contrasted with the sterner character of the Old Testament dispensation, and the "truth" is referred to as being the substance of *its* types and shadows.

18. ^aNo man hath seen God at any time; ^cthe only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.
^dEx. xxxiii. 20; chap. vi. 46; 1 Tim. i. 17 and vi. 16; 1 John iv. 12, 20. ^eVerse 14; chap. iii. 16, 18; 1 John iv. 9.

The superiority of the Gospel to the Law referred to in the preceding verse is here further shown. Christ has revealed God, in His gracious attributes, more fully and clearly to us than Moses could. Why? Because Christ has *seen* Him whom no man, not Moses even, hath seen by immediate gaze, or direct intuition, for *He* is God's only begotten Son; *they* are only God's faithful servants. (See Ex. xxxiii. 20; John v. 37, vi. 46; 1 Tim. vi. 16; 1 John iv. 12.) *The only begotten Son*. He who was in deed and truth *the Son of God*, possessing a nature like God's, as a son possesses his father's nature. *In the bosom of the Father*. A remarkable expression, here only used, presupposing the Son's conscious existence distinct from the Father, and expressing His immediate and most endeared access to and absolute acquaintance with Him. *He*, and He only, *hath declared him*, because He only *can*. (See chap. x. 15, vi. 46.)

19. ^aAnd this is ^bthe record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?—(Chap. v. 33.)

The historical part of John's Gospel now begins. *The record*—the testimony or witness. *The Jews*, &c. The Jews of Jerusalem—the Sanhedrim, or council of seventy, who had the authority of making

inquiry into the pretensions of prophets. John's fame was great (Matt. iii. 5), and the nation seemed to suppose, from the character of his preaching, that he was the Messiah. (Luke iii. 15.)

20. And ^ahe confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.
^bLuke iii. 15; chap. iii. 28; Acts xiii. 25.

Some of his disciples may, in their pride, have given out that their master was the Messiah Himself. This committee cross-examine him, and thus draw out a prompt and explicit denial, which our Evangelist adduces to silence all false claimants in John's behalf. (See on Luke iii. 16.)

21. And they asked him, What then? Art thou ^aElias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou ^bthat Prophet? And he answered, No.
^cMal. iv. 5; Matt. xvii. 10. ^dDeut. xviii. 15, 18.

What then? What then are we to think of you? *Art thou Elias?* The Jews thought that the Messiah would come attended by Elijah, as His most honored and confidential friend and follower. The general appearance and habits of John, so much like those of Elijah (see 2 Kings i. 8), together with the burden of his proclamation (Matt. iii. 2, compared with Mal. iv. 5), suggested the idea that he might be the reappearance of that Old Testament Prophet. *That Prophet*—probably put generically for any prophet who might be supposed to appear in the time of the Messiah. *No*. The Baptist replies first in a negative form. The brevity of his answer may be accounted for by the compendious character of the narrative, but verse 22 shows that he, in accordance with his rugged, ascetic character, actually answered no more than the question demanded.

22. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?

Who art thou? The conjectures of rumor are exhausted, and hence they now demand a positive declaration. *Of thyself*. Every man ought to know himself, and if he enters upon any undertaking in particular, he ought to be ready to give a reason for it.

23. ^aHe said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as ^bsaid the prophet Esaias.
^cMatt. iii. 3; Luke iii. 4, on which see notes; Mark i. 3; chap. iii. 23. ^dIsa. xl. 3.

I am, &c. Here was John's *positive* denial

that he was the Christ. Observe, 1. Every one who undertakes the work of the ministry ought to be clear of his calling, as on this his courage, comfort and success much depend. 2. As Christ's coming into the world was kingly, though in appearance it seemed common, and as, wherever He is received He will be received as a King, therefore He came with a forerunner, which is the prerogative of kings. 3. Men's hearts are naturally unprepared for Christ to come into. 4. Although Jesus commands us to prepare His way, that He may show us our duty, yet this work of preparation is not in our power, but must be His work whose reward is with Him, and His work before Him. (Isa. xl. 3, 4, &c.; Luke iii. 4, 5.)

24. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. 25. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that Prophet? 26. John answered them, saying, I baptize with water; but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not: 27. He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. 28. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

^aMatt. iii. 11, on which see notes. ^bMal. iii. 1. ^cVerses 15, 30; Acts xix. 4. ^dJudg. vii. 24; chap. x. 40.

Pharisees. This sect was extremely rigid in matters pertaining to the ritual. *Why baptizest, &c.* Thinking he disclaimed any special connection with Messiah's kingdom, they demand his right to gather disciples by baptism. It was commonly believed among them, that it would justly pertain to the Messiah to modify existing usages, introduce new laws, and in various ways assert His Kingly authority. *There standeth one, &c.* The Baptist does not enter into their nice distinctions, or attempt to combat their vain traditions. He simply endeavors to draw off their thoughts from himself to a greater, to lead them from the servant to the Master. Our Lord had nothing in His outward appearance to distinguish Him from others. There is much excellency in the world unknown. In nature there is many a rich vein of ore concealed beneath a rude surface, and many a flower that blooms unscen in the woods, and sheds its fragrance on "the desert air." Learning and genius are often buried in obscurity. The same may be said of moral and religious qualities. We are not to measure or number the instances of godliness by our personal observation. God has His hid-

den ones. *Is preferred, &c.* The most deep and pure humility does not so much arise from the consideration of our faults and defects (though that also may have its own place), as from a calm contemplation of the Divine perfections. By fixing our eyes on the infinite greatness and holiness of God, we are most fully sensible of our own weakness. We will appear as nothing in our own sight, when beheld from so great a height. This is really the greatest elevation of the soul, and there is nothing in the world so noble and excellent as the sublimity of humble minds. (Chap. iii. 27-31; Job xxxiii. 15.) It is the duty of ministers, and will be the care of such as are faithful and zealous, to exalt and commend Christ on all occasions. Jesus may be among a people, and yet they who reckon themselves very high in the Church neither see Him nor know Him. *Bethabara beyond Jordan.* The country east of the Jordan was designated as *beyond* the river. Bethabara signifies literally, *the house of passage*, and is thought to be the place where the Israelites passed the river Jordan under Joshua. (Judg. vii. 24.) The precise situation of the town is not known.

29. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!

^aEx. xii. 3; Isa. liii. 7; verse 25; Acts viii. 22; 1 Peter i. 19; Rev. v. 6, &c. ^bIsa. liii. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 3; Gal. i. 4; Heb. i. 3; ii. 17 and ix. 28; 1 Peter ii. 24 and iii. 18; 1 John ii. 2, iii. 5 and iv. 10; Rev. i. 5.

The Evangelist, having set forth Christ in the dignity and excellency of His office, now declares how He was to execute His office, and to bring about these benefits; which was by suffering. *The Lamb of God.* The reference is not to any of the lambs of sacrifice, ordained in the Old Testament, in particular, being indeed to them all. They severally set forth in type and in figure some part of that which was fulfilled in substance and in full, not by a lamb of men, but by the Lamb of God, there being thus fulfilled to the uttermost the significant word of Abraham, "God will provide himself a lamb." *Which taketh away, &c.* Not the sins of one nation only, not the sins of the Jews alone, by whom alone the typical sacrifices of the law were offered, but the sins of the whole world, of all who in all the world believe in Him. (1 John ii. 2.) Christ bore the sin of the world by

letting it be imputed to Him by His Father, in a manner incomprehensible to us, so that it became no longer ours but His. Christ takes away the sin of those who trust in Him, partly by justification, in which the merit of His death is applied for taking away the guilt and punishment due to sin, and partly by sanctification, in which the power of His death and resurrection is applied by the Holy Spirit, for subduing and removing the pollutions of sin. The expression, *taketh away*, being in the present tense, denotes a continued act, and it intimates to us that it is the daily office of Christ to take away our sin, by presenting to the Father the memorials of His death. *Behold*, with an eye of admiration, but especially with an eye of faith and dependence, improving the fruit of His death to our consolation and salvation.

This passage alone, if the truth were revealed nowhere else in the Scriptures, justifies the doctrine that our Lord was the sinner's substitute, and thus made a sin-offering for man. But this great truth is taught in the clearest and most ample terms in many other portions of God's Word. To deny the doctrine of Christ's atonement, indeed, is to rob the fabric of Christianity of its foundation, strike at the very roots of the tree of life, attempt to pluck the diadem of glory from Immanuel's brow, mutilate the fair volume of revelation, take the brightest jewel from the crown of Scripture, dash the cup of consolation from the lips of the mourner, and leave the sinner without a gleam of hope. (See 2 Cor. v. 19; also Lev. xvi. 21; Isa. liii. 11; Luke i. 77; Heb. ix. 28, x. 14; Gal. iii. 13; 1 Peter ii. 24; 1 John ii. 2, iii. 5.)

30. *This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. 31. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

*Verses 15, 27. *Mal. iii. 1; Matt. iii. 6; Luke i. 17, 76, 77 and iii. 3, 4.

This is he, &c. (See on verse 15.) *And I knew him not.* John knew Jesus, but the Baptist knew not yet the Messiah. He indeed was aware of His miraculous birth, he must have known His remarkable character, he may even have suspected Him to be the Messiah: but as God, who sent him on his work as Baptist, had promised him a sign whereby he might discover the

Messiah, and as that sign had not yet been given, he did not yet recognize Jesus as such, whatever might have been his own thoughts and suspicions. *Should be made manifest, &c.* That the Messiah should be exhibited or made known to Israel as the High Priest of God's appointment. See the ordinance to be observed with regard to Aaron and his sons. (Ex. xxix. and Lev. viii.) *Therefore am I come, &c.* "It was chiefly for this end that Christ might thus be more remarkably *made manifest to Israel*, and might be introduced with greater solemnity."

32. *And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. 33. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. 34. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

*Matt. iii. 16; Mark i. 10; Luke iii. 22, on which see notes; chap. v. 32. *Matt. iii. 11; Acts i. 5, ii. 4, x. 44 and xix. 6.

As soon as John received the sign (verse 33), and his expectations were realized, he *bare record. Like a dove.* Is Christ a Lamb? Is the Spirit a Dove? Are these two symbols so united, and so placed before us? And have we yet to learn "what manner of spirit we are of?" (James iii. 17.) *Abode upon him.* This, 1. Indicated and illustrated what is said of the difference between the baptism of Christ and the baptism of John, for He was to baptize with the Holy Ghost, a baptism of everlasting efficacy, and not as John's, which, as he himself professed, was only temporary. 2. It was intended to assure His people that He received the Spirit, not only for Himself, but also to communicate unto them. (Isa. xi. 2, 3.) *And I saw, &c.* He had previously spoken of Christ as *man* (verse 30), and intimated by the words "for he was before me," that He was something more than man. Here he affirms—*this is the Son of God.* So Christ is both God and man. (See 2 Peter i. 16; 1 John i. 1.) This great truth is very full of comfort, assuring us of His sympathy and power, and teaching us that He both knows by experience our sorrows, and can help us out of them.

35. † Again the next day after, John stood, and two of his disciples; 36. And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! 37. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? 39. He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and

abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. 40. One of the two which heard John *speak*, and followed him, was *Andrew*, Simon Peter's brother. 41. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the *Messias*, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. 42. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, *Thou art Simon the son of Jonas: thou shalt be called Cephas*, which is by interpretation, a stone.

†Verse 29. ‡Matt. iv. 18, on which see notes.

John stood—doubtless upon the banks of the Jordan, contemplating his sacred work. *Two of his disciples*. Andrew, and probably the Evangelist himself. *Looking upon Jesus*. John was encouraged to commend Him, so a sight and enjoyment of Christ's spiritual presence will much dispose and enable men to speak of Him. *As he walked—the Lamb*. (See on verse 29.) There might have been something in His very look, and whole gesture and deportment, so meek, unassuming, superhuman and heavenly, as silently to attest His Divine character and mission, and of itself to invite the designation of the Baptist. (Acts vi. 15; Luke xiii. 27.) *They followed Jesus*. They quitted one master, and joined themselves to another. There was a drawing, attractive power in that word about the Lamb, the taker away of the world's sin, which no other word possessed or could possess. Set between two magnets, the disciples showed at once which was the mightier of the two. *Jesus turned*, &c. God meets us in the way. The willing mind is accepted. The sincere desire is blessed. He who graciously “turned and saw them following,” was the same God, the same eternal “I am,” who in like manner encouraged His servant Moses. (Ex. iii. 4.) We should be attentive to every intimation of God's providence and will.

What seek ye? Jesus tenderly draws them on to open their hearts to Him. They wish to know as to His abode for the night. They will not trouble Him on His way; they wish to speak with Him alone. The use of the term *Rabbi* by these disciples, shows that they sought instruction from Jesus. For the sake of those Gentiles into whose hands this Gospel should fall, the Evangelist adds the interpretation of this Jewish term. *Come and see*. Christ invited them forthwith to accompany Him. They go, and remain until four o'clock in the afternoon. The

interest and importance of this interview we may well imagine. Its immediate effect is apparent from what follows.

The Messias, or, *Messiah*. Both these words, the one Greek, the other Hebrew, mean *the Christ*, or, the Anointed One. *Brought him to Jesus*. In this beautiful scene we behold the commencement of all Christian activity in missions. Andrew had been for some little time with Jesus himself, and he immediately evinces the influence of the intercourse on his own mind, by his concern to bring others to the same Saviour. They that have tasted that the Lord is gracious themselves, will be always constrained to invite others. Andrew *first* found Simon, but he also prevailed on others. Though we cannot bring souls to Jesus *efficiently*, we may do this *instrumentally*, 1. by intercession, 2. by the influence of example, 3. by instruction and by various other means. We should be concerned to bring souls to Jesus for the following reasons: 1. To feel a concern for this work is an evidence of grace, and an evidence the most decisive. 2. To attempt it is a duty that cannot be declined without the greatest guilt. 3. To accomplish it is the most glorious enterprise. What can be compared to the salvation of a soul? 4. To fail in it is no disgrace. Failure here, is, indeed, more honorable than success in any other enterprise. But wise and good efforts are never in vain. If they are useless as to the direct object, they do good collaterally. If they relieve not the beneficiary, they bless the benefactor.

Jesus beheld him. The Saviour, with that piercing glance which tested men, and to which the Evangelist so often gives prominence (verse 45, ii. 25, iii. 3, vi. 71), looked through the disciple brought to Him. *Thou art*, &c. Though it be the first time that Peter ever saw Jesus, it is not the first time that Jesus, in spirit at least, ever saw Peter. He knows His parentage, His name, and history. *A stone*. The word which is here thus rendered, is in reality the proper name *Peter*, and it should have been rendered as a proper name. The remark is thrown in by the Evangelist, as apprising his readers that the Simon to whom the name *Cephas* was affixed, was

the same as the Apostle whom they knew by the name Peter.

In the calling of these three humble followers of Jesus commenced that little company, that weak and feeble band, which, under the direction and in the power of the Holy Ghost, regenerated the world. Men chosen from the lower walks of life, without wealth, without learning, without much of talent either natural or acquired, and yet who succeeded in a few short years, to use the language of their opponents, in "turning the world upside down." (Acts xvii. 6.)

43. ¶ The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

The day following the calling and naming of Peter. *Into Galilee*—probably on His way home after His baptism and temptation. *Findeth Philip*. Peter, as we have seen, was called by Andrew, as Nathanael was afterward (verse 45) called by Philip, but Philip was called by Christ Himself. How various were the means by which this little party was assembled! How various, will it appear hereafter, have been the means by which the countless multitude who shall fill the everlasting mansions have been congregated! Still, however varying may be the means, the end and object of this blessed work are and must forever be the same, the following Him here on earth, who speaks with power by His Holy Spirit to the heart, and says, "Follow me," and the enjoying Him in the kingdom of heaven.

44. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.—Chap. xii. 21.

The exact mention by the Evangelist, at this point of his narrative, that *Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter*, is an intimation that he was more or less prepared for the calling. He received from Jesus, by some accounts which he had obtained from his fellow-townsmen Andrew and Peter, of what had passed between them and the Lord on the day preceding.

45. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

Chap. xxi. 2. 4Gen. iii. 15 and xl. 9. 10: Deut. xviii. 18; see on Luke xiv. 27. 1Isa. iv. 2, vii. 14 and ix. 6; Mt. v. 2; Zech. vi. 12 and ix. 9, Luke xxiv. 27. 1Matt. ii. 23; Luke ii. 4.

Philip, having attached himself to Jesus.

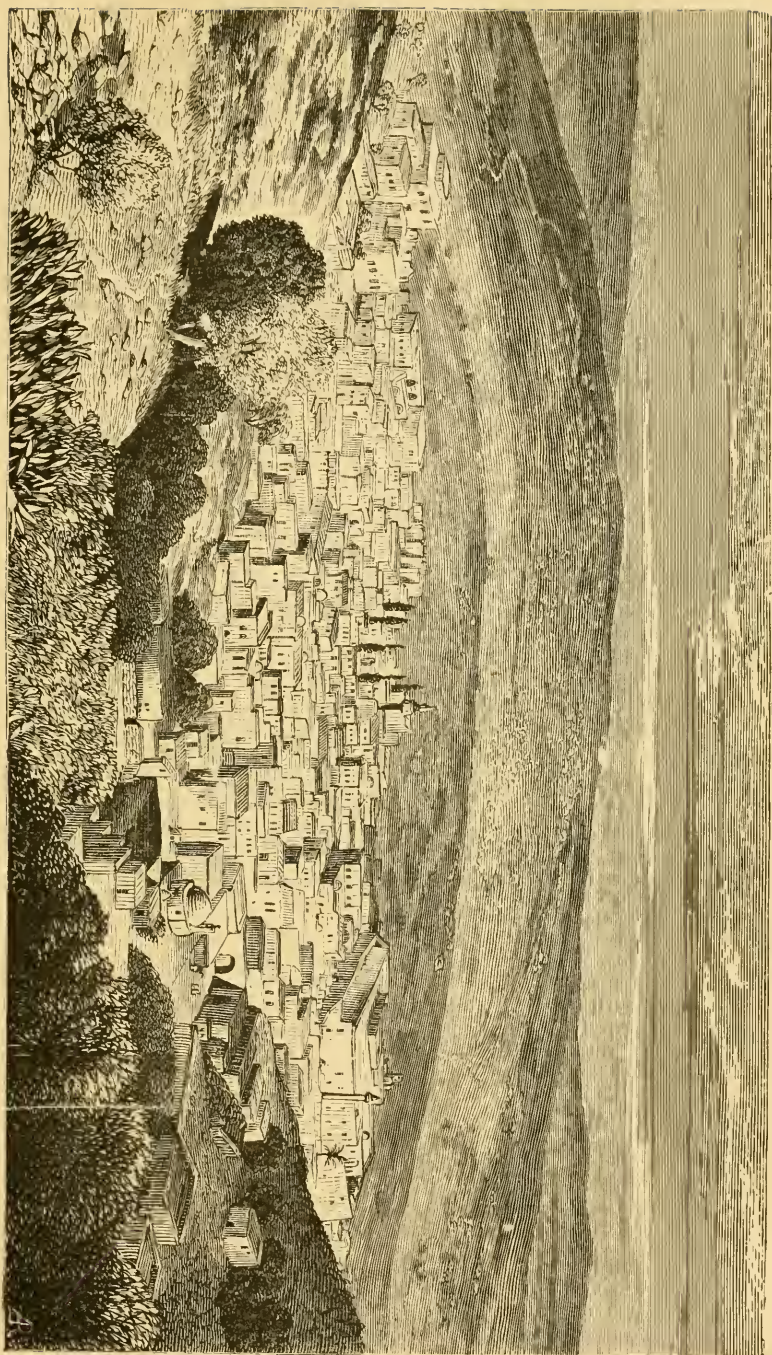
could not be content till he had introduced his friend into the glorious liberty of the same service with himself, until he had done what he could to make his friend a sharer of his treasure and his joy. *We have found him, &c.* A celebrated mathematician of antiquity, while meditating, suddenly solved one of the profoundest problems of geometry. Such was his rapture at the discovery, that he instantly ran through the streets clapping his hands, and exclaiming, *Eureka, I have found*. Philip here joyfully uses the same word, *we have found*. From the frequent recurrence of *finding*, in this chapter, it has, indeed, been called the chapter of the Eureka. (See verses 41, 43.) *Moses in the law*. (See Gen. iii. 15, xlix. 10; Num. xxiv. 17, 19; Deut. xviii. 15-19.) *And the prophets, did write*. (See 2 Sam. vii. 12-16, xxiii. 1-7; Isa. vii. 14, ix. 6, liii.; Ezek. xxxiv. 23-31.)

46. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.—Chap. vii. 41, 42, 52.

Can there any good thing, &c. There is here a reference to the general low esteem and disrepute in which Nazareth was held (Matt. ii. 23), and an intimation of the consequent unlikelihood that aught pre-eminently good would come forth from it. By the *good thing* must be understood that one "good thing," that "gift of God" (John iv. 10), in which all other good things are included. *Come and see*. He has a confidence, which the result abundantly justified, that in that holy presence, if only he could bring his friend within the range of its influence, all preconceived objections would dissolve and disappear. If men, instead of taking up unreasonable prejudices against the Christian religion, Christian missions, Christian people and Christian practices, as too many do, judging from hearsay, not from actual knowledge; from fancy rather than from fact, if these would only do as Philip advised, and as Nathanael did, that is, "come and see," they might haply arrive at a different and a juster conclusion.

47. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! 1Ps. xxxii. 2, and lxxiii. 1, Chap. viii. 39: Rom. ii. 28, 29, and ix. 6.

Not long before (verse 36), John cried of Christ: *Ece! Behold the Lamb of God!* Christ is the crier here. *Ece! Behold a*



NAZARETH.

true Israelite—one in whom is no guile—not only no hypocrite, but, with a guileless simplicity not always found even in God's own people, ready to follow wherever truth might lead him. *Behold, &c.* How kind and merciful this salutation! As easy would it have been for Him to whom all hearts are open, and from whom no secrets are hid, to have evinced His own omniscience by convicting Nathanael at once of whatever bigotry and prejudice he had manifested, by repeating to him the words, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" as thus to fix at once upon the favorable point in his character, and so freely and so kindly to acknowledge it.

48. Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

Christ here speaks of three wonderful things, which are above man: 1. Although thou wast distant, yet I saw that *Philip called thee*. 2. I saw thee before Philip found thee, *when thou wast under the fig tree*. 3. I saw into thy heart, and thou art *without guile*, verse 47. (Chap. ii. 25; Luke xix. 4, 5; Jer. xxiii. 23, 24.) Let us ask ourselves what effect the omniscience of Jesus, which we profess to believe, has upon us. Both in public and in private we are followed by the all-seeing eye, and listened to by the all-hearing ear. Jesus not only avowed His regard for Nathanael, but He avowed it *before others*. The concealments of Christians are only partial and temporary. Their day is coming: it is the manifestation of the sons of God.

49. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. ¹Matt. xiv. 23. ²Matt. xxi. 5, xxvii. 11, 42; chap. xviii. 37 and xix. 3.

There was something in the very minuteness of our Lord's naming the tree under which he had been sitting, in the privacy of his own garden, where no eye had seen him, and in His showing a knowledge of his state of mind, which evidently brought instantaneous conviction to the mind of Nathanael, hence the acknowledgment into which he burst forth. (See chap. iv. 29; 1 Cor. xiv. 25.) On that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, how will this acknowledgment shame those who with ten-fold, yea, ten thousand-fold, Na-

thanael's evidence, have not attained to Nathanael's faith, who doubt the omniscience and the divinity of Jesus! *Thou art the Son of God*. Here is the first simple creed of the infant church. The salvation, expanded in the writings of "Moses and the Prophets," is contracted into a few words, but words of a mighty power, the germ of all saving truth. Oh, that no more had been needed to join all Christians together in this "One Faith!" (Chap. vi. 69; Acts ii. 38, viii. 37; Rev. xix. 10.)

50. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. 51. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. ¹Gen. xxviii. 12; Matt. iv. 11; Luke ii. 9, 13, xxii. 43 and xxiv. 4; Acts i. 10.

Thou shalt see, &c. Our Lord confirms His faith, and, agreeably to the Divine rule, "he that hath to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance," promises him higher honor, and more blessed visions. If we are now able to see Jesus, as the Son of God, the Saviour of our soul, we shall see greater things than even His omniscience and omnipotence; we shall see His love employed in blotting out every sin we have committed, His wisdom in enlightening and instructing our mind, His strength in supporting our weakness, His blood in cleansing our pollutions, His Spirit in sanctifying and renewing our soul.

This *verily, verily*, this double Amen, which here occurs for the first time, is peculiar to John, he only records our Lord's use of it, but he on very many occasions. It was never used by any one but Christ, and always at the beginning of a sentence. It comes most fitly from the lips of Him who is Himself the Amen (Rev. iii. 14), the God of truth (Isa. lxxv. 16), in whom all the promises of God are yea, and in whom Amen. (2 Cor. i. 19; Num. v. 22; Neh. viii. 6.) How different, too, the majestic, *I say unto you*, of Christ, from that, "Thus saith the Lord," of all the prophets preceding—they hearers of the word of another, He the utterer of His own.

Heaven open. What a saying is this! When the wrath of God was poured upon a guilty world, it is expressed by this kind of language: "The windows of heaven were opened." What, then, can it here

denote, but that God would, in honor of *Him* in whom His soul delighted, pour forth a deluge of blessings in His name. *And the angels of God, &c.* In the miracles the disciples were about to witness, as accomplished by Christ, both on the bodies and souls of men, they should see things marvelous as any in Jacob's ancient vision. Christ here intimates that He should henceforward be the middle point of free intercourse, yea, of uninterrupted communion between God and men, that in Him should be the meeting-place of heaven and earth. (Eph. i. 10; Col. i. 19.) The angels that wait upon the throne of God and "do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word," were sent from thence to attend on Jesus at His resurrection and at His ascension, as His disciples witnessed, and *Nathanael* among the rest; for he is mentioned as a person present when Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after His resurrection. (Chap. xxi. 2.)

Upon the Son of man. He who had just

accepted Nathanael's tribute to Him as "the Son of God" (verse 49), and to whom the Baptist under Divine inspiration had lately borne the same testimony (verse 34), here speaks of Himself under the title of "the Son of man," a title taken from the prophecy of Daniel (chap. vii. 13), but which was never used of our Lord by any but Himself, and which *He* used constantly, to show that God had for our sakes become also very man. The use of this term by Stephen, in Acts vii. 56, is not an exception to this remark, for this use was manifestly in allusion to our Lord's own words in Matt. xxvi. 64, of which the statement of Stephen is in fact an adaptation.

"If the angels," says *Augustine*, "descend to the Son of man, He is here; if they ascend to Him, He is above. He is above with the Father, below in us." (Chap. iii. 13; Acts vii. 56, ix. 4, 5). "An angelical life," remarks *Leighton*, "spent between ascending in prayer to fetch blessings from above, and descending to scatter them among men." (Luke vi. 12, 13).

1. What is meant by "the beginning?" 2. Why is Christ called "the Word?" 3. Is Creatorship ascribed to Him? 4. What is said of "life" in Jesus? 5. Who was sent from God? 6. For what purpose did he come? 7. What is said of Him? 8. What contrast is stated between Moses and Christ? 9. What was John's answer to the priests and Levites who came to him? 10. What did he say when he saw Jesus coming unto him? 11. Who were the two disciples referred to in verse 37? 12. What did Andrew do? 13. What did Christ say to Philip? 14. Whom did Philip find? 15. What did Nathanael say? 16. State the interview between Jesus and Nathanael. 17. What did our Lord say respecting angels?

CHAPTER II.

- 1 *Christ turneth water into wine.* 12 *departeth into Capernaum, and to Jerusalem.* 14 *where he purgeth the temple of buyers and sellers.* 19 *He foretelleth his death and resurrection.* 23 *Many believed because of his miracles, but he would not trust himself with them.*

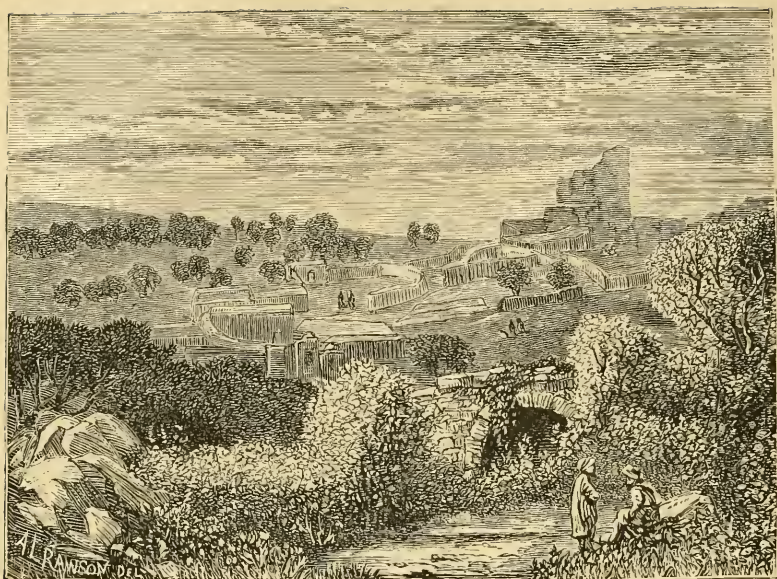
AND the third day there was a marriage in ^aCana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:
^aSee Josh. xix. 28.

The third day after Nathanael's call. *A marriage, i. e.,* a marriage festival. *Cana of Galilee,* so called to distinguish it from Cana in Asher, not far from Tyre. (Josh. xix. 28.) It was situated seven miles north of Nazareth, and about three miles north-east of Sepphoris. *The mother of Jesus, &c.*

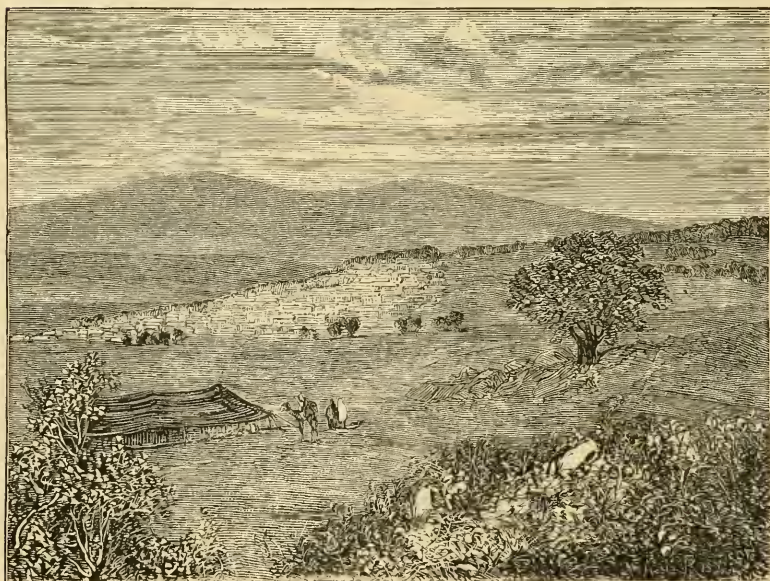
There is every reason to suppose that Joseph was now dead.

2. And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

Called—invited. How was this true of Christ, being a stranger? Probably this was the marriage of some relative of the mother of Jesus. But it may be that the invitation came through the friendly intervention of Nathanael, who was of this place. (xxi. 2.) If so, let us admire such a proof, of a convert's early love to the Lord, his zeal in Christ's service, his desire, harmonizing with that of Mary (verse



BETHANY.



CANA OF GALILEE.

5), to promote his Master's honor (i. 49) his brotherly kindness, also, for "both Jesus was called *and his disciples* to the marriage." We need not wonder to find the Lord of life at that festival, for He came to sanctify all life—its times of joy, as its times of sorrow, and all experience tells us that it is times of gladness, such as this was now, which especially need such a sanctifying power, such a presence of the Lord.

3. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

Wanted wine. The supply of wine, from some cause or other, ran short. *The mother of Jesus.* The Evangelist never calls her by name, indeed, he generally prefers to designate those of whom he speaks by their respective titles. *Saith unto him.* Having a greater interest in the matter than a mere guest would have had, she mentions the subject to our Lord, saying, *They have no wine*, implying, of course, the embarrassment of those who gave the feast and of herself also as a relative or friend of the parties. This embarrassment she hoped her Son would in some way remove.

Wine was as common a drink in Palestine as cider in portions of our own country. Their wine was so free from the alcoholic element, that it produced intoxication only through fermentation or by being drugged.

Rev. Dr. Duff, the celebrated Scotch missionary, speaking of the vine regions of southern France, says: "Look at the peasant at his meals in vine-bearing districts! Instead of milk he has a basin of pure, unadulterated 'blood of the grape.' In this its native original state it is a plain, simple and wholesome liquid, which, at every repast, becomes to the husbandman what milk is to the shepherd, not a luxury, but a necessity; not an intoxicating, but a nutritive beverage. Hence to the vine-dressing peasant of Auxerre, for example, an abundant vintage, as connected with his own sustenance, is as important as an overflowing dairy to the pastoral peasant of Ayrshire, and hence, by such a view of the subject, are the language and sense of Scripture vindicated."

Captain Treath, as quoted by *Dr. Lees*,

says: "When on the south coast of Italy, last Christmas (1845), I inquired particularly about the wines in common use, and found that *those esteemed the best were sweet and unintoxicating*. The boiled juice of the grape is in common use in Sicily. About three gallons of the juice is boiled until reduced to two—it is then poured into plates to cool. The poor people mix flour into theirs while boiling, to make it go further. It is eaten at their meals with bread, and very nice it is. The Calabrians keep their intoxicating and unintoxicating wines in separate apartments. The bottles were generally marked. From inquiries, I found that the *unfermented wine was esteemed the most*. It was drunk mixed with water. Great pains were taken in the vintage season to have a good stock of it laid by."

This must be taken into consideration in judging of the moral aspect of this miracle of our Lord. No plea whatever can be drawn from it for the use of such adulterated and poisonous wines as are generally imported and vended in this country. We see no reason for supposing that the wine of the present occasion was of that kind upon which Scripture places its strongest interdict. (Prov. xx. 1, xxiii. 31; Isa. xxii. 13), rather than of that which is eulogized as a blessing. (Ps. civ. 15; Isa. lv. 1.) See on verse 7.

4. Jesus saith unto her, ^bWoman, what have I to do with thee? ^dmine hour is not yet come.
^bChap. xix. 26. ^c2 Sam. xvi. 10 and xix. 22. ^dChap. vii. 6.

Woman, &c. The word "woman," in ancient Greek, is equivalent to "lady." The radical idea appears to be, "What have we in common? Our relations are wholly different. Be not over anxious, I know what I will do, when the proper time has come." Our Lord, in the way of mild reproof, wished her to know that though as a son He was subject to her in private life, as the Son of God His power was not under her control. But it is evident that no disrespect was intended. See the tender use of the same term in chap. xx. 15, xix. 26. *Mine hour*, &c., that is, "the seasonable time," or, "the time for doing what you suggest is not yet come," implying that He alone was the proper judge of that season, and would seize it, thus mixing comfort with the gentle re-

proof. The time would be when the wine was quite exhausted, whereby the reality of the miracle would be undoubted.

5. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

Saith unto the servants. Mary apparently understood the words of Jesus, as indeed was no doubt intended, rather as a postponement than a denial. When we find any particular mystery in God's Providential dealings toward us, instead of wasting our thoughts and time in murmuring and complaint about it, we should give greater diligence in attending to our known duties, obeying the evident will of God concerning us, leaving it to Him to solve every intricacy. (Ps. xxxvii.; Deut. xxix. 29.) *Whatsoever he saith, &c.* To obey God rightly is to obey Him as Supreme Lawgiver, which can never be done, while He only maintains a divided empire in our hearts. The same motive that prompts us to obey God in one thing, ought to influence us to strive to obey Him in all things.

6. And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.—Mark vii. 3.

Waterpots of stone—stone vessels for holding water. *Purifying of the Jews.* The Jews, on account of the regulations respecting ceremonial cleanness and uncleanness, had occasion for a constant supply of water, in readiness for washing. (Mark vii. 1-4.) *Firkins.* The word thus translated signifies a measure containing somewhat more than eight gallons. This large quantity of wine made the miracle more striking and apparent. Wedding festivals were prolonged sometimes through a whole week. The report of the wondrous miracle, doubtless, drew numbers to the feast, all of whom would wish to drink, if for no other purpose than to satisfy themselves of the truth of the affair.

7. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. 8. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

Fill, &c. These vessels were now empty, probably, from the ablutions of so many guests. The servants, though wondering, did not venture to disobey Christ. As *Messiah* Christ uttered the reproof (verse 4), as a *Son* He now complied with His mother's suggestion, and thus saved the bridal pair from mortification. The critical

Dr. Trench, now Archbishop of Dublin, says: "He who each year prepares the wine in the grape, causing it to drink up and swell with the moisture of earth and heaven, to transmute this into its own nobler juices, concentrated all those slower processes now into the act of a single moment, and accomplished in an instant what ordinarily He does not accomplish but in months." The same interpretation was given of the miracle by Dr. Joseph Hall, Bishop of Norwich, England, in 1600, by Chrysostom, born A. D. 344, and by Augustine, born A. D. 354. (See on verse 2.) *They bare it.* Equally removed from every appearance of doubt or display, our Lord does not ask to taste, or even to see the wine Himself, to ascertain the certainty of the success of His command, but tells the servants at once to carry it to the governor. As they perceived by the color and odor, that what they drew from the waterpots, had become wine, they scrupled not to do as directed. It was the function of the *governor*, or ruler of the feast, to provide for the occasion, to preside at the table, to relieve the bridegroom from minute solitudes, and to taste first what was set before the guests.

9. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was, (but the servants which drew the water knew,) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom; 10. And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.—Chap. iv. 46.

The governor, after he had tasted the wine, and found it greatly superior to any that had yet been used, called out to the bridegroom across the table, *Every man at the beginning, &c.* It would be unjust and absurd to suppose from the words of the ruler, *when men have well drunk*, that these guests had transgressed the rules of temperance. For, 1, the Greek word rendered "well drunk," does not imply intoxication, and, 2, the ruler describes the customs of others, not the conduct of the present assembly. Besides, as *Alford* well remarks: "We may be sure that the Lord would not have sanctioned, nor ministered to, actual drunkenness. Only those who can conceive this, will find any difficulty here, and they will find difficulty everywhere."

11. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him.—*Chap. i. 14.*

This was the *beginning of miracles*, the first of a *series*. It was an introduction to all Christ's other miracles, as the parable of the Sower was to all His other parables. (Mark. iv. 31.) And no other miracle would have served as so fit an inauguration to the whole future work of the Son of God, for that work might be characterized throughout as an ennobling of the common and a transmuting of the mean—a turning of the water of earth into the wine of heaven. *His glory.* Jesus shines with no borrowed light. The light which His Apostles manifested was what they derived from *Him*, but *He* shines in His own proper light. Until now Christ had veiled Himself more or less, but now He gave some glimpses of what He was. *Believed on him.* Such was the result in the case of the disciples. Their faith, as we know from what is subsequently recorded, was weak and imperfect, but it was yet genuine and grew stronger and stronger, and was graciously accepted by our blessed Lord.

From this narrative learn, 1. The lesson of patience, as exhibited in our Lord's conduct, in so meekly awaiting the fit time for disclosing His true character to the world. 2. Religion does not require us to shut ourselves out from the world, like monks and nuns, or to cherish gloomy feelings; it is social and cheerful. (Prov. iii. 17.) It teaches us how to enjoy, as well as to obey. 3. Christ honors His own institution of the marriage state. 4. The rule of giving which the Saviour pursues is very different from that which is followed by the world. The worldling has his best things *first*. He finds life grow darker and darker as he advances. But the path of the true Christian "shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The more religious he becomes, the more happy he finds himself. What, then, will be his experience when he partakes in heaven of the sweetness of redeeming love in all its perfection!

12. ¶ After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples, and they continued there not many days.—*Matt. xii. 46.*

He went down—from Cana, in the country to Capernaum, on the lake shore. *His mother.* It is probable that Joseph died

between Jesus' twelfth and thirtieth years. *His brethren.* (See on Matt. xii. 46.) These are put before His *disciples*, showing the greatness of the privileges within their reach. *Not many days.* Because the pass-over was near.

13. ¶ And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, 14. And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: 15. And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables, 16. And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise. 17. And his disciples remembered that it was written, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."

1Ex. xii. 14; Deut. xvi. 1, 16; verse 23; chap. v. 1, vi. 4, and xi. 55. 1Matt. xxi. 12; Mark xi. 15; Luke xix. 45. 2Luke ii. 49. 3Lkix. 9.

On verses 13–17 see on Matt. xxi, 12, &c.; Mark xi. 15, &c.

Jesus' passover. So specifically called by the Evangelist, for the sake of the Gentiles to whom this Gospel should come. John mentions four passovers as occurring during Christ's ministry, of which this is generally regarded as the first. *Went up to Jerusalem.* Every male among the Jews was required to appear at this feast. *Oxen and sheep, &c.*—used in sacrifices. *Sitting;* in the very act of negotiation: business was the more brisk, as the passover was at hand. *Scourge, &c.* Thus scourges were formerly made. Moreover, no material injured the body less than this. It is not said that Jesus inflicted a single blow on the men. He accomplished His purpose by terror. The scourge was a symbol of God's judgment soon to fall on the corrupters. These "cords" were the instruments of their unrighteousness, for with them the oxen were tied up. Thus do our sins, even in this life, become our scourges, as in the case of Pharaoh.

Take these things hence. Jesus acted in the spirit of a true reformer, with much zeal, and with as much moderation. He cast out the abuses, but did not forbid the duties of the temple—drove out the merchants, but not the ministers of the house of God. The different treatment of the *doves*, from that of the sheep and oxen is one of those *minutæ* which could only occur to the veritable historian. *My Father's house.* How close the resemblance of these remarkable words to Luke ii. 49—the same consciousness of intrinsic relation to the Temple, as the seat of His

Father's most august worship, and so the symbol of all that is due to Him on earth—dictating both speeches. *The zeal of thine house, &c.* Zeal for thy house, for its purity and honor, hath preyed upon my spirit.

18. ¶ Then answered the Jews and said unto him, "What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?"—Matt. xii. 38; chap. vi. 30.

The priests and rulers, though they did not justify the profanations of the temple by these traders, yet were piqued that Jesus should assume an authority which, as the constituted guardians of the temple, belonged rightfully to them, and therefore they demanded His credentials for the office of public reformer which He had thus taken upon Himself.

19. Jesus answered and said unto them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."
—Matt. xxvi. 61 and xxvii. 40; Mark xiv. 58 and xv. 29.

As the Jews did not properly attend to the sign already given (verses 15, 16), Jesus now refers them to His death and resurrection. *Destroy this temple, &c.*—that is, "I know you will destroy this temple of my body, by putting me to death, but I will raise myself from the grave the third day." Christ did not command them to destroy His body, but only foretold that they would do it. His assertion of His own power in raising His own body from the dead, is full proof of His Divinity. Was Christ's body a temple? So shall ours be too, temples for the Holy Ghost to dwell in. Was the temple of Christ's body pulled down by death for our sin? So must the temples of our bodies, ruined by our sin, ere long be destroyed. Was the temple of Christ's body repaired in the morning of the resurrection? So shall the temple of our bodies also, if we are members of Christ by a vital union. *Thy dead men, O blessed Redeemer! shall live, together with thy dead body shall they arise.* (Isa. xxvi. 19.)

20. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21. But he spake of the temple of his body.
—1 Cor. ii. 9; Heb. viii. 2; 1 Cor. iii. 16 and vi. 19; 2 Cor. vi. 16.

This temple. The temple of which the Jews spake, was begun to be rebuilt by Herod the Great in the 18th year of his reign. But though he finished the main work in *nine years and a half*, yet some additional buildings or repairs were con-

stantly carried on for many years afterward. Herod began the work *sixteen* years before the birth of our Lord: the transactions which are here related took place in the *thirtieth* year of our Lord, which makes the term exactly forty-six years. The Jews, as usual, understood Christ's words literally. They looked merely on the surface, without pausing to consider whether any deeper meaning lay below. And many a mistake still arises from understanding *literally*, what in Scripture is spoken *figuratively*, stopping at the sign, without going on to the thing signified. These words of our Lord (verse 19) were misquoted afterward at His mock trial, and made the subject of false witness and accusation against Him. (Matt. xxvi. 60, 61; Ps. xxxv. 11.) And even as He hung on the cross, with malignant mockery they cast the same in His teeth. (Matt. xxvii. 39, 40.)

22. When therefore he was risen from the dead, *his* disciples remembered that he had said this unto them, and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said,—Luke xxiv. 8.

When therefore, &c. It was the fulfilling of the saying which made it plain. *They believed.* Their faith, both in the Scripture and in Jesus Christ, was confirmed thereby. Let it be noted that the Old Testament, together with *the word which Jesus had said*, made up the faith of the first believers, for, as yet, the Books of the New Testament were not written.

23. ¶ Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. 24. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, 25. And needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man.
—1 Sam. xvi. 7; Matt. ix. 4; Mark ii. 8; Chap. vi. 64 and xvi. 30; Acts i. 24; Rev. ii. 23.

The miracles. On the following days Jesus performed a number of miracles, which are alluded to in chap. iv. 45. *Did not commit, &c.* The Saviour penetrated the hearts of men, and did not consider those His true disciples who had been moved to the recognition of Him merely by miracles, or even by superficial impressions. (viii. 31.) *And needed not, &c.* John loves to give prominence to our Lord's profound knowledge of men. (Chap. vi. 61, 64, v. 42.) "We know what is *done* by men, Christ knows what is *in them*, *tries the heart and the reins*. This is the prerogative of that essential, eternal Word. (Heb. iv. 12, 13.) We invade His prerogative if

we presume to judge men's hearts. How fit is Christ to be the *Saviour of men*, and their Physician, who has such perfect knowledge of the patient's state and case, temper and distemper, knows what is in him! How fit also to be the *Judge of all*! For the judgment of Him who knows *all men*, all in men, must needs be *according to truth*." This thought of Christ's intimate acquaintance with the secrets of our hearts

may be applied both for our comfort and for our admonition: to encourage us in our duty, to deter us from sin. Jesus knows our unseen conflicts with self, and all our silent efforts in His service, as well as our secret faults. Let this thought, then, of our ever-present Lord, be ever present with us, to keep us equally from despair and disobedience.

1. What is meant by the "third day?" 2. Who were at the wedding? 3. What did the mother of Jesus say to Him? 4. Explain His reply. 5. What did Christ do? 6. What did the ruler of the feast say? 7. What was the effect of this miracle? 8. Where did Jesus after this go? 9. What did He do in the temple? 10. What did the Jews say? 11. What was our Lord's answer? 12. What did He mean by "this temple?" 13. What was the effect of Christ's miracles in Jerusalem? 14. Why did not He "commit himself unto them?"

CHAPTER III.

1 *Christ teacheth Nicodemus the necessity of regeneration.* 14 *Of faith in his death.* 16 *The great love of God toward the world.* 18 *Condemnation for unbelief.* 23 *The baptism, witness, and doctrine of John concerning Christ:*

THERE was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

The Pharisees were a party noted for attention to the outward rites of their religion, but sadly wanting in the inward principles of godliness, though there were happy exceptions, and Nicodemus was one of these. "He was," says *Tholuck*, "an example of one of those who have attained to what Luther calls 'the milk-faith.'" Nicodemus means "the innocent blood." A ruler of the Jews—a professor of laws, and one of the *Sanhedrim*, or great council of the nation. He is twice mentioned after this as being friendly to the Saviour. (vii. 50, xix. 39.)

2. *The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

*vii. 50 and xix. 39. *ix. 16, 33; Acts ii. 22. *Acts x. 38.

By night. Perhaps he was influenced by shame, or fear, or both. "It is most reasonable," observes an old writer, "we should own the God we serve, even in the face of the world, and not, like Nicodemus, carry our religion in a dark lantern." (ix. 9; 1 Kings xviii. 21; 2 Kings v. 18; Matt.

x. 32.) It is better to go to Jesus by night, than not to come at all. He always receives those who come to Him. *We know*—I, and the other rulers. Nicodemus states the antecedent as the consequent, therefore I wished to confer with Thee. There can be no doubt of his sincerity in his inquiries. He seems to have had his attention attracted to Jesus by His miracles (comp. ii. 23), and perhaps he had before been watching for the signs of that kingdom of God heralded by the Baptist.

3. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

*i. 13; Gal. vi. 15; Titus iii. 5; James i. 18; 1 Peter i. 23; 1 John iii. 9.

Jesus did not reprove the inquirer for coming to Him in this strange way. Having come to inquire about the expected Messiah, our Lord will correct the inadequate view which He entertains as to His being only a Teacher come from God, and will show that He is the Messiah, but He will show this gradually. *I say unto thee*. Nicodemus is virtually told that he has raised a question which he is not in a capacity to solve, and that before approaching it, his spiritual vision required to be rectified by an entire revolution in his inner man. A man—not a Jew merely: the necessity is a universal one. Born

again—or, *over again*, as it were, is made a new creature, receives a principle of Divine life, *begin life anew*, in relation to God, his manner of thinking, feeling, and acting, with reference to spiritual things, undergoing a *fundamental and permanent revolution*. (See 1 Peter i. 3, 23; Titus iii. 5; Gal. vi. 15.) *Cannot see*—can have no part in. *The kingdom of God*—whether in its beginnings here (Luke xvi. 16), or its consummation hereafter. (Matt. xxv. 34; Eph. v. 5.)

4. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

A new and surprising thought had been presented to Nicodemus. He had not been in the habit of thinking that every one, in order to enjoy the blessings of the Messiah's reign, must become a new man. He therefore now proposes a question which was fitted to draw forth an explanation of *the kind of new birth* which Jesus affirmed to be necessary. His language is to be understood as *comparative*.

5. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

*Mark xvi. 16; Acts ii. 38.

Verily, verily. This verse being a reaffirmation of the truth contained in verse 3, is introduced by the same emphatic adverbs. *Of water and of the Spirit* is explanatory of the word *again*, in verse 3. See Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 8; Luke iii. 16, where baptism with water is joined with the baptism of the Spirit, and also Mark xvi. 16, where baptism is connected with faith in Christ as a prerequisite to salvation. The sense demanded by these and other parallel passages, seems to be that which lies on the very face of the text, *except a man be born of water* (i. e. except he receive the rite of Christian baptism) *and of the Spirit* (i. e., except he receive the baptism of the Spirit), *he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*, here or hereafter; he cannot be a member of the true Church of Christ on earth (Rom. xiv. 17), or be admitted to heaven. (1 Cor. vi. 9, xv. 50; 2 Thes. i. 5.) It by no means follows from this interpretation that baptism is a saving ordinance. Baptism of water, although the antecedent duty, yet does not stand on the same ground of an absolute condition without which salvation in itself is impos-

sible, as does the *being born of the Spirit*. This we see intimated in Mark xvi. 16, where baptism is required, but there is a careful avoidance of saying that *he that is not baptized shall be damned*. Baptism may in many cases be impossible. How they who deliberately and persistently neglect it will answer for this contempt of the solemn requirement of Christ at the judgment day, is for themselves to answer.

6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

The dignity of the new birth is stated as in chap. i. 13. The antithesis here, too, is simple: bodily and spiritual birth. The neuter more general than the masculine. *Flesh* may here mean "human nature as depraved," or "human nature apart from supernatural influence." In the first place it is equivalent to "depraved man can have a son only in his own likeness. Man must become God's son to become fit for His holy kingdom." In the second place it is equivalent to "as the natural descendants of Abraham, you may be, you are, possessors of external privileges, but you must be spiritually born, that is, in your inward views and feelings you must be radically changed, in order to your being fitted to enjoy spiritual privileges. The kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom, none but those who are spiritual can enjoy its privileges, and none can be spiritual without a thorough change being produced on their spiritual nature by *the Spirit*, plainly the Spirit of God. (See verse 8.)

7. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

Marvel not, &c. Yet Nicodemus did marvel. The two propositions which Christ had laid down were to him very astonishing. They were, 1. That the Jews had no title by natural descent to the blessings of Messiah's kingdom. 2. That men must be brought under a Divine influence, and that their former ceremonial religion would avail them nothing. Our Lord here cautions Nicodemus, who was saying, "How can these things be?" against arguing from the difficulty of the subject to its impossibility.

8. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.—Eccl. xi. 5; 1 Cor. ii. 11.

Where it listeth, i. e., pleaseth, so far as

human agency is concerned. The Spirit's times, modes, measures of operation, are variable, mysterious, indefinable. He moves on the soul, not in any way set down and arranged, so that man can follow and trace this out, but absolutely independent of all such set and appointed ways. "God," observes an ancient writer, "hath divers ways into divers men. Into some He comes at noon, in the sunshine of prosperity, to some in the dark and heavy clouds of adversity. Some He affects with the music of the Church, some with the prayer, some with a passage in the sermon, which takes no hold of him that stands next to him. Watch the way in which the Spirit of God comes oftenest to thee, and pervert not that path." *Hearst the sound thereof.* We have no right to speak of the new birth as having taken place, apart from the evidence of the fact. We may charitably hope that it is so, and may speak of one or another, *as if* it were so, but to affirm positively and absolutely that this change has taken place, the Spirit's new-creating energy really applied to a soul in the absence of all outward tokens of such presence, is to fly in the face of the direct teaching of our Lord in these words.

But canst not tell, &c. When the sinner exhibits tokens of a new heart—a penitent heart—a heart made alive to God, and dying to sin, then we see the sinner acted upon by the power and influence of the Spirit, even as the leaf is seen to move under the influence of the wind, but we know no more. Whence sprang this holy influence first? We cannot tell. Whither will it go next? None can tell. As little can we know which leaf is next to quiver in the breathing of the gentlest wind, as the pathway of the Spirit. *So is every one, &c.* As in the blowing of the wind, so in the new birth, there is mystery. But who does not expect to meet with mystery in religion, when it is itself the product of an infinite mind? Some ask, "how can God operate upon a human soul?" Let us rather ask how he moves matter, supports the world upon nothing, and paints the flowers with such various hues. How does the soul operate on the body? How does the mind of one man operate upon

the mind of another, not merely by instruction, but by example and sympathy? We cannot discover the laws by which the particular movements of the wind are governed and regulated. Sometimes it blows gently, and at others there is the storm, and the mighty rushing wind, and then again all is calm. Who can account for this? And who can account for special spiritual visitations on particular persons and districts? But though we cannot account for all the movements of the wind, we may sensibly know them: and so is it with the influences of the Spirit.

9. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, *How can these things be?*—*zvi. 52, 60.*

This reply to our Lord's statement respecting regeneration, is the usual reply of carnal wisdom in the case of Divine mysteries. Things which seem strange to human eyes, and which are certainly above human power, are pronounced to be impossible. Objection to the mysterious wisdom of the Gospel is most unreasonable, since all that the Gospel prescribes to us, as our duty, is plain and evident; all that is mysterious is on God's part, and relates entirely to the surprising acts of Divine wisdom and mercy in the redemption of the world. The curiosity of seeing into, and explaining everything, and adjusting it to our weak ideas, is one of the most dangerous diseases of the human mind. (Job xi. 12; Eccl. vii. 10.) But though Nicodemus asked this question, he seems to have proposed it diffidently, and to have been really desirous to learn the truth, and so our Lord proceeded to further statements.

10. Jesus answered and said unto him, *Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?*

Master—teacher. The thing which Jesus had been teaching, having been previously taught by the prophets (Ps. li. 12; Ezek. xviii. 31, xxxvi. 24-28; Jer. xxxi. 33), ought to have been known by Nicodemus, hence the measure of reproof administered to him. Ignorance on religious subjects is often found where there was no good reason to suspect its existence. Let the strong not be offended at the inquiries of the weak, but, like Jesus, persevere in presenting the truth to inquiring minds, according as they are able to bear it.

11. *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and I ye receive not our witness.* 12. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? 13. And *no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.*

^aMatt. xi. 27; chap. i. 18, vii. 16, viii. 28, xii. 49 and xiv. 24. ^bVerse 32. ^cProv. xxx. 4; chap. vi. 33, 38, 51, 62 and xvi. 26; Acts ii. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 47; Eph. iv. 9, 10.

Verily, verily. (See on verse 3.) *We.* Our Lord, though meaning only Himself, uses the plural number in order to give weight and dignity to what He says, as kings do. *Speak, &c.* "I declare with authority and bear witness to truths, which from all eternity I have known and seen, as God in union with the Father and the Holy Ghost." (viii. 38.) *And ye*—the greater part of you, *received not our witness*—testimony. The reference here is to the *class* to which Nicodemus belonged, but from which he was beginning to be separated in spirit. *Earthly things*—such as the regeneration which takes place on earth. Spiritual things being represented to us in an earthly form (verse 8), come clothed to us with our own notions. We can see the sun better when reflected in the water of a vase, than in the firmament, and we can interpret heaven's language best when it speaks to us in the language of earth. *Heavenly things*—such as God's requirement, in the counsels of heaven, of the atonement and death of His only begotten Son. If they believed not what He told them regarding *themselves*, how should they believe what He might tell them regarding *Himself*? *No man hath ascended, &c.* Verse 13 contains the first "heavenly thing" which our Lord displays to Nicodemus. Jesus could tell of heavenly things, and He *alone* could tell them; for, whilst no one had ever ascended to heaven to bring back a report concerning the transactions there, *He* had come down from thence for this very purpose, speaking to men of things with which He was familiar. Indeed, though He had for man's sake become *the Son of man*, and His bodily presence was among men on earth, yet His Divine nature was in heaven as well—where, indeed, He had ever been the self-existent from all eternity. (Ex. iii. 14; Rev. i. 4.) "Wonder not," says *Jerome*, "to find one and the same to be *Priest*, God and man, the rod and the root, the root and offspring of David, his Son

and yet his Lord; for these things belong to that one Person, who is both God and man; some of them as He is God, some of them as He is man, and some as God-man." (Matt. xxii. 43.)

14. *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

¹Num. xxi. 9. ²viii. 28 and xii. 32. ³Verse 36, vi. 47.

And as Moses, &c. Here is the first "heavenly thing" shown by our Lord to Nicodemus, viz.: the necessity of His own crucifixion. The truth is here exhibited in opposition to the false views generally entertained by the Jews, that the Messiah would first be elevated to the throne of David, and then to the throne of the world.

Mark wherein the brazen serpent and Christ agree. 1. In the *occasion* of their *institution*. They were both appointed for cure and healing. Were the Israelites serpent-stung? We are sin-stung, stung by the infernal serpent. Was the sting of the fiery serpent inflaming, spreading, killing? So is sin. 2. Both the brazen serpent and Christ must be *lifted up* before cure could be obtained. 3. Both must be *looked unto* before cure could be obtained. The looking of the Israelites was as necessary in order to healing as the lifting up of the serpent, and faith is as necessary to salvation as the death of Christ. (Heb. xii. 2.) 4. As *all* were healed that looked upon the brazen serpent, however distant and weak their look, so Christ justifies and saves *all*, however weak their faith, if it be truly sincere, that rely on Him for salvation. 5. As the brazen serpent was effectual for Israel's cure after many stings, so the merit of Christ's death is not only effectual for our cure and healing at our first conversion, but after involuntary relapses and backslidings, if by faith we have recourse to the blood of Christ, we shall find it efficacious for our further benefit and future healing. 6. As the brazen serpent was in the likeness of the fiery serpent, which is Satan's likeness, so Jesus is in the *likeness of sinful flesh*. 7. The consequences of disobedience are the same in both cases. Doubtless many bitten Israelites, painful as their case was, would *reason* rather than *obey*; would speculate on the absurdity of expecting

the bite of a living serpent to be cured by looking at a piece of dead metal in the shape of one—speculate thus *till they died*. Alas! is not salvation by a crucified Redeemer subjected to like treatment? Has “the offense of the cross yet ceased?” (See 2 Kings v. 12.)

“*Must the Son of man be lifted up,*” *i. e.*, it is becoming or necessary in order to the gaining of the ends proposed. *That whosoever believeth*, &c. “Whosoever” in the original is “every one,” salvation through the cross of Christ being declared to be accessible to all who believe on Him. Every one, however guilty, depraved, wretched, who believes the plain, well-accredited testimony of God respecting full salvation through the Just One in the room of the unjust. There is no exception. No holy qualification is required to warrant the sinner to apply to the Saviour. It is because he is guilty and miserable that the salvation is provided. The *belief* here mentioned is not merely of the head, but also of the heart and will, such as is exercised when a person feels his desperate need by reason of sin, flees to Jesus Christ, trusts in Him, leans on Him, and commits his soul entirely to Him as his Saviour and Redeemer. It is not on account of our faith that God saves us: it is through means of our faith. The saving result of faith is given in the two-fold form, the negative, *should not perish* (as otherwise he must), is here opposed to *eternal life*, and the lost condition referred to must therefore be *eternal death*. The words *life* and *death*, are of frequent use in the writings of John, to denote the eternal happiness and the eternal misery of the human soul. (See on verse 16.)

16. *For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

*Rom. v. 8; 1 John iv. 9.

God so loved. How much that “*so*” means, no tongue can describe, or imagination conceive. There is such a height, depth, length and breadth in that love, in every dimension of it, as none but an infinite understanding can fathom. The love of God is the *origin* of salvation. Christ did not die *that* God might love man, He died *because* God loved man. (See Rom. v. 8; 1 John iv. 9, 10.) The atone-

ment is thus not the *cause*, but the *effect* of the love of God. *The world.* Not merely the Jewish nation, as they supposed, but the human race. The atonement offered by Christ Jesus was not merely sufficient for the salvation of the whole world, but it was intended and fitted to remove out of the way of sinners generally, every bar which the perfections of the Divine moral character, and the principles of the Divine moral government presented. In consequence of that atonement, every sinner may be, and if he believe in Jesus, certainly shall be pardoned and saved. (See Titus iii. 4; 2 Cor. v. 19; Ezek. xxxiii. 11; 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4; Titus ii. 11.)

That he gave. While essentially the Father and Son are one, in the economy of grace the Father is greater than the Son. Jesus Christ was divinely authorized and commissioned to act as the Saviour of the world, to do and suffer all that was necessary for the attainment of the salvation of man, in accordance with the perfections of the Divine character, and the principles of the Divine government. (See Rom. iv. 25, viii. 32; John iv. 10; 2 Cor. ix. 15; John vi. 32.) *His only begotten Son.* We are here taught in reference to the Messiah, 1. That He is of the same nature with His Father, that is, that He is God. 2. That whilst He is of the same nature with the Father, He and the Father are in some respects distinct from each other. The Father is not the Son, nor is the Son the Father. 3. That He is the object of the supreme love of the Father. *That whosoever believeth*, &c. The repetition of this glorious saying (see verse 15), shows that mighty and broad as is the love of God, it will prove useless to every one who does not believe in Christ. Jesus employed the universal term “whosoever,” both to invite indiscriminately all to partake of life, and to cut off every excuse from unbelievers. An ancient writer observes that this verse and the two preceding ones comprise all the causes of justification. 1. The remote and efficient cause, God’s love. 2. The approximate efficient cause, the gift of God’s Son. 3. The material cause, Christ’s exaltation on the cross. 4. The instrumental cause, faith. 5. The final cause, eternal life. *Should not*

perish, &c. (2 Thes. i. 9; see on verse 15.) The sinner who believes in Jesus not only escapes hell and condemnation, but has a seed of eternal life at once put in his heart, receives a complete title to an eternal life of glory and blessedness in heaven, and enters into that life after death. The word here rendered *everlasting*, is the same as that in the preceding verse, which is translated "eternal."

17. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

18. Luke ix. 56; chap. v. 45, viii. 15 and xii. 47; 1 John iv. 14.

Our Lord here shows Nicodemus another "heavenly thing"—the main object of the Messiah's mission into the world. *To condemn*, &c. (See on verse 16.) It was love not wrath, which moved the Father to send His Son, it was love, not wrath, which brought the Son down. He was sent, not only to be a witness for the truth, but to be a sacrifice for sin—that *the world through him might be saved*. (1 John ii. 2.) Most wonderful instance of Divine compassion! If we would know how greatly and really God loved the world, we have but to think of the stupendous gift which God the Father gave, and the willingness with which God the Son came down from heaven, not only "making Himself of no reputation," and "taking on Him the form of a servant," but "becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii. 7, 8.) *That the world*, &c. The meaning of this sentence is, not that all the world might finally be saved through Christ, and none be lost, but that all the world might have a door of salvation opened through Christ; that salvation might be provided for all the world, and that any one in the world believing on Christ, might be saved.

18. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.—*av*. 24, vi. 40, 47 and xx. 31.

Believeth on him. (See on verses 15, 16.) *Is not condemned*, i. e., the sentence of condemnation under which he lies from having broken God's law, is removed by faith in Christ. *He that believeth not*, is a general description which applies to all who, while they have an opportunity of becoming acquainted with "the truth as it is in Jesus," do not receive and embrace it—do

not trust in Him with a living faith for salvation. *Is condemned already*, &c. This may signify, either "he is even now condemned, in not believing, he contracts guilt, he subjects himself to punishment," or, "he is already sentenced to punishment. Not only will he be condemned at last, but the sentence of condemnation is already passed, and if it be not reversed, the judgment of the last day will only confirm that sentence." (Mark xvi. 16.)

Already. The day of grace may be lost, before the day of death come. (xii. 38–40.)

19. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20. 4, 9, 10, 11 and viii. 12.

Here we have the folly and the guilt of those who will not believe. *This is the condemnation*, this aggravates their crime, this justifies their sentence, this very thing condemns them, that when light is offered they prefer to remain in darkness. They are not straitened in *God*, but they are straitened in *themselves*. It is not that opportunity is denied them, but they are unwilling to avail themselves of it. *Light is come*, &c. Christ the Light (i. 9), is come into the world from heaven, a greater than any earthly potentate is come down to us, bringing light with all the blessings it symbolizes, and men are unwilling to come to it, prefer to remain in their original darkness. *Because their deeds were evil*. This light exposes and reproves "the unfruitful works of darkness," therefore men prefer to continue in the darkness which covers and conceals their evil deeds.

20. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. 21. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.—*Job* xxiv. 13, 17; *Eph*. v. 13.

If men came to the light they could no longer practice the works of darkness, therefore they hate the light, and will not come to the light, lest their deeds should be discovered and reprov'd. But the honest and sincere inquirer, "the Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile" (i. 47), walks faithfully according to the measures of light vouchsafed to him, and instead of shrinking from that light, is eager after more. *That his deeds*, &c. This is not to be attributed to the love of praise or notoriety, but a desire to bring one's acts and feelings to the searching test of truth, in order

that it may be determined whether *they are wrought in God, i. e.*, are in accordance with God's commands, and proceed from Him as the source of all good. (See Ps. xix. 12, cxxxix. 23, 24.) Hatred of the light is still the cause of that prejudice and contempt with which the Bible is treated by evil men. They are against the Scripture, because the Scripture is against them. But Divine truth, however hated and perverted, cannot be made of none effect by all the malice of men or devils. (Job xxiv. 13, 17; Acts iii. 46.)

22. ¶ After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. 23. ¶ And John also was baptizing in Enon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. 24. For John was not yet cast into prison.

iv. 2. *1 Sam. ix. 4. *Matt. iii. 5, 6. †Matt. xiv. 3

After these things. The expression of time is indefinite. *Land of Judea*—the rural parts of that province, the foregoing conversation being held in the capital. *And baptized.* Jesus did not Himself administer the sign. (See iv. 12.) What a king's servants do, is often spoken of as done by himself. *Enon* was probably situated in one of the valleys running down to the Jordan, from the west. *Salim* was a village near the valley of the Jordan, some eight miles south of Bethlehem. *Because there was much water there.* Some maintain that nothing more is here meant, than that there was water enough there for the multitude of people with their beasts of burden, who flocked to John's baptism. Others contend that John chose this locality for the administration of baptism, because he administered the rite by immersion. Whatever the mode of the baptism, these water conveniences would be very essential for the assembled multitudes.

Cast into prison. (See on Matt. xiv. 3-12.) This incidental allusion by the Evangelist to the Baptist's imprisonment, as to a well-known fact, gives an air of authenticity to his Gospel, stamps upon it a character of genuineness, and is one of the many marks of credibility in the sacred narrative. The remark itself seems to have been inserted as a note of time, that it might be known that our Lord's ministry did not begin, as some might suppose, after the imprisonment of the Baptist, but

before. We ought to labor in the work of God until we fall under an impossibility of performing it, according to John's example.

25. Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. 26. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.—i. 7, 13, 27, 34.

About purifying, i. e., baptizing, the symbolical meaning of washing with water, being put (as in ii. 6) for the act itself. As John and Jesus were the only teachers who baptized *Jews*, discussions might easily arise between the Baptist's disciples and such Jews as declined to receive that rite. *He that was with thee, &c.* Their jealousy and party zeal for their master prompted them to speak thus circuitously and reservedly of the Lord, whom they ought, with that master, to have openly acknowledged to be "the Lamb of God." *All men come to him.* The disciples of John did not doubt but that this consideration would excite in him those passions which they felt working in themselves. But John was not framed of materials liable to take fire from such a spark. (Mark xii. 32; 1 Cor. iii. 4, 5.) True Christians can be content to have others go before them and others overtake them; envy can be content with neither. (1 Sam. xviii. 8; Luke xv. 28; Prov. xiv. 30.)

27. John answered and said, *A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. 28. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. 29. ¶ He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. 30. He must increase, but I must decrease. 31. ¶ He that cometh from above is above all; he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. 32. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth, and no man receiveth his testimony.

*1 Cor. iv. 7; Heb. v. 4; James i. 17. †Chap. i. 20, 27. *Mal. iii. 1; Mark i. 2; Luke i. 17. †Matt. xxii. 2; 2 Cor. xi. 2; Eph. v. 25, 27; Rev. xxi. 9. *Cant. v. 1. †Verse 13; chap. viii. 23. †Matt. xxviii. 18; chap. i. 15, 27; Rev. i. 5. †1 Cor. xv. 47. *Chap. vi. 33; 1 Cor. xv. 47; Eph. i. 21; Phil. ii. 9. †Verse 11; chap. viii. 26 and xv. 15.

John answered. His reply is one of the noblest and most affecting utterances that ever came from the lips of man. *A man*—I, who am but a man. *Receive*—take to himself. *Nothing*—not anything, much less the name of Messiah. *Given him from heaven*, that is, from God. John affirms that he could not go beyond the bounds of his heaven-appointed commission. He could not enter the lists with Jesus, whose forerunner only he was to be. He also reminds his disappointed disciples that

such was his language to them from the first—*Ye yourselves bear me witness*, &c. Faithful ministers of Christ think it honor enough to be His servants, and would not have their followers attribute the least part of that honor and glory to them which is due to Him. *The bride*—the Church. *The bridegroom*—Christ. (See Isa. liv. 5, lxii. 5; Jer. xxxi. 32; comp. iii. 14, 20; also Hos. ii. 19, 20; Eph. v. 23, &c.; 2 Cor. xi. 2; Rom. vii. 1-4; Rev. xxi. 9.) *The friend of the bridegroom*. There is an allusion here which would have peculiar propriety in the East, where the friend of the bridegroom is always the recognized agent for negotiating the marriage, and the channel of communication between the bridegroom and the bride elect. Thus early in this Gospel is a second testimony of honor (ii. 2) rendered to the marriage relation.

He must increase, &c. His present success is but the beginning of a most glorious and universal spread of righteousness, peace, truth, and good-will among men. My baptism and teaching, as pointing out the coming Messiah, must *cease*; because the Messiah is now come, and has entered publicly on the work of His glorious ministry.

He that cometh from above, &c., *i. e.*, from heaven. This indicates not only Christ's Divine extraction, but His Divine nature. He had, before His conception, a heavenly being. None but He that came from heaven, was fit to show us the will of heaven or the way to heaven. When God would save man, He *sent from above*. Hence Christ's sovereign authority, He is *above all things* and all persons, "God over all, blessed forever more." The antithesis in *above all* corresponds to the *is of the earth*, and that he *testifieth to speaketh of the earth*. *Hath seen and heard*. In chap. vi. 46, Christ claims for Himself exclusively the *seeing*, and ascribes to man only the power of *hearing* the Father. *And no man*, &c. The phrase must be taken with limitation, denoting few or none. There were some cheering exceptions, and should be more.

33. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. 34. "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." 35. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." Rom. ii. 4; 1 John v. 10. "Chap. vii. 16. "Chap. i. 16. "Matt. xi. 27 and xxviii. 18; Luke x. 22; Chap. v. 20, 22, xiii. 3 and xvii. 2; Heb. ii. 8.

He that hath received His testimony. Hath received and fully believed His doctrine—hath yielded his *heart* to its influence. *Hath set to His seal*, &c. As sealing was employed for vouching the authenticity of writs, to *seal* came, by a natural and easy transition, to signify to *vouch*, to *attest*. Our acceptance of God's message by His Son, through an unshaken faith, vouches on our part, the faithfulness of God, and the truth of His promises. Although we cannot demonstrate the mysteries of Revelation by Reason, yet we may give a rational account why we believe them. (i. 51, iii. 3; Rom. iii. 4.) For He whom God hath sent (*i. e.*, the Messiah), *speaketh the words of God*, and hence to disbelieve the one is to disbelieve the other. *Giveth not the Spirit by measure*—as to the highest of the ancient prophets. In Christ "dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (See i. 4, 9, viii. 2; Col. ii. 3; Isa. xi. 2.)

The Father loveth the Son, &c. This is obviously spoken in a way of eminence and distinction; God loves His people, yet though His love to them be the same with the love that He bears to His Son, it is the same in kind only, not in degree—"in all things He must have the pre-eminence." The Father's love to the Son is founded in three things: 1. Likeness. He is "the image of the invisible God," "the express image of His person." "In Him was no sin." 2. Obedience. He was the ten commandments embodied and alive, walking up and down the earth for three-and-thirty years. "I delight," said He, "to do thy will, yea, thy law is within my heart." 3. The devoting Himself to die for the recovery of sinners. "I lay down my life for the sheep. Therefore doth my Father love me," &c. *And hath given all things*, &c. This assertion cannot be taken too extensively. It takes in, 1, all *Nature*. "The world is His, and the fullness thereof." 2. All in *Providence*. All that is devised and carried on in our world is under His rule. The government is upon His shoulders. 3. All in *grace*. The resources of the natural and providential worlds are His, to enable Him to accomplish the work of grace. He is King in Zion. Everything is committed to His authority. 4. All in *glory*. At death He

comes and receives the souls of His people to Himself, that where He is there they may be also.

38. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. PHab. ii. 4; chap. i. 12 and vi. 47; verses 15, 16; Rev. 1. 17; 1 John v. 10.

He that believeth, &c. Every one that believes with the heart (see on verses 15 and 16) on the Lord Jesus Christ, *hath* everlasting life. He has in him *now* a principle of spiritual life, which shall be expanded and perfected in another, a holier and happier world. He has here the *earnest*, and he shall hereafter have the fruition, of all the blessings and privileges which Christ came to procure for us, purchased with His precious blood, and deserved for us by His perfect obedience and merit. It is not the speculation of heaven as a thing to come, that satisfies the desires of religious souls, but the real possession of it, even in this life. Men are apt to seek after assurance of heaven as a thing to come, rather than after heaven itself, and the inward possession of it here. (Verse 6, vi. 54; 1 John v. 11, 15; Phil. iii. 20.)

He that believeth not, &c. The rejection of Christ's testimony is also a rejection of

God's. (John v. 10.) To *see* in this passage, isto enjoy. (Verse 3.) The life which awaits such is a living death. (2 Thes. i. 8, 9; Jude 15; Rev. vi. 15, xiv. 9-11, xix. 15.) *The wrath of God abideth on him*, because he despises or disregards the offers of His love. This wrath *abideth* on the unbeliever, it remains upon him, and as he has rejected the only means of its removal, it will abide on him forever. This sentence furnishes an unanswerable reply to some grievous errors 1. It condemns the notion that under the Gospel there is no more anger in God, and that He is only love, mercy and compassion, and nothing else. 2. It condemns the modern idea that Christ, by His death, justified all mankind, and removed God's wrath from the whole race of Adam, and that all men and women are justified in reality, though they do not know it, and will all finally be saved, whether they have faith or not. 3. It condemns the weak and false charity of those who say that preachers of the Gospel should never speak of God's wrath, and should never mention hell. To warn men of God's wrath, and of their danger of hell, is not harshness, but true charity.

1. Who came to Jesus? 2. What did he say? 3. What was our Lord's reply? 4. Why is the Spirit's operation compared to the wind? 5. How was the serpent lifted up in the wilderness a type of Christ? 6. Why did God send His Son into the world? 7. What is "the condemnation?" 8. What question arose between some of John's disciples and the Jews? 9. How did John dispose of it? 10. Explain verse 33. 11. What is said of the love of the Father for the Son? 12. What of him that believeth on the Son? 13. What of him that believeth not the Son?

CHAPTER IV.

1 Christ talketh with a woman of Samaria, and revealeth himself unto her. 27. His disciples marvel. 31. He declareth to them his zeal to God's glory. 39. Many Samaritans believe on him. 43. He departeth into Galilee, and healeth the ruler's son that lay sick at Capernaum.

WHEN therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, 2. (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) 3. He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.—lit. 22, 23.

From verse 35 of this chapter, it may be inferred that the Redeemer at this time remained about half a year in the surrounding country. Our Lord knew by His

Divine Omniscience that the Pharisees knew of His success. In verse 1, the word *Jesus* is used instead of the pronoun *He* designedly. It is not tautology. The proper name is employed because the reports which the Pharisees had heard is given *verbatim*. *Though Jesus himself, &c.* The mere ministerial act of baptism, as the Evangelist is careful to note, Jesus accomplished by other hands than His own, He reserving the baptism with the Holy Ghost for Himself. *Departed again, &c.* It

became a measure of prudence to withdraw from the observation of the jealous Pharisees, into the remoter region of Galilee. Jesus submitted to His own precept. (Matt. x. 23.) He had yet a great work to do.

4. And he must needs go through Samaria.

Must needs go, &c., for two reasons, 1. Because the direct road from Judea to Galilee lay through the province of Samaria. 2. He had in design the conversion of the poor woman, mentioned in verse 7. We cannot imagine that an event of such magnitude in itself, and involving the salvation also of many of the Samaritans, was accidental.

5. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

Gen. xxxiii. 19 and xlviii. 22; Josh. xxiv. 32.

The proper name of the town referred to, seems to have been Shechem, or Sychem, but it was commonly called *Sychar* by the Jews—which appears to have been a species of reproachful nickname—the word signifying “idolatrous,” or “drunken.” The town is still in existence, and is now called Nablûs, a corruption of Neapolis. *Near to the parcel*, &c. In the neighborhood of that piece of ground which Jacob seems first to have purchased from the descendants of Hamor, and afterward, when some Amorites had taken possession of it, to have recovered as his right by a successful appeal to arms, and which he left as a legacy to his favorite son Joseph. (Gen. xxxiii. 19, xlviii. 22; Josh. xxiv. 32.)

6. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

We have no reason to doubt that the well which bore Jacob's name, was indeed dug by his orders, and that out of it he and his family drank while residing in this neighborhood. In that dry and thirsty land water is precious to a degree that we can hardly realize in this land of ours, and the man who digs a well there is a public benefactor. These wells are usually enclosed with a low wall, which affords a seat to the weary wayfaring man. *Being wearied with his journey*. This representation does more to convince us that Jesus was “very man,” to assure us of His sympathy and compassion, than all the declarations of sympathy, or all the words of compassion

which He ever uttered. *Sat thus*—that is, like a fatigued person as He was. If wearied with your spiritual journey, thou canst not go on, *sit down*, but let it be by the way-side. Wait, but let it be by *Jacob's well*. Ply the ordinances of God, and the God of ordinances will come to thee and bless thee. (Ps. lxxxiv. 5-7.) The Evangelist, by adding *about the sixth hour*, brings more vividly to our consciousness the oppression and burden of the time, for it was the heat of the middle noon; he also teaches us, even in the smallest matters, to practice exactness and precision.

7. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. 8. For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.

A woman of Samaria, i. e., a Samaritan woman. *To draw water*—an office which in the East still falls to the women. Jesus waits for the despised Samaritan! The Son of God waits! She comes, the well her object, not the Saviour sitting there. By chance she comes, as men would say, to fill her water-pot, but not so Christ. She came to fill her pitcher at an earthly spring, and little did she wist life's open fountain rippled at her feet. How often do men hasten to find a rill to slake their thirst, heedless of the deep waters of life and peace which flow steadily by their side. In the conversion of this woman we have a remarkable example of the Saviour's grace. 1. Of its freeness in selecting so wicked a person without her desire, and making her not only the partaker, but the instrument of His goodness. 2. Of its gentleness, in having recourse to no means of alarm—no violence. 3. Of its power—in the victory it gained over the conception of her heart. 4. Of its effects. She not only believed with the heart, but confessed with the mouth. No sooner had she gained good, than she was concerned to do good. *Give me to drink*. A real thirst was one motive of our Lord's request (xix. 28; Matt. xxi. 18), though what He most truly thirsted after was the salvation of the woman's soul. (See verses 31, 32.) It was our Lord's custom to make material things minister spiritual sustenance. *For his disciples were gone*, &c. This verse is parenthetical, being designed to show why Jesus was dependent upon the woman for a drink of water, His disciples having with

them the vessel with which water was drawn from wells or fountains.

9. Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

2 Kings xvii. 24; Luke ix. 52, 53; Acts x. 28.

How is it, &c. The woman expresses surprise at the unusual occurrence of a Jew asking a favor from a Samaritan. From His dress, dialect, and those unmistakable features of Jewish physiognomy with which the Samaritans had nothing in common, she took Him to be a Jew, as indeed He was: but she took Him to be nothing more. She was, however, soon to learn how much more He was. It is remarkable that while the Samaritan woman here is taunting the Lord with being a Jew, the Jews, in a somewhat similar passage (viii. 48), charge Him with being a Samaritan. *The Jews have no dealings, &c.* Our Evangelist, as his manner is, adds this as the reason for the woman's surprise. Of that known enmity which subsisted between the Jews and Samaritans, the Lord Jesus took no undue advantage to make friends or proselytes of either. Upon the Jews He inculcated a more comprehensive benevolence, with the Samaritan He defended the orthodoxy of the Jewish creed. (2 Tim. ii. 15.)

10. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

Isa. xlii. 3 and xliiv. 3; Jer. ii. 13; Zech. xiii. 1 and xiv. 8.

The gift of God. By this is to be understood, according to some, the Holy Ghost; according to others, Christ Himself (Isa. ix. 5; chap. iii. 16); according to others, the gracious and golden opportunity vouchsafed to this woman to meet the Saviour of the world; according to others still, eternal life. (Rom. vi. 23; Isa. lv. 1; Rev. xxii. 17.) The expression denotes the blessings of the Christian salvation—the knowledge of the true character of God—the pardon of sin—genuine holiness—conformity of mind and will to God, which constitute real happiness, and which God gives to souls thirsting in the wilderness of this world as the *water of life* to slake their thirst. *If thou knewest, &c.* If the Samaritan woman had known the nature and excellence of this gift of God, and if she had known that He who spake to her

was indeed the Messiah—the promised Saviour—the Author of this salvation—the Person who was to bestow this gift on mankind—Himself the fountain and spring of this life—instead of hesitating about complying with His request, and instead of moving the embers of that wretched quarrel between Samaritans and Jews, she would immediately, in her turn, have become a petitioner, and in answer to her petition, she would have found no hesitating delay, but would have received from Him, what well deserves the name of “living water,” as calculated to quench and satisfy completely the thirst for happiness. Note, 1. Christ has living water to give. 2. If men would only ask they would receive it. 3. They do not ask, because they are ignorant. 4. We may be very near to our greatest mercies and not perceive them.

11. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; from whence then hast thou that living water? 12. Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

Sir. This was in that day the usual form of courtesy. (xii. 21.) *Nothing to draw with, &c.* (See on verse 8.) *The well is deep.* Travelers have found the well which tradition has pointed out from the beginning as “Jacob’s well,” to be of the depth of one hundred and five feet, and to this day it contains ten or fifteen feet of fresh water. The argument here is, the great patriarch not only gave his children and his cattle to drink of this well, but he drank of it himself. He knew of no other resource whereby to quench his own thirst. *Art thou greater, &c.*—she therefore asks, already beginning to suspect that she is addressing some great One indeed.

13. Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again;

Without directly correcting the woman’s mistake, or formally comparing Himself with Jacob, Jesus asserted, in metaphorical language, that the relief which the water of Jacob’s well could give was only temporary, but that the relief which His blessings would bestow would be permanent. *Drinketh.* The original expressions in this verse, and the next, though both rendered “*whosoever drinketh*,” are different one from the other. The one sets forth the recurrence, the interrupted seasons of

drinking of earthly water; the other, the *once having tasted*, and ever continuing in the increasing power and living forth-flowing, of that life-long draught. *Shall thirst again.* Examine the most specious earthly good, and you will find that disappointment in pursuit, dissatisfaction and satiety in enjoyment, and uncertainty in possession, communicate a three-fold vanity to all sublunary things. The attainment of such good increases the thirst and promotes the torment. "Lord," says *Augustine*, "Thou hast made us for Thee, and our heart is disquieted till it resteth in Thee."

14. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.—*vi.* 35, 38. *vii.* 33.

Whosoever drinketh, &c. (See on verse 13; also *viii.* 51, 52, *xi.* 26, *xiii.* 10.) O precious words to this poor thirsty universe. *Never thirst.* What does it mean? do not those who drink thirst for Christ, for holiness, for happiness and heaven? Yes, but thirst for the polluted and polluting streams of earth, its wealth, its pleasures, its fame, as once they did, they do not. The reason is, the water which Jesus gives quenches the dreadful fire from which such thirst springs. *In him a well of water.* "He who receives this living water of me shall become himself in some sort, although of course only in a secondary sense, a springing well, no cistern merely to contain, but a springing fountain out of which shall flow these same waters, shall minister to others the same salvation which has been already ministered to himself." (See *vii.* 38.) *Springing up, &c.* This expresses, that death not only does not interrupt this life, this communion with God (*xi.* 25), but that it rather brings it to perfection. Religion is life and spirit, which, flowing out from God, who "hath life in Himself," returns to Him again, as into its own Original, carrying the souls of good men up with it. The spirit of a good man is always drinking in fountain-goodness, and fills itself more and more, till it be "filled with all the fullness of God." (*i.* 51; *Ps.* lxxxiv. 5-7.)

15. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. 16. Jesus saith unto her, Go call thy husband, and come hither. 17. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I

have no husband: 18. For thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that thou saidst truly; *svi.* 34 and *xvii.* 2, 3; *Rom.* *vi.* 23, 1 *John* *v.* 20.

Give me this water. There is a certain blind longing after this springing water awakened in the soul of this poor sinner, who had thirsted so long, though still there is confusion and contradiction in her mind about it, for she imagines that it will exempt her from the toil of coming to draw from that well any more. As she has not risen to the full spirituality of His words or of His character, Jesus will now so direct the conversation as to furnish the proof that He is a *prophet* of God, and that His words express Divine spiritual truth. *Call thy husband.* Jesus knew that she had no living husband, just as God knew that Cain had no living brother. (*Gen.* *iv.* 9.) *I have no husband.* The woman's slumbering conscience now began to be aroused in reference to the guilty life she was leading. The Saviour, like a good physician, proceeds to probe the wound more deeply still, and to pave the way for her acknowledgment of Him, first as a Prophet, and afterward as the Messiah Himself. *Thou hast well said, &c.* *He whom thou now hast, &c.* From this it would seem that she was a person of loose morals, and disreputable character.

Observe, 1. Jesus dealt very tenderly and gently with this woman, using no upbraiding speech. So, in reproofing sin, all sharpness and bitterness of expression must be avoided. 2. Christ discovered her sins to her particularly, setting her secret sin before the face of her conscience distinctly. So, if ever the ministry of the word works upon the minds of men to their conversion, it must be by a particular and close application of the word to every man's conscience: general applications will not affect. 3. The particular sin which Christ charged home upon the conscience of this woman, was the sin of uncleanness. This sin will be heaviest upon the conscience, and wound the soul most deeply, when the Spirit of God once effectually discovers it, for there is no sin so directly opposite to sanctification and holiness as this sin, no sin that quenches the Holy Spirit of God like this.

19. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. 20. Our fathers worshipped in this

mountain, and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

¹Luke vii. 16 and xxiv. 19; chap. vi. 14 and vii. 40. ²Judg. ix. 7. ³Deut. xii. 5, 11; 1 Kings ix. 3; 2 Chron. vii. 12.

Our Lord's knowledge of the woman's character and history persuaded her that He must have supernatural means of information. In speaking this, her conviction, she virtually confesses all the truth, acknowledges that the charge was just. (See 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.) The conviction of sin, however, was not at present deep, as appears from the apparent indifference with which she went on with the conversation. *Our fathers*, &c. Glad, probably, to shift the discourse from a subject so painful and discreditable to her, she introduces the great point of controversy between the Jews and the Samaritans. Speculation about theological doctrine is often found in unnatural union with habitual neglect of moral duty, and among the endless tortuosities of the depraved human heart, this is one, to seek in polemical discussions respecting orthodoxy and heterodoxy, protection from the shafts of conviction for plain violation of the law of God. How awful is such self-deception! (See xii. 29; Job xxi. 14; Isa. xxx. 10.) *In this mountain*—Mount Gerizim, but a little way from Sychar. The Samaritans maintained that on this mountain Abraham and Jacob had erected an altar, and offered sacrifices to Jehovah. (Gen. xii. 6, 7, xxxiii. 20), and therefore that the Deity had willed *blessing* to be pronounced from thence, and an altar to be erected, alleging in proof Deut. xxvii. 4, 12. The remnant of Samaritans yet subsisting, continue to worship on Mount Gerizim three times in the year, with great solemnity. *Ye say*, in opposition to our claims for the sanctity of this mountain. *Is the place*, referred to in Deut. xii. 5. *Where men ought* (according to the passage just quoted) *to worship*.

¹Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

²Mal. i. 11; 1 Tim. ii. 8.

"The time is just at hand when the solemn public worship of God 'the Father,' the common Father of His human family, shall not be confined to any one place, and when of course the controversy whether Gerizim or Jerusalem has

the better claim to that honor, shall be superseded."

²²Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. ²³1 Kings xvii. 23. ²⁴Isa. ii. 3; Luke xxiv. 47: Rom. ix. 4, 5.

Ye know not what. The Samaritans acknowledged the Pentateuch only, and as they were destitute of the Prophets and Psalms, they wanted not only the complete development of theological truth, but especially also the entire compass of the Messianic prophecies. God was consequently for them, in a certain degree, an unknown God; hence also the neuter form of expression in the original—"a Being whom ye know not." (See Acts xvii. 23.) *We know*, &c. Under the "*we*" Jesus embraces Himself as well as the Jews. This He may have done in condescension to the woman's idea of Him. But could He be *man* in fact, without belonging to a distinct *nationality*? *Salvation is of the Jews*. Salvation was to come from the lineage of David, and by consequence from the Jews; they could not, therefore, remain without an accurate knowledge of God. (Gen. xlix. 10; Isa. xlii. 13.) Jesus sprang from them as did also the twelve Apostles, and in general the first preachers of the Gospel: the Gospel proceeded from them to the Gentiles.

²³But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him. ²⁴Phil. iii. 2. ²⁵1 Cor. xiii. 17.

But. Jesus further shows that a worship superior, not merely to that observed on that "mountain," but even to that rendered at Jerusalem, is at hand. The "*now is*" declares that this is a future which has already commenced. The dispensation of the Spirit, in which God the Spirit shall be spiritually worshiped, is not merely something which is to be hereafter, she stands already upon its threshold. Prophesied of long since (Jer. iii. 16; Hag. ii. 7-10; Zeph. iii. 9; Isa. xlv. 23) it has now actually begun. *True worshippers*, i. e., those who are free from all formalism and hypocrisy. *In spirit* is opposed to mere external forms of worship. So *in truth* is opposed not only to false doctrine, but also to the hypocrisy that conceals its true character by an outward show of piety. The preposition *in* denotes, as it were, the element in which this wor-

ship is exercised. Of course our Lord does not here (nor does He anywhere else) condemn external worship by suitable forms and observances. He Himself performed such worship unto God, so did His Apostles and disciples. He only condemns the substitution of forms and observances for true and humble devotion. (Ps. xvi. 9; Gen. xxviii. 16, 17; Deut. xii. 11.) We are not to put God off, as the Jews and Samaritans were too much disposed to do, with bodily worship only, but we must worship Him *in spirit* too, and by consequence *in truth*, that being the only true worship, which is thus performed by the whole man, by the body and spirit both, unto Him that made them both. (Job i. 20; Matt. xxvi. 39; Luke xviii. 13, 14; Eph. iii. 14.) *For the Father seeketh, &c* Only such worshippers are acceptable. It is intimated that they are not easily found.

24. *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*—*2 Cor. iii. 17.*

The Saviour's intention here is not to prove the spiritual nature of God, but that the worship and service must correspond with its object. If God were corporeal and confined within certain limits, there might be reason why He should be worshiped only corporeally, and His service confined to this or that locality where He might be present and perceive it; but seeing that He is a Spirit, and so present everywhere, men may worship Him everywhere, and spiritual service is peculiarly pleasing to Him. There is also a secondary meaning of the passage—that of earnestness and genuineness, heart-worship. *In spirit and in truth.* (See on verse 23.) *"Must worship him."* There is a fitness, a consistency, a necessity, in this. A Spirit must be worshiped spiritually.

25. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. 26. Jesus saith unto her, *I that speak unto thee am he.*
1 Verses 29, 39. 2 Matt. xxvi. 65; Mark xiv. 62; chap. ix. 37.

The woman understood Jesus, in what He said of "salvation" (verse 22), to refer to the Messiah. In order, therefore, to express this intelligence of His meaning, as well as to waive a decision in which she cared not to acquiesce, but was unable to discuss, she proceeds to declare her belief in the near advent of the Messiah (a He-

brew word, which John, for the second time (see i. 42), explains to mean the "Christ," that is, "the Anointed One"), and implies that all doubts of this nature will be effectually solved by Him, at His coming. *I that speak, &c.* The all-important point is now attained. Jesus has announced Himself as Jew, Prophet, MESSIAH. Jacob's *Shiloh* was thus still found at "Jacob's well." (Gen. xlix. 10.) No words of acknowledgment or surprise from this poor woman are recorded, but we can have no doubt that she asked and obtained the living water, and how full her faith that the Teacher had arrived who *can tell us all things*, her energetic and successful mission to her countrymen shows.

27. *And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?* 28. The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, 29. Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? 30. Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.—*1 Verse 25.*

Marvelled. So great (however absurd and ill-founded) was the pride of the Jewish literati, that they imagined that to hold discourse with women, on any serious and important matter, would ill suit the dignity and gravity which ought to be uniformly maintained by a rabbi, or doctor of their law. That the disciples were not, in anything, superior to the prejudices of the age, is manifest from the whole of their history. That the woman was a Samaritan doubtless made the matter more astonishing. *Yet no man, &c.* As the reverence of the disciples induced them not to question the propriety of our Lord's conduct—though for the present they could not understand it—so should we act toward Him. He is not bound to give account of any of His matters, and He often requires us to walk by faith, and not by sight. But we know that His work is perfect, His ways are judgment.

Left her water-pot, either, 1, for the use of the Saviour and His disciples, who were just going to partake of their homely fare, or, 2, from indifference, being now so impressed and occupied with infinitely greater and better things, or, 3, because it would have proved a hindrance to her, she could not bear the thought of losing a moment in communicating the knowledge she possessed. *Come, see a man,* that Himself,

without waiting for my questions, regarding too my past as well as present state, *told me all things*, &c. The same shall one day be every one's case, the same Jesus (though in more awful circumstances), shall tell every one of us *all that we ever did*. Say, then, where lies our wisdom, but in a constant endeavor to do that that will bear the telling? Happy are they that pursue this endeavor. (Ps. l. 21; Rom. ii. 16.) *Is not this the Christ?* The form of the question (in the Greek) is a distant, modest way of only half *insinuating* what it seemed hardly fitting for her to *affirm*: nor does she refer to what He said of Himself, but solely to His disclosure to her of the particulars of her own life. What He told her of *herself*, prepared her to believe what He told her of *Himself*. *They went out*, &c. How different from the Jews! and richly was their openness to conviction rewarded.

31. ¶ In the meanwhile his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. 32. But he said unto them, ¶ I have meat to eat that ye know not of. 33. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him aught to eat? 31. Jesus saith unto them. ¶ My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

¶ Jer. xv. 16. ¶ Job xxiii. 12; chap. vi. 33, xvii. 4 and xix. 30. ¶ Heb. xii. 2.

In the meanwhile—the interval while the woman is occupied in going to the city and returning with her neighbors. *Master, eat*. They had so much affection for their Master, that they could not bear to see Him refuse the food they brought Him. *Hath any man*, &c. What wonder if the woman understood not the water? (Verse 11.) The disciples do not yet understand the food. (Matt. xv. 15, 16; Heb. v. 12.) *My meat*, &c. Jesus was too intent upon the souls He was now going to save, to be able to eat. Here was the power and triumph of the soul over the body. When we are going to enjoy a great delight, our appetite is taken away; and so it was with Jesus, His meat was to do His Father's will, and to finish His work. (See Job xxiii. 12; Ps. xix. 10, xl. 7, 8; Heb. x. 7.) What was that will? What was that work? To seek and to save those which were lost; to glorify His Father by the salvation of sinners. (xvii. 4, xix. 30.) O what love Christ had to take delight in saving us His enemies! And shall we spend our lives in doing *our own* will, and seeking *our own* glory?

35. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest. 36. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. 37. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. 38. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

¶ Matt. ix. 37; Luke x. 2. ¶ Dan. xii. 3; 1 Cor. ix. 19, 23; Phil. iii. 15, 16; 1 Thes. ii. 19.

Say not ye, &c. "It is a common saying among you, when the seed is cast into the ground, in four months we shall have harvest, but lift up your eyes, and say, if, though we have but commenced sowing, it be not harvest already, are not this people really a people prepared for the Lord?" It is likely our Lord refers here not only to what had just occurred, but also to the great success which had attended His labors and those of His disciples, in Judea. *He that reapeth*, that is, the person who succeeds in converting men to the faith of Christ, *receiveth wages*, obtains a glorious reward, and *gathereth fruit*, &c. This either refers to his reward being an eternal one, or rather denotes that those who are converted by his means—the fruits of his ministry—shall be saved everlastingly; so that the sower—he who used means for their salvation, and did not see their complete success—and he that reapeth, that is, who has been the means of their conversion, may, in their everlasting salvation, find a common enjoyment.

One soweth, &c. This proverb was fulfilled in the case of our Lord's disciples—other men had labored, and they had entered into their labors. *I sent you to reap*, &c. It was owing to John's preliminary labors that their preaching had been so successful. This, probably, was said by our Lord to repress the vanity of His disciples, who might be flattered by the great multitudes that in Judea had been induced to submit to baptism.

39. ¶ And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.—Verse 29.

Believed on him. Wonderful readiness! They had not yet seen Jesus. (See verse 40.) The woman (who was the first Apostle of Christ in Samaria) must have testified with great power among those thirsting souls, hitherto inexperienced in such things. *He told me*, &c. (See on verse 29.)

40. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

Tarry, always, or at least a long time, all the time He could spare out of His brief ministry. They wanted to know more of Him who had so drawn them to Himself, they wanted to bring their kinsfolk and neighbors unto the same blessedness. We can only suppose that these two days were spent in teaching and preaching the Gospel.

41. And many more believed because of his own word;

This verse shows the sovereignty of God in saving souls. One is called in one way, and another in another. Some Samaritans believed when they heard the woman testify. Others did not believe till they heard Christ Himself. We must be careful that we do not bind down the Holy Ghost to one mode of operation.

42. And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard *him* ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.—*xxvii. 8; 1 John iv. 14.*

Now we believe, &c. John loves to mark the advancing steps of faith, and how those who believe come to believe more strongly (*Comp. ii. 11, xvi. 30, xx. 8.*) This speech of her fellow-townsmen to the woman has nothing rude or offensive about it, rather, indeed, the contrary. "We set our own seals to the truth of thy report." (*See 1 Kings x. 6, 7; 2 Chron. ix. 5, 6.*) *We have heard him ourselves*—the gracious words which He speaks, the authority with which He speaks them, He has so commended Himself to us, with such demonstration of the truth, that we bow to His claims, and, quite irrespective of thy testimony, take Him for what He avouches Himself to be, *the Christ*, &c. May we, if we cannot like these Samaritans, receive the Saviour into our houses, at least welcome Him into our hearts, and, in the diligent and devout use of the means of grace, entertain there that Heavenly Guest, that He may abide with us, not for a time, but forever!

43. ¶ Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee. 44. For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. 45. Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast. *cMatt. xlii. 57; Mark vi. 4; Luke iv. 21. dff. 23 and iii. 2. eDeut. xvi. 16.*

After two days, literally, "the two days" of His stay at Sychar. *Jesus himself testified*, &c. If Nazareth (which was in Galilee), was Christ's "own country," this statement should be filled up thus: "He went into the region of Galilee, but not, as

might have been expected, to that part of it called "His own country" Nazareth (*see Mark vi. 14; Luke iv. 24*), for He acted on the maxim which He oft repeated, "that a prophet," &c. (*See on Matt. xiii. 57; Mark vi. 4; Luke iv. 24.*) The Galileans welcomed Christ, not because they believed in Him as the Messiah, but on account of the miracles which they had seen performed by Him at Jerusalem. They doubtless hoped that He would exercise His wonderful miraculous power, in effecting their deliverance from the Roman yoke, which was particularly galling and oppressive to the Galileans.

46. So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.—*fil. 1, 11.*

Into Cana—perhaps to the residence of those at whose wedding He had performed His first miracle. *Nobleman*—one attached to the court of Herod Antipas. What avails all the pomp of life which appears abroad, if, when we shift the gaudy flattering scene, the man is unhappy where happiness must begin—at home? Whatever ingredients of bliss Providence may have poured into his cup, domestic afflictions will render the whole composition distasteful.

47. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

Besought him, &c. The man's application showed faith, but it was limited and imperfect. He believed that Jesus *could* heal his son, but not without coming down to Capernaum to do so. *At the point of death*. The true believer need not dread death. Even an earthly parent is particularly tender and careful of a dying child: much more will God, the great and gracious Father cherish and defend His own children in the hour of death. (*Ps. cxvi. 15; Heb. ii. 14, 15; Rev. xxii. 20.*)

48. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. 49. The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. *a1 Cor. i. 22. bPs. lxxxviii. 10, 12.*

Why does our Lord's reply to this application seem less gracious than His usual answers to distressed parents? The reason is most probably this: The faith of this man rested merely upon hearsay in regard to the miraculous works of Jesus; it was naturally weak, and it was

not a religious want, but simple necessity, which had led him to Jesus; that faith in the proper sense was a result of the miracle is shown by verse 53. *Sir, come down, &c.* The words of reproof looked like putting him off; the nobleman, therefore, begs that Jesus would not interpose a longer and critical delay. Who does not hear a groan, and see a hot tear in every word of this? The man, though a very anxiously loving father, not only had not the least idea that Jesus could heal his son unless He went down to Capernaum but neither did he suppose that there was any power in Him to burst the bands of death, and hence his anxiety that He reach the house before the child's death. Christ intends to cure this father of his want of faith, in order to make him worthy to receive the cure of his son, but he is hitherto wholly taken up with the thoughts of that which he is afraid of losing. Alas, how many fathers are there in the world who nearly resemble him!

50. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way, thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

More wonderfully than the suppliant anticipated, did the miraculous power of our Lord display itself. *And the man believed*, not only believed that Jesus could cure the child though at a distance, but that He *had* cured him, or at least begun to cure him. *And he went his way*—not in doubt or haste, but leisurely in contrast with the haste and trepidation wherewith he had come. Observe here the double miracle wrought by the word alone of Christ: the one on the distant body of the son, the other on the invisible heart of the father, who is himself cured of his incredulity by believing the cure which he did not see.

51. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. 52. Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

Then inquired he, &c. Though he believed from what our Lord had said, that his son would recover, yet as he had only looked for a *gradual* recovery, he inquired of the servants at what time he *began to amend*, doubtless expecting to hear it was the seventh hour; and this we know from his faith he was prepared to hear. The more attentively the works and blessings of God are

inquired into, the greater food and support does faith acquire. (1 Peter i. 12; Ps. cxi. 2.) *At the seventh hour.* By that consideration it appears that the nobleman did not anxiously make haste, because he believed the word of Christ, but went on quietly in his journey, which is an excellent description of true faith. (Isa. xxviii. 16.) *The fever left him*, left him suddenly. The recovery was speedy and complete. Here is a clear and beautiful illustration of the Apostle's words (Eph. iii. 20), that "God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." The nobleman expected an *amendment* or *beginning* to amend: Christ bestowed at once perfect health. Numberless are the instances of God's overflowing grace in this respect. (See Mark viii. 23, x. 13, 16; Luke i. 67, xviii. 14, xix. 4, xxiii. 43.) The fevers which affect the body are generally healthful to the soul, and therefore we ought to be more earnest in praying for a good use of them than for their cure. Those fevers only which affect the soul are obstacles to salvation, and nothing must be spared to obtain their cure.

53. So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.

The nobleman's faith was confirmed and increased by the miracle. It was raised into a full belief of Christ's power and goodness. *Before* he believed Christ's word, now he believes in *Himself*. His person, His attributes. And his whole household, his family and servants, to whom he would detail, with all the eloquence of earnest gratitude and in the rapture of new-born faith, these wondrous things, they also become united with him in the same blessed bond of a common faith. Deep affliction is often the means of great good. The father of a family may be the means of the salvation of his children. "To-day is salvation come to this house." (Luke xix. 9.)

54. This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.

Second miracle Jesus did—i. e., in Cana, done "after He came out of Judea," as the former before. Whence learn, 1. Christ's works, and particularly His more special manifestations of Himself, ought to be marked and kept in memory. 2. Christ's

present works and manifestations ought not only to affect us themselves, but should bring His former works to remembrance.

3. However men may study and strive to

crush Jesus in the world, yet it will be to no purpose, for in one place or other He will be still reaping fruit and manifesting His glory.

1. Why did Jesus depart again into Galilee? 2. To what city did He come? 3. What well was there? 4. Why did the Saviour sit on the well? 5. What does this teach us? 6. Who came to the well? 7. What did Christ ask for? 8. What was the woman's reply? 9. Explain verse 4. 10. Also verses 13 and 14. 11. What is said about the woman's husband? 12. How is God to be worshiped? 13. What did this woman do? 14. What reply did Jesus make when His disciples said to Him "Master, eat?" 15. What are "many of the Samaritans" said to have done? 16. State the particulars of the healing of the nobleman's son.

CHAPTER V.

1 *Jesus on the sabbath day cureth him that was diseased eight and thirty years.* 10 *The Jews therefore cavil, and persecute him for it.* 17 *He answereth for himself, and reproveth them, shewing by the testimony of his Father.* 32 of John, 36 of his works, 39 and of the scriptures, who he is.

AFTER this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Lev. xxiii. 2: Deut. xvi. 2: chap. ii. 13.

This is generally supposed to have been the feast of the passover: yet perhaps none of the Evangelists mention all the passovers which occurred during our Lord's ministry. But subsequent to what was related in the former chapter, several things, recorded by the other Evangelists, are supposed to have taken place before Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Christ made a point of attending the sacred festivals, both because such was the command of God (Deut. xvi. 16), and thus it became Him to fulfill all righteousness, and also because these were grand opportunities for teaching the large number of people assembled on these occasions.

2. Now there is at Jerusalem ^{by the sheep market} a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.—Neh. iii. 1 and xii. 39.

There is, &c. The inference might be drawn that Jerusalem was standing when the Evangelist wrote; the explanation, however, is, that the pool remained after the destruction of the city, in fact it was still pointed out in the time of Tertullian and even of Eusebius. *By the sheep market*, near that gate of the city which was called the sheep gate. *Bethesda* means "the house of mercy." *Five porches*, little porticos or chambers, for the accommodation

probably of the sick who waited there for healing. Compassion toward the afflicted is a commendable duty. The Jews had now declined, yet, to their great credit, here were accommodations for the sick, either built for them, or now converted to that use.

3. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

Impotent folk, infirm, diseased people. *Blind*, by disease, not from birth. (See ix. 32.) *Halt*, crippled. *Withered*. Among these we are to comprehend the paralytic, a class to which, indeed, the sick man whom Jesus cured belonged, for paralysis is sometimes produced by extraordinary debilitation of the muscles; that is, by a *dwindling* of them. The *moving of the water* must have been something that could be seen and observed by persons standing by or looking on. There was no virtue or healing element in the water, until the movement took place. "A great number of diseases and diseased persons," says an old writer, "are necessary to represent the condition to which man is reduced by sin: so miserable is he and full of infirmities from his very birth. How great is the debt which we owe to Thee, O blessed Saviour, for having *moved this water* in our behalf, which hath made us whole. Finish, Lord, what thou hast begun in us." (Isa. i. 4-6; Zech. xiii. 1.)

4. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatever disease he had.

An angel, &c. Here is another proof that benevolent spirits are employed as the instruments of good to men, in like manner as wicked spirits are busily engaged in the infliction of evil. There can be no doubt of the miracle, as there were multitudes living when this Gospel was published, who, from their own knowledge of Jerusalem, could have exposed the falsehood of the Evangelist if no such cure had been known there. *At a certain season*, the disturbance of the water was occasional and temporary. *Whosoever then first, &c.* Jesus has opened a pool of Bethesda to all, where not only he that comes first, but he that comes even last, with faith and repentance, may receive health and cleansing.

5. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. 6. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

An infirmity—probably it was a palsy. *Thirty and eight years.* The length of the time he had been afflicted makes the miracle of his cure the greater. Were we presently cured, so soon as we complained, we should less esteem the danger of our disease. The long smart and tediousness of our misery makes us to consider what it is to sin. God often makes choice of the greatest sinners to show forth in them the greatness of His mercy and the power of His grace. *Saw him lie*, as too weak or sick to be in other than a recumbent position. *And knew*, not as the result of inquiry from bystanders, but by His omniscience. “The unprejudiced reader can find no place for information given to the Lord between *saw*, *knew*, and *saith*, all compacted together in one.” *Wilt thou be made whole?* The impotent man probably had waited so long, and so long waited in vain, that hope was dead or well-nigh dead within him, and the question is asked to awaken in him a new yearning after the benefit, which the Saviour, compassionating his hopeless case, was about to impart. Our Lord thus persuading him to believe in His love, prepared him to believe also in His might, and was giving him now the faith which presently He was about to demand of him.

7. The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. 8. Jesus saith unto him *Arise*, take up thy

bed, and walk. 9. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

•Matt. ix. 6; Mark ii. 11; Luke v. 24. •ix. 14.

The man's answer is no direct reply to our Lord's question. Perhaps he understood it as an expression of surprise that he lay there so long, when the means of recovery were before him. *I have no man.* He speaks feelingly of the want of a friend. I have not a single friend. What a picture of desertion and loneliness! only able to drag himself along, no one offering to assist him, no money to pay for help. Observe, he did not breathe a syllable against the hard-heartedness of his fellow-men. How good an evidence is it that sickness, and trial, and trouble, have had their perfect work, when the pride of the heart is humbled, and the fretfulness and complaining of the lips are silenced, and we can dwell upon our sorrows without one repining word, or one distrustful thought! *Another steppeth, &c.* To a person of any sensibility this world is a wretched place. There is not a step in life, where we can be sure of not meeting some latent lurking thorn. A hard, selfish, thorough-paced mind goes on, and cares not, but the sensitive, delicate feeling spirit is ever pushed to the wall. To such a spirit, then, what a gentle, blessed relief is afforded by a heartfelt knowledge of Christianity! (See Ps. cxlii. 1-5; Heb. iv. 15; 1 Thes. v. 14.) Let us give an attentive, patient hearing to the poor and needy, when they detail to us their trials and sufferings, their hopes and disappointments. And in our own afflictions, let us take encouragement from the case of the impotent man to “make known our requests unto God,” telling Him all our sorrows. With them, indeed, He is well acquainted: yet He will know them from ourselves. It is only when we confess our misery and call upon Him, that we can expect His mercy. (Ezek. xxxvi. 37; Ps. l. 15.)

Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. We can see four reasons for this command to this sick man. 1. It was to evince the perfection of the cure. His walking, indeed, would prove this, but his taking up his bed, and being able to carry that in which he had been carried, would display it still

more, as it showed his strength, as well as health. 2. It was to teach him to be careful, and to waste nothing. The bed probably was not very valuable, but he was not to throw it away. Christians should avoid closeness and meanness, lest their good be evil spoken of, but they should also avoid profusion, negligence, carelessness. 3. As a memento of his deliverance and duty. This bed, as he looked upon it at home, would remind him of former misery and mercy. 4. To try his obedience. Carrying his bed was a servile work, and it was now the Sabbath, on which day no burden was to be borne. He seemed therefore to oppose the law of Moses, and accordingly the Pharisees were offended, and murmured. But works of necessity and mercy were *always* proper, and the Sabbath was made for man, and the Son of man was Lord even of the Sabbath day. *And immediately the man was made whole, &c.*—"immediately." He *spoke* and it was *done*. *The same day was the Sabbath.* Beyond all doubt this was intentional, as in so many other healings, in order that when opposition arose on this account men might be compelled to listen to His claims and His teaching.

10. ¶ The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the Sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. 11. He answered them, He that hath made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. 12. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? 13. And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place.

¹Ex. xx. 10; Neh. xiii. 19; Jer. xvii. 21, &c.; Matt. xii. 2; Mark ii. 24 and iii. 4; Luke vi. 2 and xiii. 14.

The Jews—certain of the Jews, elders or heads of the nation, members of the Sanhedrim. *Said unto him*, probably having met him, on his way home, carrying his couch or bedding as the Lord had commanded. *It is not lawful, &c.* Consider the following texts: Ex. xxxi. 14, 15; Num. xv. 33 to 36; Neh. xiii. 19 (where burdens of merchandise alone are forbidden), Jer. xvii. 21, 22; Mark ix. 16. *He that made me whole, &c.* His meaning evidently was that the order of the person who had healed him was quite sufficient to account for and justify his proceeding. "I have a mighty warrant for carrying my bed, even the command of One who cured me by a single word of my protracted infirmity." We are not to judge the Lord's

commands, but to follow them. His orders may be trying, and in obeying them we may give offense, but we need not regard the revilings of men, while we can plead His authority. *What man is that, &c.* They feign ignorance as to the person who had wrought the miracle. They do not ask concerning that which should win their admiration, but that which might furnish a ground for their calumnious accusation. *Wist not*—knew not, from the old Saxon verb *witan*, to *know*, whence our words *wit* and *wise*. *Conveyed himself away*—quietly and silently glided through the multitude as the excitement at the cure commenced. The man had thus no chance to identify his unknown benefactor. *In that place*—at the porches of the pool. It is difficult to obtain a sight of Christ in a crowd. A crowd is noisy—this sight requires some secret place. He who saw Him not in the crowd, saw Him in the temple. (i. 50; Ex. iii. 1, 2.)

14. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. 15. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. 16. And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

¹Matt. xii. 45; chap. viii. 11.

In the temple, whither in all probability he had gone to pour out his heart to the Author and Giver of all good things. (See 2 Kings xx. 8.) Many are brought to feel their need of something better than this world can offer, by the pressures of affliction—are led from the bed of sickness to the temple, from the word of God to the Son of God, from bodily health to spiritual cure. *Behold, thou art made whole*: contrast thy present with thy past condition, and realize the blessing. *Lest a worse thing come unto thee*. A worse thing than thirty-eight years of pain and infirmity! What the past sin of this sufferer had been, to which our Lord alludes, we know not, but the man himself knew very well. His conscience was the interpreter of the warning. Though the scheme which should in every case affirm a man's personal suffering to be in proportion to his personal guilt is refuted by all experience (see Luke xiii. 1-5), yet our Lord here intimates that very much of judgment is even now continually proceeding. (See 2 Kings v.

20-27; Acts xiii. 8-11, xii. 23; Job ii. 3, &c.; John ix. 1-3.) *Told the Jews, &c.* It appears from the man's exclusive reference to the *healing*, that, in his simplicity of heart, he conceived that these persons only wanted to know his Healer in order to render Him honor for the great work He had done. But they were only provoked the more. So is it ever with the revelation of the Divine: what it does not draw to itself it drives *from* itself, what it does not win to obedience it arrays in active hostility.

17. † But Jesus answered them, †My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.—*ix. 4, xiv. 10.*

"My Father hitherto, from the creation of the world, has continued to work on the Sabbath day, and I also work on the Sabbath day." Though God on the seventh day rested from the work of creation—the giving being to new orders of creatures, He is continually employed in the preservation and government of the world. The great machine of the universe does not stand still on the Sabbath day, the mighty and the minute processes of nature experience no interruption. "What my Father does," says our Lord, "I do:" He works on the Sabbath day, and I work on the Sabbath day, and who dare call in question His right or mine to do so? Our Lord here obviously claims a two-fold equality with the Father. He does the same works with Him, and like Him, He works perpetually. He puts His own work of power, in the miraculous cure which He had effected, on the *same footing* of consideration as the works of the Deity in the conservation and government of the universe, and *upon this parity* He grounds His right thus to work on the Sabbath day.

18. Therefore the Jews *h*sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making himself equal with God.—*lvii. 19. ix. 30, 33; Phil. ii. 6.*

That God was his Father, meaning that He called God *peculiarly* His Father, in a sense quite different from that in which pious men speak of God as their Father. *Making himself equal with God*, that is, claiming to Himself an authority equal to that of God. Not only His claim of Sonship, but the high position He assigned to that Sonship, both caused and justified their interpretation of His words as making Himself God's equal. The Jews themselves often called God their Father, and

would never have found fault with, much less charged blasphemy upon, any that came to them under the character of a prophet, for using the same style, and therefore they must be supposed to understand our Lord as speaking of God as His Father in a sense superior to any covenant or office-relation, and in a sense so peculiar to Himself as to intimate His partaking of the same nature and perfections with Him, or else there would have been no room for their imagining or suggesting, that, by His claim of relation to God as His Father, He made Himself equal with God.

19. Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, †The Son can do *nothing* of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

‡Verse 30, viii. 28, ix. 4, xii. 49, xiv. 10.

Our Lord now reiterates and expands His preceding affirmation of essential unity with the Father. *The Son can do nothing of himself, i. e.*, apart from and in rivalry of the Father, as they supposed. There is no avowal here by Christ of any dependence or subordination of rank or power, but the most entire harmony of will and action with His Father. The meaning is, "the Son can have no separate *interest or action* from the Father." *For what things soever, &c.* "On the contrary, whatever the Father doeth that same doeth the Son," *likewise*, in the like manner. The doings of the Son are the doings of the unknowable Father. And the doings of that Son through His humanity are the doings of the eternal Son, and are the true expression of the eternal Father. The fact of Three Divine Persons in the eternal Godhead is plainly revealed. Man insists upon apprehending the *mode*: in his present state he cannot apprehend it; he therefore denies the fact, and commences unbeliever. "All the objections against the Trinity," says one, "proceed from hence, that men discourse about an Infinite Being, as they would about a finite one, without considering the difference of the subject they are upon, and what an immense disproportion there is." (Isa. xl. 18, 25; 1 Cor. ii. 11.)

20. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth; and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

†Matt. iii. 17; chap. iii. 35; 2 Peter i. 17.

Neither is there here implied any supe-

riority in the Father, or any inferiority in the Son, as to their Divine nature and essence. The "love" is meant to show us that unspeakable unity of heart and affection (if such words may be reverently used) which eternally existed and exists between the Father and the Son. The "showing" means that entire confidence and co-operation which there was between the Father and the Son, as to all the works which the Son should do when He came into the world to fill the office of Mediator and to save sinners. The "greater works" which remained to be shown were evidently the works specified in the two following verses—the works of quickening and of judging. That the Jews did "marvel," and were confounded at the works of "quickenings," we have from the Acts of the Apostles. That they will "marvel" even more at our Lord's work of judgment we shall see when He comes to judge the quick and the dead.

21. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. ^aLuke vii. 14 and viii. 54; chap. xi. 25, 43.

To raise the dead would be a more marvellous work than that performed upon the impotent man. Our Lord's language seems to be applicable either to the quickening of those who are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. ii. 1), or to the raising of the dead at the last day. (See vi. 39, 40, 44, 54.) *Quickeneth whom he will*—that is the prerogative of God alone; of God the Father, as in James i. 18; of God the Son, as in Matt. viii. 3, and in this place, of God the Holy Ghost, as in Cor. xii. 11. God, and God only, may do *as He will*. Yet it is certain that the will of God is not arbitrary: for He worketh all things "after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. i. 11), and whatever is done with counsel or wise resolution, has of necessity some reason why it should be done. In every instance where *His will is to vivify*, the result invariably follows.

22. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: 23. That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. ^aHe that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

^aMatt. xi. 27 and xxviii. 18; verse 27; iii. 35 and xvii. 2; Acts xvii. 31; 1 Peter iv. 5. ^{c1} John ii. 23.

The other "greater work" to which our Lord referred (verse 20), is His power to judge. This is His prerogative, no less

than the raising of the dead: and indeed this latter is in order to the former. The judicial office has been committed to Christ, in this matter the Father works entirely by Him: for the Father in His own person *judgeth no man*, &c. *All men*. Observe the universality of the application. All men shall honor the Son, either willingly, being justified by faith, or unwillingly, experiencing the wrath of the Judge. *Should honor the Son, even*, &c. "Is there not here," says *Prof. Stuart*, "an equality of power and honor ascribed to the Father and Son? It is perfectly plain, that, so far as the 'committing of judgment to the Son' is concerned, it must be to the Mediatorial Person, to one who, in respect to office, is subordinate to God. But so far as *qualifications*, requisite to perform the duties that commitment requires, are concerned, the Saviour is Divine, and the honor to be claimed by Him, the same with that which the Divinity claims. Multitudes of prophets, as commissioned by God, have borne His messages of mercy and judgment to His people, but to whom among them all did He grant the privilege of being honored, as Himself?"

24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, ^aHe that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.

^biii. 16, 18, vi. 40, 47, viii. 51 and xx. 31. ^{c1} John iii. 14.

Verily, verily. The usual formula of solemn confirmation. *Heareth* denotes not only the outward act of hearing, but receiving the word in power. *Believeth*. Faith is coupled with hearing, and hearing is put first, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." *On him that sent me*. On the Father, who, in the plan of redemption, is represented as "sending" His Son to save men. (John iii. 17.) *Hath everlasting life*. Our Lord does not use the future, but the present. He does not say, "shall have," but "hath." The future indeed is implied in the present, but such have it even now—they have now the germ which shall be developed into that immortal plant. Faith in God who sent His Son is here represented as being connected with everlasting life. (See on iii. 15, 16, 36.) But there can be no faith in Him who sent His Son, without faith also in Him who is sent. The very

essence of bene. in the Father is, that He sent the Son. *And shall not come, &c.* The same truth, presented in the preceding clause of the verse, is thus expressed, according to John's custom, negatively. The meaning is, that the believer, having *passed from death unto life*, shall not come into that state of final condemnation, in which those who are impenitent and unbelieving will be found at the last day.

25. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.
 *Verse 23; Eph. ii. 1, 5 and v. 14; Col. ii. 13.

Verily, verily. (See on verse 24.) Even at the moment Jesus was speaking, He was able to give spiritual life to dead souls. He has been doing this work ever since that hour. We do not see the dead souls arise, but Jesus does. *And they that hear, &c.* How unspeakably encouraging is this declaration! We cannot be more insensible than the "dead," yet even they shall hear. Such hearing is meant as includes reception, belief, obedience.

26. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself: 27. And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.
 *Verse 22; Acts x. 42 and xvii. 31. *Dan. vii. 13, 14.

The Father hath life in himself, it belongs to His nature, He has received it of no one, it is an essential attribute of His necessarily existing nature. He so has life, that He can impart, withdraw and restore it to whomsoever He pleases. Now, the Son is said to have "life in himself," that is, the Son is a possessor of independent existence. He is equally with the Father the possessor of that independent existence, and that power of giving existence, which is one of the grand characteristics of Divinity. *So hath he given, &c.* It will be observed the expression is not the Father hath given to the Son life in Himself, but He has given to the Son "to have life in himself." The word "give" is often used in Scripture as equivalent to "appoint." The appointment of the Son to be the Messiah is repeatedly expressed by this word. (Isa. lv. 4; chap. iii. 16.) The Father has appointed the Son to have, or hold, life in Himself. The word "given" does not seem to refer to the life itself, but to the manner of *having* or holding it. The Father, as the head of the Mediatorial

economy, appoints the Son to hold and exercise that independent power of conferring life, which is the characteristic property of that divinity of which they are equally possessed. The idea seems materially the same as when it is said that "it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell." That the words refer to a Divine appointment, having a reference to the Mediatorial economy, is obvious from what follows: *And hath given him authority to exercise judgment also*—to pass and execute final sentence on all intelligent beings. *Because, &c.* The final judgment is to be performed by the Messiah, not only because He is the only begotten Son of God, partaking of the Divine nature, but also because He is the Son of man, and holds a peculiar relation also to the human race. How interesting the thought, that the Saviour and the Judge of men, while on the one hand He is keenly alive to the honor of God, has, also, on the other hand, a most tender sympathy for human beings.

28. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29. *And shall come forth; *they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

*Isa. xxvi. 19; 1 Thes. iv. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 52. *Dan. xli. 2; Matt. xxv. 32, 33, 46.

Marvel not—be not surprised. *All that are in the graves, &c.* In verse 25 the transaction is altogether spiritual, here it is altogether physical. All the actual dead shall hear with their bodily ears the very voice of the Son of man, and shall come forth with such bodies as it shall please their Creator to give them (1 Cor. xv. 35-53), and soul and body shall re-unite and stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive sentence of reward or condemnation, according to the deeds done in the body. (2 Cor. v. 10; Rev. xxii. 12.) *They that have done good, &c.* All shall rise to immortality, but not all to the same immortality. They that rise shall be separated into two classes, and it is their conduct *here* that shall determine their separation *there*. The one class—the doers of good—shall rise to what is emphatically life; the other—the practicers of evil—to that which is worse than death. (See on chap. iii. 16, 36; Dan. xii. 2; Matt. xxv. 31; Rev. xx. 12, 13; Titus ii. 11-14.)

30. *I* can of mine own self do nothing: as *I* hear, *I* judge: and my judgment is just: because *I* seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. 31. *If I* bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. 32. *There* is another that beareth witness of me; and *I* know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.

¹Verse 19. ²Matt. xxvi. 39; chap. iv. 34 and vi. 38. ³See chap. viii. 14; Rev. iii. 14. ⁴Matt. iii. 17 and xvii. 5; chap. viii. 18; 1 John v. 6, 7, 9.

Do nothing, i. e., apart from the Father, or in any interest of my own. (See on verse 19.) *As I hear, &c.* "My judgments are all anticipated in the bosom of my Father, to which I have immediate access, and by me only responded to and reflected. They cannot, therefore, err, as I live for one end only, to carry into effect the will of Him that sent me. *If I bear witness of myself,* standing alone, and setting up any separate interest. There is no contradiction between this and the statement in chap. viii. 14, on which see notes. Our Lord, in one of these passages, expresses what was to be admitted as true in the account of men; in the other, what His testimony was in itself. *There is another, i. e.,* the Father, as is plain from the connection. How brightly the distinction of the Persons shines out here! *And I know, &c.* This is the Son's testimony to the Father's truth (See vii. 28, viii. 26, 55.) Thus He cheered His spirit under the cloud of human opposition which was already gathering over His head.

33. *Ye* sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. 34. But *I* receive not testimony from man: but these things *I* say, that ye might be saved. 35. He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

¹Chap. i. 15, 19, 27, 32. ²Peter i. 19. ³Matt. xiii. 20 and xxii. 26; Mark. vi. 20.

Ye sent, &c. The reference is to chap. i. 19, which see. *But I receive not, &c.* That is, "John, by his testimony, added nothing to me: I was what I was, and *I am what I am,* before John testified of me, and since." *But these things, &c.* The anxious desire of Jesus that His hearers might be saved, induced Him to bring distinctly to view the testimony of John, which was happily adapted to convince them that He was the Messiah, and was testimony of which they could easily judge. The words *burning* and *shining* are not used of light undervided or independently possessed, but of that which is lit up and shines from another source. Some lights are shining, but not burning; John was both. Burning he was with the fire of holy zeal, burning, as consumed away in

His Master's service. The minister, or private Christian, who would enlighten others, must be a shining light himself. And if he would affect others, he himself must feel, his own heart must burn with holy ardor. *And ye were willing, &c.* They were the living examples of the stony-ground hearers. They received the word of John "with joy," but they rejoiced for a season, having "no root" of deep conviction. It is our privilege to "rejoice in the Lord," but it is exceedingly dangerous to make comfort a ground of confidence, unless the nature, source and effects of that comfort be considered, for it may result entirely from ignorance and self-flattery in a variety of ways.

36. But *I* have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish: the same works that *I* do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. 37. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. 38. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. 39. Search the Scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

¹1 John v. 9. ²John 2, x. 25 and xv. 24. ³Matt. iii. 17 and xvii. 5; chap. vi. 27 and viii. 18. ⁴Deut. iv. 12; chap. i. 18; 1 Tim. i. 17; 1 John iv. 12. ⁵Isa. viii. 20 and xxxiv. 16; Luke xvi. 29; verse 46; Acts xvii. 11. ⁶Deut. xviii. 15, 18; Luke xxiv. 27; chap. i. 45.

The works which the Father hath given, &c. Jesus now proceeds to describe the different ways in which His Father witnessed to Him. *First,* by enabling Him to do miracles. Christ's works are speaking testimonies of His glory, and we never rightly appreciate them till we see that they bear witness that the Father hath sent Him, as His own Son, to be the Saviour of the world. *And the Father . . . hath borne witness of me.* Here is the second of the three ways referred to, in verse 36. His Father Himself had borne witness of Him, by speaking from heaven at His baptism. (See 2 Peter i. 17.) *Ye have neither heard his voice, &c.* This is to be understood as a proof of their ignorance of the Father, of the knowledge of whom they so much gloried. And inasmuch as they might object that though such manifestations were gone, yet they had the word which was delivered by the ministry of Moses to their fathers, and in them to their successors and children, Christ answers that it was not "abiding in them"—had not its due place with them, since they believed not in Him. *Search the Scriptures, &c.* Here is the third of the ways mentioned in verse 36. The Father

had borne witness to His Son, in the Scriptures. *Search*—read carefully. *For in them ye think.* It is a sad thing, indeed, and a most unprofitable use of the Scriptures, if we read them, as these Jews did, only to form *opinions* out of them. In what they testify concerning Christ and “eternal life through His name,” there is no place for opinion, all is matter of faith, we must “believe and be sure” that He is “the Saviour of the world.” *Which testify of me.* “If we do not,” says *Cecil*, “see the golden thread through all the Bible, marking out Christ, we read the Scriptures without the key.” (Ps. xxxvi. 9.)

40. ^aAnd ye will not come to me that ye might have life.—*mi*, 11 and *iii*, 19.

Life. This is of three kinds. 1. Life judicial—that is, pardon, so verse 24. (See xx. 31; 1 John v. 12.) All were under sin, condemned to die the second death, but in Jesus’ hand there was a way of pardon open and free to them all. 2. Life spiritual—that is, inward holiness, spoken of in verse 25. (See Col. iii. 3; Gal. ii. 20.) 3. Life of glory—called “eternal life” and “everlasting life.” (Matt. xxv. 46; John iii. 16.) Jesus has eternal life in His hand, ready to give the right to it, the foretaste of it, and itself in due time. (Chap. x.; Gal. vi. 8.) *Ye will not come, &c.* This is the only reason Christ here assigns. He traces the difficulty to their willful and guilty rejection of Him. How will sinners bear the reflection in eternity, that through folly, pride, ignorance, they *would not* come to Jesus that they might have life!

41. ^aI receive not honour from men.

^aVerse 34; 1 Thes. ii. 6.

Our Lord points out the reason why they were unwilling to connect themselves with Him. It was because He appeared in a style which crossed their prejudices, traditions and carnal desires, because He disclaimed human honor, and made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, seeking not His own glory as man, nor a kingdom which is of this world, but the glory of His Father in heaven.

42. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. 43. I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him will ye receive. 44. ^aHow can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?

^axii. 43. ^aRom. ii. 23.

I know you. By this ray Jesus penetrates

His hearers’ hearts. He means this: *I know* the Father (verse 32), and *I know* that you are strangers to Him. This was spoken by Him most compassionately. They were not actuated in anything which they did by a desire to promote God’s glory. Their ends and aims were all selfish. *In my Father’s name*, or authority. “There is proof that under a profession of piety, ye have not the love of God in you, for if you had, you would receive me by faith as sent by Him, with credentials so clear that they cannot be reasonably questioned. Yet if an impostor come and promise you empire and earthly glory, him ye will receive.” *How can ye believe, &c.* Than these words what can be a stronger proof of the *believing*, here spoken of, being a moral disposition of the sublimest kind, since our Lord in these expressions makes it imply, essentially, both the most heroic dereliction, and the most spiritual preference, that could be made by man in this world? We should indeed honor all men. But the excited ambition of these Jews, unable to gratify itself in triumph over foreign nations, exhausted itself in exacting and exchanging honors with each other. *The honor that cometh from God only* is alone eternal, enduring with our immortal existence.

45. Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. 46. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. 47. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

^aRom. ii. 12. ^aGen. iii. 15, xii. 3, xviii. 18, xxii. 18 and xlix. 10; Deut. xviii. 15, 18; chap. i. 45; Acts xxvi. 22.

Do not think, &c. “It is not necessary that I accuse you, for, even now, Moses, in whom ye trust, your great lawgiver and patron, is, as it were, your accuser before God, and charges you with being regardless of him as well as of me.” *Had ye believed Moses, &c.* Here Jesus presses the Jews with this, that, if they did believe the writings of Moses and their other Scriptures, they must of necessity believe Him also. This is the sense of the New Testament concerning the Old Testament. Supposing therefore the truth of the New Testament, the Divine authority of the Old Testament is to be acknowledged. (Luke x. 26, xxiv. 27, 44; Acts xiii. 18, x. 23, xxiv. 14, xxvi. 27.) *But if ye believe not his writings, &c.* “If ye do not really believe what your honored lawgiver Moses wrote

—and it is plain that you do not—it is not likely that you will believe what I say.” It appears that our Lord’s discourse effectually confounded the Jews, for they went away without replying; a proof that they had nothing to say.

1. What pool was at Jerusalem? 2. What is said of it? 3. What did Jesus say to the man who had an infirmity? 4. What was the man’s reply? 5. What was the result? 6. State the interview between the Jews and the man that was cured. 7. Explain verse 17. 8. Also verse 19. 9. To whom is all judgment committed? 10. Who hath everlasting life? 11. Whose voice shall be heard by all that are in the graves? 12. What shall occur when it is heard? 13. Had Jesus greater witness than that of John? 14. What is said about searching the Scriptures? 15. What is said of the “writings” of Moses and the “words” of Christ?

CHAPTER VI.

1 *Christ feedeth five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes.* 15 *Thereupon the people would have made him king.* 16 *But withdrawing himself, he walked on the sea to his disciples:* 26 *reproveh the people flocking after him, and all the fleshy hearers of his word:* 32 *declareth himself to be the bread of life to believers.* 66 *Many disciples depart from him.* 68 *Peter confesseth him.* 70 *Judas is a devil.*

AFTER these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias.

^aMatt. xiv. 15; Mark vi. 35; Luke ix. 10, 12.

After these things—an indefinite expression, not meaning immediately after the things mentioned in the preceding chapter. The clause, *which is the sea of Tiberias* (literally, of Tiberias), is added probably by John, because at the time he wrote his Gospel, this sheet of water was more generally known to the people of other countries by this name. Our Lord went to a private and desert place near Bethsaida.

2. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.

A great multitude—partly of Capernaïtes and partly of passengers to the approaching Passover at Jerusalem. *Followed him.* This they might easily do by going round the head of the lake, to the point where Bethsaida was. *Because they saw, &c.* The miracles of Christ were designed, 1. To excite inquiry. 2. To convince men that He was the promised Messiah. 3. To teach us to place our trust in His power. 4. To dispose our hearts to obedience. Surely, if we really believe these wonderful works, we cannot but desire to obey Him who is thus Lord of all creatures, and it is remarkable that as faith leads to obedience, so there is nothing like obedience for increasing faith.

3. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

Literally “into the mountain,” so designated, either because it was the one mountain which stood there, in contradistinction to the more level ground composing the district, or because it was “that particular hill” to which our Lord was in the habit of going when He visited that district. *Dr. Thomson* expressly says that there is a “bold headland” here, with “a smooth, grassy spot” at the base, “capable of seating many thousand people.” There Jesus sat, as teachers do, in the chair of instruction; He sat as one having authority—whoever would, might come, and find Him there. He sat with his disciples, condescended to take them to sit with Him, to put a reputation upon them before the people, and give them an earnest of the glory in which they would shortly sit with Him. (See Eph. ii. 6.)

4. ^bAnd the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

^bLev. xxiii. 5, 7; Deut. xvi. 1; chap. ii. 13 and v. 1.

Our Evangelist accounts in part for the ready assembling together of such multitudes of people, by informing us that the Passover, a feast of the Jews (as he explains for the sake of his Gentile readers), was nigh, when much people (xi. 55) were gathered together from the various villages to the principal cities or centers, previously to setting out for Jerusalem.

5. ^cWhen Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? 6. And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

^cMatt. xiv. 11; Mark vi. 35; Luke ix. 12, on which see notes.

Whence shall we buy, &c. Let us not think that we have acted as the followers of Jesus, if we have sent the people away in want of the common necessities of life, without an effort on our part to supply their wants. *To prove him, i. e.,* to make trial of the Apostle's faith, to prove what manner of trust he had in Him, whom he had already acknowledged the Messiah (John i. 45.) Philip had seen our Lord's miracles, and ought to have trusted Him for supplying all that was wanted. There was in him a certain slowness of heart to recognize the Godhead of the Incarnate Son. (See xiv. 7-11.) His reply at this time shows that he dreamed of nothing less than of a display of miraculous power. *For he himself knew, &c.* "Christ's relief of bodies," says *Baxter*, "was in love to bodies and souls. Christ's questions were to instruct the hearers, and not Himself."

7. Philip answered him, "Two hundred penny-worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little." 8. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, 9. There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes; but what are they among so many? 10. And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

⁷See Num. xi. 21, 22. ⁸2 Kings iv. 43.

Two hundred penny-worth—a sum variously estimated from \$28 to \$30. A considerable quantity of bread, yet not enough, Philip thinks, as he glances at the gathering multitudes, to give even a taste to each. There is not so much as a hint of his trust in Divine power. "When men judge by sense or reason," says an old writer, "and look to likelihoods and probabilities, and not to Christ's power, they will soon be at their wits' end in extremities, and unable to answer doubtful cases, for so much doth this answer of Philip teach."

Andrew saith unto him, &c. As he, as well as Philip, was a native of the district of Bethsaida, where all these things happened, there was an obvious propriety in his speaking and giving information on the present occasion. John is the only writer who mentions that these were *barley* loaves. Barley was a cheap kind of food; much used by poor people. *Fishes.* This word in the original literally means something *boiled, i. e.,* meat, flesh, eaten with bread, hence, any sauce or condiment eaten with bread to give it a relish

or flavor. Fish was the chief dainty of the Athenians, and thus the word came gradually to be used for a sauce or relish. The fact that a *lad*, a little boy, could carry all that Andrew mentions, is a plain proof that the loaves could not have been large, nor the fish of great size. "Idle and indecent application of sentences taken from the Scriptures," says *Dr. Johnson*, "such as 'loaves and fishes,' is a mode of merriment, which a good man dreads for its profaneness, and a witty man disdains for its easiness and vulgarity." *What are they among so many?* The order of the words in the original is much more emphatic: *But these—what are they for so many?* Five loaves and two small fishes are more than enough in His hands who continually multiplies the corn of the earth a hundred-fold. Whoever is faithful in adoring and praising God for all the benefits He does us by the ordinary methods of His providence, will not find his faith and confidence stagger when he stands in need of extraordinary assistance.

Make the men sit down, recline, as was usual at taking a meal. Christ may see fit to engage His people in what seems to them strange service, and to give them commands that seem absurd to sense and reason, and yet give a good account of all in His time. And it is a commendation of faith that it obeys His precepts without reasoning. *Now there was much grass, &c.* (See on verse 3.) This is one of those graphic touches which help us to picture to ourselves the scene. *So the men, &c.* Men would of course form the largest proportion of a paschal caravan, as it was only the *males* who were commanded to appear in the holy city.

11. And Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down, and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. 12. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. 13. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. 14. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world.

¹¹Gen. xlix. 10; Deut. xviii. 15, 18; Matt. xi. 3; chap. i. 21, iv. 19, 25 and vii. 40.

Giving thanks was the piety of His human nature, but the *blessing* came from the virtue of His Divine nature. We ought to give thanks for our food, for we have it from the hand of God, and must *receive it*

with thanksgiving. (1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.) And the disciples to them that were set down. Here is a lively emblem of the work which a true minister of the New Testament is meant to do. He is not a mediator between God and man. He has no power to put away sin, or impart grace. His whole business is to receive the bread of life which his Master provides, and to distribute it among the souls among whom he labors. He cannot make it soul-saving or life-giving, to any one.

When they were filled. They had come "taking no thought," for three days at least, of "what they should eat, or what they should drink," only anxious to hear the Word of Life, only "seeking the kingdom of heaven," and now the meaner things, according to the promise of the Saviour (Matt. vi. 33), were "added unto them." (Ps. xxxvii. 3.) Gather up the fragments, &c. Though Jesus was able miraculously to furnish any amount of food, He strictly forbade wastefulness. We ought to be neither anxious about the future (Matt. vi. 25), nor regardless of those present advantages which may supply our necessities in time to come.

Filled twelve baskets, &c. This is an extraordinary instance of our Lord's power. These were probably large baskets, such as were usually slung from the shoulder. The disciples lost nothing by giving their services for the good of others, at the command of Christ. There was a basketful for each of the twelve, after all they had given away. *This is of a truth*, &c. This expresses the popular expectation of the Messiah, based on Deut. xviii. 15-19. "In this matter of miracles," observes an ancient writer, "we do much abuse ourselves. For why was it a greater miracle that our Saviour once turned a little water into wine, than every year in so many vine trees to turn that into wine in the branches, which being received at the root was mere water? Or why was it more wonderful for Him once to feed five thousand with five loaves, than every year to feed the whole world, by the strange multiplication of a few seeds cast into the ground?"

15. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

On verses 15-21, see on Matt. xiv. 22-33.

The miracle at first made an overwhelming impression upon the people. Under the dominion of earthly expectations regarding the Messiah, they wished now to take Jesus with them to Jerusalem, in order to make Him a king. Observe, 1. The Saviour's omniscience—He perceived, &c. As God, He possessed a perfect and universal knowledge of the human character in all its depths (ii. 25). 2. The Saviour's freedom from ambition—He declined the honor which they sought to force upon Him. "The acceptance of an earthly kingdom," says Bishop Horsley, "had been inconsistent with the establishment of His everlasting Monarchy, and He declined the danger of popular tumult and private assassination, that He might die in the character of a criminal by a judiciary process and a public execution." (xii. 33.) 3. The Saviour's love of solitude. How often do we read of Him being alone! Solitude familiarizes the soul with God and Divine things, elevates the mind above the world, prepares for fresh trials and sorrows, and by the Divine blessing meetens us for the heavenly inheritance.

16. And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, 17. And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.
Matt. xiv. 23; Mark vi. 47.

When even was now come, &c. Rather, "And when the evening was come, His disciples had gone down to the sea, and having entered the ship, were going over the sea to Capernaum." *It was now dark*, &c. It must needs be dark in our souls when Jesus does not come. But why does infinite love delay? May it not be for this wise and gracious purpose, that in the obscure night of our afflictions the failure of every earthly help and comfort, and the disappointment we thence experience may serve, as the dark foil, to commend His goodness and faithfulness, and to show us more of His glory? (Deut. xi. 6, xxi. 3, 4; Ps. xxvii. 14; Hab. ii. 3.)

18. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.

Arose—was beginning to run high. A great wind. The position of this lake, with its high hills on either side, exposed it to sudden and violent wind-storms. How lively an image of the Church "tossed with waves" did that ship with its

little company present! The small progress effected, in spite of the incessant labor, and the opposition continually experienced, as well as the storm patiently sustained, are all circumstances which suggest their own interpretation.

19. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.

Five and twenty, &c.—about four miles. They were detained till toward morning by the storm. *They see Jesus, &c.* But they did not know that it was He. It was too early in the morning for them to see distinctly. (Matt. xiv. 25.) How, says the querist, was this miracle performed? We suppose that both the miracle of walking the sea and moving the ship to land (verse 21), was performed just as a writer moves his pen, by an act of will—of a will supernaturally, Divinely powerful. Gravitation, so far as we can see, is the immediate effect of the Divine volition holding the spheres in their places. That same volition could hold the water solid beneath the feet of Jesus, or cause His body to glide over the undisturbed surface. *And they were afraid.* Christ, even when He comes to deliver His people in a remarkable way, may be mistaken, and even mercies may be matter of fear and terror to them. It is acceptable service to God to oppose faithless fears in trial.

20. But he saith unto them, It is I, be not afraid. 21. Then they willingly receive him into the ship; and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

It is I, &c. This utterance by One who at that moment was “treading upon the waves of the sea” and was about to hush the raging elements with His word, what is it but the voice which cried of old in the ears of Israel, seeking to “gather them” in the days of Moses, “I AM.” “I, EVEN I, AM HE!” These same words of our Lord, which now freed the disciples from fear, on another occasion filled the hearts of His enemies with consternation. (xviii. 6; Ex. xiv. 20; see on xxi. 7, 12.) It is a sufficient deliverance to the Lord’s people, if, when they are in greatest extremities, they be delivered from slavish fear. *Willingly.* As they had before dreaded His approach, so now they are eager to receive Him on board. *And immediately, &c.* (See on verse 19.) Before they had time to

realize their deliverance, they find themselves, by the mighty power of their Lord, at land. There was a double miracle: the wind ceased suddenly, and they arrived at their destination presently. This manifold exercise of Christ’s power illustrates the fullness of the riches of His grace to our souls, and assures us of our heavenly rest, if we abide in the ship. (See i. 29; Jude 24; Acts xvii. 31.)

22. ¶ The day following, when the people, which stood on the other side of the sea, saw that there was none other boat there, save that one wherinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone: 23. Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks: 24. When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. 25. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

The people, which stood, &c. Not the whole multitude that had been fed, but only such of them as remained over night about the shore, *i. e.*, on the east side of the lake, for we are supposed to have come, with Jesus and His disciples in the ship, to the west side, Capernaum. *Saw that there was none, &c.* The meaning is, the people had observed that there had been only one boat on the east side where they were, namely, the one in which the disciples had crossed at night to the other, the west side, and they had also observed that Jesus had not gone on board that boat, but His disciples had put off without Him. *Howbeit, &c.* This parenthetical and express mention of these “other boats,” was necessary in order to explain how the multitude had it in their power to cross the sea in boats, when they went to the western side, seeking for Jesus. These boats, in their passage up the lake, were probably by the same wind which was contrary to the disciples (Mark vi. 48), driven near to the place where Jesus had fed the multitudes, and where those of the people who had kept together still remained. *Tiberias*, a town so-called in honor of Tiberius Caesar, on the southwest part of the Sea of Galilee. *Given thanks.* (See on verse 11.) The particularity with which this is here noticed, shows the important connection of this act of devotion with the great miracle which followed.

Took shipping, &c. Finding that Jesus was not there, they followed Him to

Capernaum, which was the ordinary place of His residence. *Rabbi, when comest thou hither?* Hooker says on this question: "The disciples, when Christ appeared to them in a far more strange and miraculous manner, moved no question, but rejoiced greatly in that they saw. For why? The one sort beheld only that in Christ which they knew was more than natural, but yet their affection was not rapt therewith through any great extraordinary gladness: the other, when they looked on Christ, were not ignorant that they saw the well-spring of their own everlasting felicity: the one, because they enjoyed not, disputed; the other disputed not, because they enjoyed. (xxi. 4-7, xx. 28.)

26. Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

Jesus did not satisfy their curiosity by answering their inquiry, but proceeded to unveil their hearts, and to expose the selfish, earthly motives that led them to seek Him so earnestly. They did so, not because they saw in His miracles the evidences of His being "that Prophet that should come into the world (verse 14), but because they hoped to reap temporal advantages from His miraculous power—"loaves" being here put generically for all the temporal blessings which they hoped to enjoy as the followers of a personage possessed of such miraculous power. Learn, 1. Jesus is not pleased, nor can He be deceived, with the fairest show of respect to Him. 2. He is so tender, even to hypocrites, that He will not abruptly put them away, but deal with them in great compassion. 3. The true difference between time-servers and sincere professors is not always indicated by their outward diligence. (Ps. lxxviii. 34-37; Isa. lviii. 1, 2.) 4. Christ, in trying men, looks not only to their diligence, but chiefly to their ends and principles. "Holy intention is to the actions of a man that, which the soul is to the body, or form to its matter, or the root to the tree, or the sun to the world, or the fountain to the river, or the base to a pillar."

27. Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

^bVerse 54, iv. 14. ¹Matt. iii. 17 and xvii. 5; Mark i. 11 and ix. 7; Luke iii. 22 and ix. 35; chap. i. 33, v. 37 and viii. 18; Acts ii. 22; 2 Peter i. 17.

Labor not, &c. This prohibition must not be understood absolutely, but comparatively. (See 2 Thes. iii. 10.) Our Lord's meaning is, labor not in the first and chief place for earthly things—they either perish in our hand, or we perish ourselves in the midst of them. It is certain that our salvation must be wrought out, something must be done for it, though we have it not for anything we can do. We must "sow in righteousness," before we can "reap in joy." It was Naaman's fault that he thought to be cured of his leprosy by sitting still, and it is our folly, and will be our misery, too, to dream of blessedness, without having that faith which evinces its existence by works. (Rom. ii. 7; Heb. iv. 11; James ii. 22.) There are promises in the Scriptures to help our weakness, but none to overcome our willfulness. (Heb. vi. 17, 18; 2 Cor. vii. 1.) *Which endureth, &c.* (Prov. ix. 5; Isa. lv. 2.) This is the true food of souls. (See verse 51.) From the sacrificial death of Christ flows, 1. Our pardon, in which the true life of the soul begins. 2. From this flows love, which is the mighty agent in giving life to the soul. 3. From this flows purity, which is strength. We are strong in proportion to its increase, because we are made more and more partakers of the Divine nature. *Shall give.* While he bids them *work* for this, He yet promises to *give* it to them. Heavenly food is the gift of the Son of man. *Sealed.* Among the seals put upon the claims of our Lord, were: 1. The impress of Divinity on His doctrine. 2. Miracles. 3. Fulfilled prophecy. 4. The striking events of His crucifixion. 5. The seals of the resurrection and ascension of Christ, of both which great events the gift of the Holy Ghost was the public confirmation.

28. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? 29. Jesus answered and said unto them, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.—†1 John iii. 23.

Our Lord had spoken of *working* for something: the people suppose He was recommending to them some legal works, that God had bidden this Prophet to propose to them certain additional ceremonies; and so they ask what these might

be, and ask apparently with a readiness to perform. For they, like many in modern times, were willing to do some things, like Herod, after hearing John the Baptist, were willing to do many things, provided this did not particularly interfere with that whereon their hearts were set. *This is the work of God, &c.* This is the same as saying, "this is the first and greatest of all duties, and without it no other duty can be acceptable." Faith is called "the work of God," for three reasons: It is the work of His efficiency (Eph. i. 19; Col. ii. 12), the work of His commanding, and the work of His approbation. Believing is not a work of merit, for it is the beggar coming to the king for alms, the criminal suing to the judge for mercy. It is no easy matter for a man to believe. Such an one must not only receive Christ as a Saviour, but as a Lord too. He must renounce all to have Him; he must take Him on His own terms. He must deny the world and all, looking beforehand what it will cost him. (Eph. i. 19; Col. ii. 12.)

30. They said therefore unto him, ¹What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? 31. ²Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written, ³He gave them bread from heaven to eat. 32. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. 33. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. 34. ⁴Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

¹Matt. xii. 38 and xvi. 1; Mark viii. 11; 1 Cor. i. 22. ²Ex. xvi. 15; Num. xi. 7; Neh. ix. 15; 1 Cor. x. 3. ³Psa. lxxviii. 24, 25. ⁴iv. 15.

What sign, &c. The carnal belief in miracles is insatiable, it craves miracle after miracle. *Our fathers, &c.* Here was an intimation that, as Moses fed their fathers in the wilderness, who were no less than six hundred thousand persons, with excellent manna from heaven, and this for forty years together, they had more reason to believe Moses than Christ. *Moses gave you not*—Moses did not give that bread, *he did not create it*: nor was it living bread; it would not give life to the dead, or even preserve the life of the living. *But my Father, &c.* The expression must not be supposed to imply actual reception on the part of the Jews. It rather means "giving" in the sense of "offering" for acceptance a thing which those to whom it is offered may not receive. "It is," says one, "a very remarkable saying,

and one of those which seems to me to prove unanswerably that Christ is God's gift to the whole world—that His redemption was made for all mankind—that He died for all, and is offered to all. It is like the famous texts, John iii. 16; 1 John v. 11." *Lord, evermore give, &c.* Though our Saviour had spoken to them of heavenly food, they, still cleaving to earth, cannot comprehend Him, but supposing that He offers something better than the manna, yet withal earthly, they desire to be always supplied with it: as the Samaritan woman, in a somewhat parallel conversation asks Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." (iv. 15.)

35. And Jesus said unto them, ¹I am the bread of life: she that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. ²Verily, I say unto you, I am the bread of life.

Henceforward it is "I" "me" throughout the discourse. *The bread of life* is equivalent to "the life-giving bread." Our Lord here affirms that He is the author of true happiness, that He, that He alone, can make men truly and permanently happy. *Hunger and thirst*, are here used figuratively for that restless and dissatisfied state which rises out of the want of what is necessary to our happiness—a sense of that want—and a craving desire to have that want supplied. That is the state of all men in their natural condition.

He that cometh to me—relies on my atonement as the only expiation of guilt, and implicitly submits to my authority as the great Teacher of truth and holiness. *Shall never, &c.* "Every one that believing comes to me for happiness shall obtain it. After having tasted the happiness which I have to bestow, he will not expect to find it anywhere else. He will find in me alone, that truth which will satisfy his understanding, that atoning righteousness which will pacify his conscience, that sanctifying influence which will transform his character, that soul-satisfying portion which will fill his heart."

36. ¹But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.—²Verily, I say unto you, I am the bread of life.

Our Lord here upbraids them because of their unbelief. He had already told them (v. 33, 43), and now He repeats the charge, that though He had given them every proof, even ocular demonstration,

testifying not merely to faith, but unto sight, that He was the Sent of God, yet they would not believe.

37. *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. [†]Ev. 43. [‡]Matt. xxiv. 24; chap. x. 28, 29; 2 Titus ii. 19; 1 John ii. 19.

As if to derive consolation to His own soul, amidst so discouraging an aspect as that referred to in the preceding verse, the Saviour adds, *All that the Father, &c.* (Rom. v. 11.) If our Divine Master could draw consolation from this high source, surely the weakest of His servants may well be permitted to do the same. *Him.* Observe the particularity of the promise: although our Lord began the sentence with "all," He changes the person in that portion of it which He intended especially for the sinner's heart, and says, "*him that cometh,*" &c. It is the soul that Jesus would have to come. Whosoever and whatever he be, though he may long have been the most hardened rebel, though he may be the readiest slave of Satan, still let him come, and he shall find a blessed welcome. *In no wise, &c.* Here is a double negative. "I will not, no, I will not cast out." None shall be excluded on account of their age, or their situation in life, or their ignorance and slowness to learn, or the number, magnitude, or aggravation of their sins. "Though they are but some," says *Bishop Beveridge*, "that God hath elected, yet His promises are made to all 'Come unto me, all ye who are weary,' &c., 'Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish,' &c. In the application of which and the like promises, we must not have respect to the eternity of God's purpose, but to the universality of His promise. His promises are made to all, and therefore all are bound to lay hold upon His promises; and, as we are to receive His promises, so are we also to obey His precepts, as made to all. So that in all our doings the will of God is to be followed, as we have it expressly declared to us in His Word, not considering whether God elected me from eternity, but whether I obey Him in time: if I obey Him in time, I may certainly conclude, that He elected me from eternity."

33. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but

should raise it up again at the last day. 40. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

[†]Matt. xxvi. 39; chap. v. 30. [‡]iv. 34. [§]ix. 28, xvii. 12 and xviii. 9. [¶]Verses 27, 47, 54; iii. 15, 16 and iv. 14.

Our Lord proceeds to confirm His previous position, by saying that there is no opposition between Him and His Father. *For* would be better translated "inasmuch as." *Came down*, the tense of the verb is perfect—*have come down. Not to do, &c.* The "Messenger of the Covenant" came down from heaven to do the will of the Father, which is indeed His own will, for they are one. (See on chap. v. 30; also Ps. xl. 9, 10, with Heb. x. 5, 7.) *This is the Father's will, &c.* This verse expresses more distinctly what was the will of the Father. It refers back to the covenant brought to view in verse 37, and confirms its merciful provision in regard to the recovery from sin and death of those who are embraced in it. *Of all, &c.* A reference to God's amazing love in choosing some of this guilty world, who should certainly be to the praise of His glory. (See xvii. 6; Eph. i. 5, 6.) *I should lose nothing*—let nothing of such be lost. *But should raise it up again.* The neuter "it" conforms to the gender of "all," and is in like manner to be taken in a collective sense of all Christ's people. They shall, though they die in this world, be raised up again to a happy state, this being the contrast of *losing nothing*. The day of judgment is called *the last day*, for days, weeks, months and years, the revolutions which now measure, time shall then be swallowed up in an unchangeable eternity. The saints shall be forever with the Lord. (1 Thes. iv. 17.)

That every one which seeth, &c. Our Lord had (verse 39) referred to the redeemed *collectively*, as being given to Him of the Father, and as being made partakers of everlasting life, now as to their souls, and resurrection life hereafter as to their bodies. He now refers to the redeemed *individually*, pointing to that whereby they come to be partakers of the blessing, faith in the Son of God. "Faith," says *Scougal*, "hath the same place in the Divine life, which sense hath in the natural, being, indeed, nothing else but a kind of sense or feeling persuasion of spiritual things. It extends

itself unto all Divine truths, but in our lapsed estate, it hath a peculiar relation to the declaration of God's mercy and reconcileableness to sinners through a Mediator, and, therefore, receiving its denominations from that principal object, is ordinarily termed faith in Jesus Christ." (xii. 21; Heb. xi. 27; Matt. xxvii. 55; Luke x. 18; chap. xvii. 24; Acts iii. 16; Heb. viii. 6.) "Every one," is the expression. No one can say he is excluded. "Seeing and believing" are the only things required. No one can say that the terms are too hard. *And I will raise, &c.* (See on verse 39.) These words are repeated in order to make it sure that the glorious resurrection referred to will take place.

41. The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. 42. And they said, 'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?'
 *Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3; Luke iv. 22.

Murmured—muttered. *How is it then, &c.*
 "What can this mean? Do we not know all about him—where, when and of whom he was born? And yet he says he came down from heaven." (See on Matt. xiii. 55; Luke iv. 22.) The obscurity of Christ's temporal birth renders the greatness of His eternal birth incredible to carnal men, as the majesty of His Divine being has made others question the reality of His human nature. Reason is always mistaken when it pretends to judge by itself, or to make the senses judges of the mysteries of religion, instead of having recourse to the authority of the Word of God.

43. Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. 44. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.
 *Cant. i. 4; verse 65.

"The point of our Saviour's reply is," says Luther, "that all dispute about His person is fruitless, until the internal sense of want is experienced." In what this consists, we are told (verses 45, 46), you wish to subject me to measure and square, and judge my word by your reason, but I say unto you, that is not the right way and path—you will not come to Him till the Father opens to you His great mercy, and Himself teaches you that from His fatherly love He sent Christ into the world." *Can come*—not simply come outwardly, but with the heart. "Drawing" is tantamount to having "learned of the

Father," in verse 45. But it is not every one that has been objectively instructed by the preaching of the Gospel who comes to Christ; it must therefore be such an instruction and drawing as is peculiar to true believers. In this drawing, which is rendered necessary by men's ignorance, as well as their perversity toward God, no violence is done to the mental or the moral powers of a man, but the influence of God is harmonious with both, and renews the heart in such a manner that the person is conscious of no interruption of his own free choice and action. God draweth with His Word and by His Spirit, but man's duty is to *hear* and *learn*, that is to say, receive the grace offered, consent to the promises, and not resist the God that calleth. *And I will raise, &c.* (Comp. xvii. 2; see on verses 39, 40.) The pronoun "I," is emphatic. Jesus thus reminds them of His Divine power.

45. 'It is written in the prophets. And they shall all be taught of God. 46. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me.
 *Isa. liiv. 13; Jer. xxxi. 34; Mi. iv. 2; Heb. viiii. 10 and x. 16. 47. Verse 37.

The prophets—that section of the Old Testament popularly styled *the prophets*. The quotation is probably from Isa. liiv. 13. *Shall all be taught, &c.* This teaching is part of the great process of the Father's drawing to Christ. (See on verse 44.) *Every man therefore, &c.* We here learn, 1. That faith in Christ is not a mere notion or belief, but *such* a belief as is accompanied with an application to Him for all the purposes of salvation. (See on verse 37.) 2. The reasonableness of faith. It is not the offspring of presumption or ignorance: it flows from instruction, from Divine teaching. 3. The entire importance of the Lord Jesus. We here see that all the teaching of God, both in the revelation of the Word and in the work of His Spirit, is designed to make us feel our need of Christ, and to induce us to desire Him, and repair to Him. This is telling us plainly enough, that there is salvation in none other, that in Him all fullness dwells, that He is all, and in all.

46. 'Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.
 *18 and v. 37. 47. Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22; chap. i. 18, vii. 29 and viii. 19.

Not that, when He bade them hearken

to the Father's teaching, He would have them expect any personal direction from the Father to believe in the Son. (See Rom. x. 6, 8; Deut. xxx. 12, 14.) God who spake in time past unto their fathers by the prophets, was now speaking unto them by His Son. *He which is of God*—the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. As the Son sees the Father, through His essential and eternal union with Him (i. 14), so do we see the Son (verse 40), through a mystical union with Him by faith. And, as we see the Father in His Son (xiv. 9), so, by a mystery of grace, the Father seeth us in His Son likewise. (Eph. i. 1-7; chap. xvii. 21.)

47. Verily, verily, I say unto you, «He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

«iii. 16, 18, 35; verse 40, on which see notes.

Our Lord repeats, with solemn affirmation, that blessed truth, the substance of which He had already uttered (verse 40), only now applying it directly to Himself. *He that believeth*. Observe, that the very foundation of all that follows, is Faith. *Hath everlasting life*, because he hath the present right to it, and because He hath already entered upon the present enjoyment of that which will become everlasting life hereafter. (xvii. 3.)

48. «I am that bread of life. 49. «Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50. «This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

«Verses 33, 35. «Verse 31. «Verses 51, 53.

I am that bread of life. "You did not misapprehend me, when you thought I appropriated to myself the appellation, "the true bread," "the bread from heaven," "the bread of God. I am that *life-giving bread*, I am the procurer and bestower of immortal happiness." The Saviour goes on to compare or contrast Himself with that bread which the Jews were accustomed to call "the bread from heaven," the manna. There is one great difference in the parallels: the manna gave but a transient earthly life, this true manna gives heavenly and eternal life. *That a man may eat, &c.* This clause contains the reason why this bread from heaven was given to man—as a remedy and preservative against death, both spiritual and eternal. The resurrection of the body to a condition of glory and blessedness is also comprised in the gift.

51. I am the living bread [which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and «the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. «iii. 13. «Heb. x. 5, 10.

To mark the importance of the sentiment in verse 50, our Lord repeats it. *I am, &c.* Eating is that which in consequence of the natural constitution of things, is necessary to our deriving the advantage from bread, which it is intended to communicate—that is, bodily nourishment. To "eat" the bread of life is just, by the faith of the truth, to obtain a personal interest in the blessings of Christ's salvation. (See on verse 53.) *And the bread that I will give, &c.* The "flesh" of our Lord is plainly just equivalent to His body, or Himself as embodied. To "give His flesh," is, to devote Himself as a sacrifice—voluntarily to lay down His life. "The world" is just equivalent to mankind, without distinction, Gentiles as well as Jews, and "to give his flesh for their life," is either "to give Himself, to devote Himself, in their room—to lay down His life for their forfeited life—to give His soul as a ransom for their souls—to die in their room, in order to save them from the death which they deserved," or, what comes materially to the same thing, "to lay down His life in order to obtain life—happiness—for them."

52. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, «How can this man give us his flesh to eat? «vii. 13, ix. 16 and x. 19. «iii. 9.

Some of the hearers see clearly that Christ cannot, in the literal sense, give His "flesh" as food, whilst others have more correct views of the spiritual nature of this food, hence there is a conference as to the real meaning of the word. As Jesus saw that, in general, it was not *comprehension* but *candor*, which they needed, He was pleased not to enter into any further explanation, but (as before, at verse 44), gravely repeats, with stronger asseveration, what He had before said.

53. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. «Matt. xxvi. 28, 29.

The language of our Lord here is certainly metaphorical, but it is founded in truth, and designed to convey an important reality. We live spiritually by the dying of the Lord Jesus, and the allusion refers to His Mediatorial offering for our

sins, and teaches us, that faith is necessary to our deriving benefit from His sacrifice. The resemblance between this eating and drinking, and the exercise of faith, which they represent, appears in four things. 1. Appetite. The Saviour speaks of hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Such are the desires which all believers feel toward the Lord Jesus. 2. Application. In eating there is an actual refection of the food into the animal system, and in believing we receive Christ Jesus the Lord. 3. Satisfaction. As food is essential to our subsistence, and there is immediate gratification in receiving it, so the reception of Christ is not only indispensable, but free and delightful. 4. Nourishment. This is the design and effect of food. And "the just shall live by faith." Blessed Jesus! Thy flesh is meat indeed, and Thy blood is drink indeed! Evermore give us this food.

Though the Eucharist had not yet been instituted, yet we probably have the idea of it, and a kind of anticipative allusion to it, in this chapter: though we may not restrict our Lord's words solely to that holy mystery. The whole passage in fact, looks at the passion of our Lord. (See verse 51.) There is a glancing at His heartless betrayal. (Verses 70, 71.) There is the anticipation of His atoning sacrifice, allusion to His cross and passion, though not yet accomplished, and therefore, together with it, to the sacred Supper, as the memorial of His body broken and His blood shed, for the life of our souls, and as the outward sign of the manner in which we feed on Him in our hearts by faith, with thanksgiving, as a public profession of our inwardly receiving His atonement, and as a pledge to all true believers of everlasting life.

54. "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55. For my flesh is meat indeed; and my blood is drink indeed. 56. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58. "This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. 59. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

^aVerses 27, 40, 63, iv. 14. ^b1 John iii. 24 and iv. 15, 16. ^cVerses 49, 50, 51.

Whoso eateth, &c. The preceding verse declares the necessity of this spiritual food,

to the acquisition of eternal life. This verse reaffirms the promise made in verse 40, on which see notes. *Meat indeed drink indeed, i. e.,* truly, really in the very highest sense. "In all ages," says *Latimer*, "the devil hath stirred up some light heads to esteem the sacraments lightly, or, to be empty and bare signs." "The real presence of Christ's most blessed body and blood," observes *Hooker*, "is not to be sought for in the sacrament, but in the worthy receiver of the sacrament." *Dwelleth in me, &c.* As the branches are very members of the vine, so are believers of the Lord Jesus. This is the secret of their life. They have eternal life because they are partakers of Christ, because they are legally and spiritually united to Him who is "the Prince of life." (See Eph. iii. 17; Col. i. 27; Rom. viii. 9-11; Gal. ii. 20; also 1 John iii. 24, iv. 13, 15, 16.)

The expression *the living Father* is plainly equivalent to "the life-giving Father, the possessor and communicator of all life and happiness, the source and fountain of existence, intelligence, activity and enjoyment." *Hath sent me, &c.* It is plain that Christ here speaks of Himself as Mediator. The general thought in this verse, seems to be this: the intimate connection between believers and the Saviour is so close, as that His life secures their life (see xiv. 19), and He illustrates this thought by comparing the connection which subsists between believers and Him, to the connection which subsists between Him and His Father, and the security which their connection with Him affords for their life, to the security which His connection with the Father affords for His life. (1 Cor. xi. 3, iii. 23.) *This is that bread, &c.* This is a sort of summing up of the whole discourse, on which let this one further remark suffice: that as our Lord, instead of softening down His figurative sublimities, or even putting them in naked phraseology, leaves the great truths of His person and office, and our participation of Him and it, enshrined for all time in those glorious forms of speech, so when we attempt to strip the truth of these figures, figures though they be, it *goes away* from us, like water when the vessel is broken, and our wisdom lies in raising our own spirit, and

attuning our own ear to our Lord's chosen modes of expression.

60. *Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is a hard saying, who can hear it? *Verse 66; Matt. xi. 6.

Disciples. By this word here are meant the persons who had lately attended on the instructions of Jesus, though their hearts had not become attached to Him. *A hard saying*—an address hard to be understood and believed. This is a strange way of speaking, thought they, that a mere man, whose father and mother we know, should tell us that He has come down from heaven (verses 41, 42), and that He can give us His flesh to eat. *Who can hear it?* Who can stop and listen to this? It seemed to them literally absurd. They conclude Him beside Himself (x. 20). The words of eternal truth are hard sayings, but they are such only to those who have a hard heart. The most saving words are not to all persons words of salvation. The school of Christ is not to all His disciples a school of light and truth. It is to every one of us such as our heart is, because the heart itself is this school.

61. When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

Knew in himself. By giving them this proof that He knew their hearts, Jesus also proved that He was God. *It, i. e.,* what He had declared, that He had come down from heaven, and that in order to have life, they must eat His flesh and drink His blood. *Doth this offend you?*—does it prove a stumbling-block to you?

62. *What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? *viii. 13; Mark xvi. 19; Acts i. 9; Eph. iv. 8.

The first thing that the Jews "murmured" about, was our Lord's saying that He "came down from heaven;" the second thing, that He would "give them His flesh to eat." Instead of humoring them in their objections by lowering His tone, or qualifying His expressions, Jesus dares their further *offense* by adverting to a greater mystery respecting Himself, to a truth still more difficult to their carnal conceptions. He asks them what they would think if they saw His body "ascending up" into heaven. Even then, after His ascension, they would have to "eat his flesh and drink his blood," if they desired

eternal life. What would they think of that? Would they not find it even more difficult to receive and believe?

63. *It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.—*2 Cor. iii. 6.

Our Lord here further reproves them for that carnal interpretation which they put upon His spiritual sayings. Even if it were possible for them to partake of the literal flesh of the Lord, it would profit them nothing, seeing it is the spirit alone that quickeneth, the flesh to that end contributeth nothing. (Comp. Rom. i. 3, 4; 1 Peter iii. 18.) All the quickening power ascribed to our Lord's flesh, or human nature, flows from His Godhead, to which it is united. *The words that I speak, &c.,* that is, the words that I have now spoken, concerning eating of my flesh, are to be understood in a spiritual sense of a spiritual eating and drinking, and by that means, and that only, a true eternal life is to be obtained. "We should," says *Leighton*, "aspire to know the hidden rich things of God, that are wrapped up in His ordinances. We stick in the shell and surface of them, and seek no further; that makes them unbeautiful and unsavory to us; and that use of them turns them into an empty sound." (Verse 39; Jer. xxxi. 33; 1 Peter i. 10-12, iii. 21.)

64. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. 65. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. *Verse 36. *ii. 24, 25 and xiii. 11. *Verses 44, 45.

There are some of you, &c. "I know that some of you—that many of you—notwithstanding your professions, do not really believe me to be a Divine messenger, for you are not disposed to receive as true whatever I declare to be so; you receive my doctrine only so far as it coincides with your preconceived opinions." *For Jesus knew, &c.* He was never imposed upon. When He called Judas to be an Apostle, He knew that He would be the traitor. *Therefore said I unto you.* For this reason I told you (verse 44) that no man can come unto me, &c., because I know that the prejudices of corrupt nature lie strongly against me and my doctrine, and that nothing but Divine grace will subdue them. The degree of men's depravity—their moral impotency in their fallen state

—is such, that they cannot come to Christ as a Saviour, until the Father has given them grace. It cannot be doubted that the doctrine of this verse has often furnished unbelievers with an *excuse* for not coming to Christ. His reason for declaring it, however, was that He might convince man of his danger and helplessness, and many have been alarmed from hearing it, and have been led to cry out, "What shall I do to be saved?" See verse 40, from which it is plain that it is the revealed will of Christ that every one who hears the Gospel should come to Him for life.

66. ^bFrom that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.—Verse 60.

The word *disciple* means *learner*. It was applicable to the followers of Christ, because they were *taught* by Him. It does not imply of necessity that those to whom it was given were real Christians, but simply that they were under His *teaching*, were professed learners in the school of Jesus. The Son of God, did not escape giving offense to many of His disciples. Even, therefore, though very many shrink back from a pure doctrine, it is not right to suppress it. "None," says *Gurnall*, "will have such a dreadful parting with the Lord at the last day, as will those, who by profession went half way with Him, and then left Him." (1 Peter ii. 20-22.)

67. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? 68. Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. 69. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.
^cActs v. 20. ^dMatt. xvi. 16; Mark viii. 29; Luke ix. 20; chap. i. 49.

When the multitude went away, and walked no more with Him, the Good Shepherd was grieved, for He never yet saw a lost sheep running on to destruction but His heart bled for it. But when His own believing disciples were in danger of being led away, He speaks to them, and, as we may well suppose, in a tone of tenderest affection. *Will ye also*, &c. "Will ye whom I have chosen, washed, sanctified and filled with hopes of glory, will ye also go away?" Observe, Christ keeps His disciples from backsliding by putting this question to them. The words went to the heart of the frank and generous Peter, and drew from him (on behalf of the rest as well as himself) this earnest declaration: *Lord, to*

whom shall we go, &c. Three reasons are here given why the believer cleaves to Christ. 1. *To whom go*. None of the founders of religions, or philosophies, or priesthoods, can fill His place. 2. *Thou hast the words*, &c. To unconverted minds the words of Christ are hard sayings (verse 60), to His own, they are tried words—words of eternal life. The very thing that drives the world away from Christ, draws His own disciples closer and closer to Him. 3. *We believe and are sure*, &c. It is this that rivets the believing soul to Christ—the certain conviction He is a Divine Saviour. We believe and are sure that He is the *Son of the living God*, and therefore, we know that He is a sufficient surety for us. To whom else can we go for pardon? To whom else for a new heart? To whom else for a title to, and meetness for, the inheritance of heaven?

70. Jesus answered them. Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? 71. He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.
^eLuke vi. 13. ^fxiii. 27.

Our Lord intimates to Peter, that his charity was something too large in promising so much for them all, for there was one traitor among them, of whose perfidiousness He now gives them warning. *Chosen*, selected to be my Apostles, and to enjoy a more intimate acquaintance with me. *A devil*. The disposition of Satan, as the adversary of Christ, might well be said to have been possessed by Judas. The best thing corrupted is worst. A bad man is the worst of all creatures, a bad Christian the worst of all men, a bad professor the worst of all Christians, a bad minister the worst of all professors. *Judas Iscariot*. (See on Matt. x. 4; Luke vi. 16.) *Should betray him*, literally, *was about to betray him*, for it was *he* who at that time began to harbor this execrable purpose. *Being one of the twelve*. How much is implied in this short sentence. It is a very solemn irony. One of those who witnessed his Master's miracles, heard His discourses, companied with Him, walked with Him, sat with Him in the fishing-boat on the Galilean Sea, sat at His frequent board—what a fall was here! From that height of favor to this depth of degradation! Numbered with the twelve, by base and heinous transgressions

Judas fell, that he might go to his own place. (Acts i. 17, 21.) As he stood so well in the esteem of his fellow-Apostles, as to be intrusted with the bag containing their little all, we ought not to solace ourselves with the thought that the best of men approve us, if our hearts are conscious that we do not *love* the Saviour.

1. Why did the multitude follow Jesus? 2. Where did He go? 3. State the particulars of the miracle of feeding the multitude. 4. What did Christ do when the people proposed to make Him a king? 5. What did He say to His disciples as He walked on the sea? 6. Explain verse 27. 7. What is said of the "bread from heaven?" 8. Who is the bread of life? 9. Will Christ in any wise cast out those who come to Him? 10. How are we to understand verse 41? 11. How verses 43-55? 12. What did Jesus say to the twelve? 13. What did Peter reply? 14. What is said about Judas?

CHAPTER VII.

1 *Jesus reproveth the ambition and boldness of his kinsmen, 10 goeth up from Galilee to the feast of tabernacles: 14 teacheth in the temple. 40 Divers opinions of him among the people. 45 The Pharisees are angry that their officers took him not, and chide with Nicodemus for taking his part.*

AFTER these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.—*v.* 16, 18.

The Saviour went about from place to place in Galilee, preaching and working miracles, as was His custom. (Acts x. 38.) Although ministers and private Christians may be secluded from many places and parts of their calling, yet they have no warrant to be idle, but ought still to be doing good. *Jewry*. This term is retained in this place alone from the oldest English translation. It signifies a place or quarter where Jews reside. *Because the Jews, &c.*—meaning principally their rulers. (See verse 13.) Though Jesus might otherwise, by supernatural means, have secured Himself from the effects of malice, He was pleased to choose this ordinary method. For there is a manifest economy in the Divine dispensations, which teaches us that where ordinary means suffice, we are not to look for extraordinary supplies. Faithful ministers may for a time withdraw themselves from personal danger, yet they should not do this out of a slavish fear, but should use this means of self-preservation as a duty warranted by Christ's example.

2. ^bNow the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. ^cLev. xxiii. 34.

The *feast of tabernacles* was one of the

three great annual feasts which every Jew was required to attend at Jerusalem. It is here noticed by the Evangelist as the *Jews' feast*, for the sake of His Gentile readers. It was celebrated in Autumn, from the 15th to the 23d of Tisri (October), the 23d being the chief day of the feast (Lev. xxiii. 34-42; John vii. 37.) It commemorated the sojourning of the Israelites in the wilderness, and is a lively emblem of the sweet issue of the wandering of the godly, when they shall enter out of the wilderness of this world into their heavenly Canaan. It was intended also as the feast of the ingathering of all the fruits of Autumn, by which it was testified that present mercies had not produced forgetfulness of former trials.

3. ^cHis brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. 4. For *there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly.* ^dIf thou do these things, show thyself to the world.

^eMatt. xii. 46; Mark iii. 31; Acts i. 14. ^fxviii. 20.

His brethren, i. e., His natural brethren. (See on Matt. xii. 47, xiii. 55.) Among the Jews kinsmen in various degrees were called brethren. *Depart hence, &c.* The worldly spirit which this address reveals, is much to be noticed. They were far from entertaining just views of the nature of Christ's mission, and were too much actuated by low and unworthy motives in urging Christ to make a public avowal of His claims to the Messiahship, as here related. They manifested too little of that goodness which seeks "the honor that

cometh from God only." (v. 44.) As little did they know of that heavenly method which our Saviour was at this very time pursuing—in gathering together the outcasts, and bringing home the wanderers from the fold, extending His kingdom upon earth by methods which seemed to men foolishness, building up His Church out of the "base things of the world, and things which are despised, yea, and things which are not." (1 Cor. i. 28.) They were ambitious of human honor, and thought all lost which was done in secret. (See on verse 5.) *Show thyself to the world.* "The world," observes an ancient writer, "is the great theater on which men act a part; but behind the scenes they may be seen in their proper persons, without any studied appearances. Our domestic behavior is therefore the main test of our virtue and good nature." (1 Sam. xv. 30, xix. 9, 10.)

5. For neither did his brethren believe in him.
cMark iii. 21.

(See on verse 4.) This cannot be taken universally of our Lord's kindred, for three of His kinsmen, at least, were found in the number of His Apostles—Simon, and Jude, and James the Less, who is expressly called the Lord's brother. This is a very surprising announcement, but it is very instructive. 1. It favors the truth of Christianity. Had all our Lord's relations recommended and followed Him, His case might have looked human and suspicious. 2. It shows us what evidence may be resisted, and what means may be rendered ineffectual, by the depravity of human nature. 3. It proves that none will be saved by mere relationship. It is a mercy to have pious connections: but religion is a personal thing, and if we refuse to tread in their steps the blessing will be turned into a curse—whilst they are admitted into the kingdom of God, we ourselves shall be shut out. *Believe in him.* "Observe," says Wordsworth, "the imperfect: they were not believing in Him; they were not steadfast in faith. They had made, as it were, 'an act of faith' at Cana, there they (ii. 11) 'believed' when they saw His miracles, but it had not ripened into a *habit*."

6. Then Jesus said unto them, *My time is not yet come:* but your time is always ready.
fil. 4 and viii. 20; verse 8, 30.

Great as is the want of respect shown in

the words of His brethren, the reply of Christ displays the wonted character of elevation. *My time, &c.*, a suitable, proper time for me to be going up to the festival. His time for going was not while the roads were thronged, and there was a concourse of the people, but privately, when the way was comparatively clear, lest the hostility of His enemies should break forth prematurely. (See on verses 7, 8.) We must be extremely careful not to anticipate God's appointed time, especially in undertaking the more eminent and remarkable actions. The Christian, who is desirous to perform the will of God, waits till He is pleased to make it known to him, and then makes it the spring of all his activities. *But your time, &c.*, any time was suitable for them. There were no special reasons in respect to them for preferring one time to another. The world could not hate *them*, or show any hostility to them, for they had given it no cause. What absurdity and madness mark those, who because they imagine that, in regard to securing salvation, their "time is always ready," waste the passing and precious days, and months, and years.

7. *The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth,* ^bbecause I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.
exv. 19. fil. 19.

The world—to which (verse 4) ye so ambitiously bid me show myself. *Cannot hate you.* The immediate relatives of Jesus were not so different from other men in religious respects, as to be exposed to their ill will. *But me it hateth, &c.* The true reason of the enmity of many of the Jews against Christ is here distinctly indicated. That adultery, covetousness and hypocrisy were rife and common among the leading Pharisees, is evident from many expressions in the Gospels. It was our Lord's witness against these darling sins that enraged His enemies. (See iii. 19–21.) Whatever be the hazard, Christ's servants are bound, in their stations, to bear testimony against the evil practices of the world. Whatever pretenses of zeal persecutors of Jesus and His followers may have, yet the true cause of their hostility is the opposition that is made to their wickedness and hypocrisy.

8. *Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast,* ^bfor my time is not yet full come. 9. When he had said these words unto them, he abode *still* in Galilee.—lviii. 20; verse 6.

Christ bade them, for the reason stated in the preceding verse, go up at once, if they would, with all the bustle and excitement of the public journey. As for Himself, He said, *for my time is not yet full come, i. e.*, was not fully completed. *Tholuck* says on these verses: "At other times Jesus invariably appeared at the beginning of the feast; here He declares that he will not yet go to *this* feast, because the proper time had not yet come; if He came unexpectedly, and did not appear until in the midst of the feast, the disturbance would be less. That the fear of disturbance was not groundless, is seen in the picture given us of the state of feeling at Jerusalem."

10. ¶ But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

When his brethren, &c. (See on verses 6-9.) Then went he, &c. Jesus attended the Jewish feast, according to the command of God. (Ex. xxiii.) Being made under the law, He showed a punctual obedience to the law, and fulfilled it in His own person. *Not openly*. Not with the ordinary pilgrim caravans by the ordinary route on the east side of Jordan. *As it were in secret*—not by any actual concealment, but informing no one except His Apostles, and taking the cross route through Samaria. This private method of going was adopted rather for fear of giving offense, than of receiving injury. If the work of God be done effectually, it is best done when done with *least noise*. The kingdom of God need not come *with observation*. (Luke xvii. 20.) We may do the work of God *privately*, and yet not do it *deceitfully*.

11. Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? 12. And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay, but he deceiveth the people. 13. Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.

Jxi. 56. Kx. 16 and x. 19. 1Matt. xxi. 46; Luke vii. 16; chap. vi. 14; verse 40. 1ix. 22, xii. 42 and xix. 38.

Where is he? The Jews, perhaps from hatred, forbore to name Him. There was much *murmuring*, or private discussion among the multitude, on the point whether He were even a good man, or deceiver of the people. "Censure no man," says one, "detract from no man, praise no man before his face, traduce no man behind his back. Observe thyself as thy greatest

enemy, so shalt thou become thy greatest friend." (viii. 4; Rom. i. 30.) The record here made of the various impressions of the people in reference to our Lord, shows the impartial fidelity of the sacred historian, and affords a fair presumption of his veracity. *For fear of the Jews*—of the Jewish rulers, whose policy at this time was to slight Jesus, to treat Him with contempt, in the vain hope that the popular excitement regarding Him would die out. Fear is the main rock upon which most men split their faith, their honor, and their integrity. Concession of principle has been in every age the bane of good men, and the policy of bad.

14. ¶ Now about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. 15. And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

1Matt. xiii. 54; Mark vi. 2; Luke iv. 22; Acts ii. 7.

About the midst of the feast. (See on verses 8, 9.) Went up into the temple, &c. Henceforward in Judea and Galilee, Jesus could only show Himself in safety by suddenly stepping into a great assemblage of the people, and exercising His ministry there. In such situations, the spirit of reverence which animated many of the people toward Him, still for a while sheltered Him against His enemies. *Letters*, learning. (Acts xxvi. 24.) *Having never learned*—at any rabbinical school; as Paul under Gamaliel. These rulers knew well enough that He had not *studied* under any human teacher—an important admission against ancient and modern attempts to trace our Lord's wisdom to human sources. Probably His teaching on this occasion was *expository*, manifesting that unrivaled faculty and depth which in the Sermon on the Mount had excited the astonishment of all.

16. Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. 17. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

1viii. 11, viii. 28, xii. 49 and xiv. 10, 24. 1viii. 43.

My doctrine—my teaching. *Is not mine*—is not mine alone. *His that sent me*. As much as to say, "I do not proceed upon any authority or power distinct from that of my Father: my plans and actions are inseparable from His, my doctrine, works and glory are His, and His are mine." The great truth of Christ's own inseparable and mysterious union with God the Father is here once more pointed at. *If any man*

will, &c. If any man *sincerely* wish to perform the will of God, he shall discover the Divine original and descent of the doctrine the Saviour taught. The knowledge in question is not in the first instance suspended upon the cordial voluntary performance of God's will, but purely upon the purpose to perform it when once discovered, a qualifying condition for this great gift of knowledge, much more merciful, because much more limited. "As the expansion of air, that is about us, doth not preserve life, but that part which we breathe in, so 'tis not the compass of our knowledge and belief (though it were equal to the whole revealed will of God) that is vital to the soul, but that which is practiced by us."—*Bates*. "The way to judge of religion is by doing of our duty: and theology is rather a divine life than a divine knowledge. . . . No man understands the Word of God, as it ought to be understood, unless he lays aside all affections to sin."—*Jeremy Taylor*. "If it be certain that the unfeigned desire to serve God is necessarily attended by a knowledge of His truth in Christ, it must be equally certain, by strict and inevitable consequence, that a *rejection* of the faith, or, by similar reasoning, a disparagement of the faith, or a neglect of the faith, or a carelessness about its influences, its advancement, its perpetuation—must arise from an absence of solicitude to please God in His chosen form, or any God in any form—that is, from a radical atheism of the heart."—*William Archer Butler*.

18. *He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him, 19. *Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? *Why go ye about to kill me? 20. The people answered and said, *Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee? sv. 41 and viii. 50. *Ex. xxiv. 3; Deut. xxxiii. 4; chap. i. 17; Acts vii. 38. *Matt. xii. 14; Mark iii. 6; chap. v. 16, 18, x. 31, 39 and xi. 53. *viii. 48, 52 and x. 20.

He that speaketh, &c. If I speak so as to procure my own glory—to gratify vanity, or secure and promote any worldly interest, then reject me as a false prophet. But if I act only to promote the glory of God, to induce all men to love and obey *Him*, you cannot help acknowledging me at least for a *true* prophet, and if you add to this the proofs which I have given you of my mission and power, you must acknowledge me as the mighty power of God, and

the promised Messiah. *But he that seeketh*, &c. Consider this in connection with v. 44. *The same is true*. Here our Lord attributes to a character thus free from self-seeking, the predicates of truthfulness and of moral purity. *Did not Moses*, &c. The hearers are designated as those who do not make even the doing of the will of God their law, entirely in accordance with v. 45, also viii. 37. As a proof of this, the extremest transgression of the law is adduced, the murderous designs of the officials, but the multitude of those who are at the feast, regard this suspicion as so extravagant, that they attribute it to the inspiration of the spirit of lies. In viii. 48, there probably lies a retrospective reference to this reproach.

21. Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel, 22. *Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision, not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers, and ye on the sabbath day circumsise a man. 23. If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? 24. *Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. *Lev. xii. 8. *Gen. xviii. 10, xv. 8, 9, 16. *Deut. i. 16, 17; Prov. xxiv. 23; chap. viii. 15; James i. 1.

Our Lord proceeds further to show the unreasonableness of the opposition of His enemies. "Work" is a term by which our Evangelist very frequently names the miracles, and it is eminently significant. (See x. 25, 32, 38, xiv. 11, 12, xv. 24, also Matt. xi. 2.) "The *wonderful* is, in His eyes, only the natural form of working for Him, who is dwelt in by all the fullness of God: He must, out of the necessity of His higher being, bring forth these works, greater than man's. They are the periphery of that circle whereof He is the center. The great miracle is the Incarnation; all else, so to speak, follows naturally and of course. It is no wonder that He whose name is *wonderful*, does works of wonder, the only wonder would be, if He did them not. . . . These miracles are the fruits after its kind which the Divine tree brings forth, and may, with a deep truth, be styled *works* of Christ, with no further addition or explanation." (Ps. lxxii. 18, civ. 24.) *One work*. The reference is to the healing of the impotent man on the Sabbath. (v. 8, 9.) *Moses therefore*, &c. The word "therefore" should stand in the preceding verse, as having reference to the work there alluded to, so that the last clause of

that verse would be as follows: "And ye all therefore (on account of it) marvel." The argument of the Saviour is: "If, or, inasmuch as, a man may be circumcised on the Sabbath day, without the Sabbath being thereby broken, it is unreasonable in you to be angry with me, if, in place of wounding by circumcision, I have made a man perfectly well, and thus the more capable of enjoying the promised rest. Are ye angry at me because I have done upon a man a work, not of the ceremonial law, but of mercy, by making him altogether sound on the Sabbath day?"

"Judge not, &c. Judge not the deed I did according to the appearance. It was done on the Sabbath, but it was an act of necessity and mercy, and therefore an act as lawful to be done as circumcision, which you yourselves perform on the Sabbath day. Judge fair, and just, and righteous judgment. Man, who sees not the heart, ought to be very cautious in judging his brother. It is unjust to form our judgments upon the outward appearance of any action, or by the love or hatred we bear toward the person who has done it. To judge uprightly and justly we must love justice: and since our love for it is but small, let us never judge but when it is absolutely necessary, and let us then do it with fear and caution.

25. Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? 26. But lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. 27. ^aDo the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? 27. ^bHowbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.

^aVerse 48. ^bMatt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3; Luke iv. 22.

Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? Why do they not do it? Who hinders them? They say they are determined to get Him out of the way, and yet, lo, he speaketh boldly, &c. Here two things are slyly insinuated, to exasperate the rulers against Christ. 1. That by conniving at His preaching, they brought their authority into contempt. Must a man that is condemned by the Sanhedrim be permitted to speak boldly, without a check? 2. That by the course they were pursuing they were bringing their judgment into suspicion. Do they know indeed that this is the very Christ? If so, if, as would seem from their utter remissness, they have undergone some change of purpose or opinion,

and are coming round to acknowledge and adopt Him, how came they to change their minds? What new discovery have they made? *Howbeit we know, &c.* (See on next verse.) There was a notion prevalent that the Messiah's origin would be veiled in obscurity, and that He would burst suddenly upon an astonished world. Observe the unreasonableness, inconsistency, self-contradictions of these men who were not willing to believe in Jesus, though they say here, "We know this man whence He is," they say elsewhere, "As for this fellow we know not from whence he is." (ix. 29.)

28. Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. 29. But I know him, for I am from him, and he hath sent me. ^cviii. 14. ^dv. 43 and viii. 42. ^ev. 32 and viii. 26; Rom. iii. 4. ^fi. 18 and viii. 55. ^gMatt. xi. 27; chap. x. 15.

Cried Jesus, with a loud voice, consequently with special emphasis. (vii. 37, xii. 44.) In His words, as in viii. 14, 23, the majesty and the indignation of a king whom his subjects refuse to recognize, find utterance. Christ raises His voice, to teach His ministers that it is a dishonor to Divine truth to preach it in a timorous manner. Ye both know me, &c. These words may be taken as declaring them to know Christ, and yet to be ignorant of Him, in different respects. They knew Him and whence He was, as man (though even in that they erred if they supposed Him to be the carpenter's son), yet they knew not the Father nor Him, as God, proceeding from the Father, and sent by Him. *He that sent me is true.* I am no unauthorized person, but I have a commission. The matter here impressed on them is the genuineness, the reality of the fact, that Jesus was sent, and there was One who sent Him. *True—objectively, not subjectively,* "really existent," not "truthful," which the word here rendered *true* will not bear. *But I know him, &c.* Jesus adds, that He was comforted in this, that whatever they thought of Him, yet He knew that He was sent from the Father, and however they knew not the Father, yet He knew Him, as being from Him, and sent by Him into the world.

30. Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. 31. And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?

^aMark xi. 18; Luke xix. 47 and xx. 19; verse 19; chap. viii. 37. ¹Verse 41; chap. viii. 20. ^bMatt. xii. 23; chap. iii. 2 and viii. 30.

The enemies of Jesus seem to have been greatly exasperated by what had been said (verses 25-27, on which see notes), probably also by the emphatic declaration which He had made of His having come from God as His accredited messenger. *But no man laid hands, &c.* He laid invisible hands on their power, for it is He who hath said to the sea, "Hitherto shalt thou come and no farther." The *hour* here, means the grand point of time in the life of our Lord, the time of His passion and death. (xvii. 1.) Learn, 1. That Christ's sufferings were undergone voluntarily. He did not go to the cross because He could not help it. 2. That nothing can hurt God's people except and until He permits. Then let them work on confidently. They are immortal till their work is done. (Ps. xxxi. 15.) *Believed on him*, expressed a conviction that He was the Messiah. *When Christ cometh, &c.* The word "more" probably means not only more in number, but "greater" in character. The question raised by these people was a fair and reasonable one, "What greater evidence could any one give that He is the Christ, than this man has given? He could not work greater miracles, even if He worked more numerous ones. What are we waiting for? Why should we not acknowledge this man as the Christ?"

32. ¶ The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him. 33. Then said Jesus unto them, ¹Yet a little while am I with you, and ²then I go unto him that sent me. 34. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, ³thither ye cannot come.

¹xiii. 33 and xvi. 16. ²Hos. v. 6; chap. viii. 21 and xiii. 33.

Heard. Though these bystanders had not the nerve to apprehend Jesus, they had the spirit to carry the news of His preaching, and its effects to these Pharisees. *Officers*—the beadles or attendants of the Sanhedrim. Jesus had no enemies so watchful for evil against Him as the most outwardly religious people among the Jews. *To take him.* Bloody and violent persecution is the last refuge of hypocrites. When Satan and his instruments come to this, it is an evidence that they are vexed and at their last gasp. *Yet a little while.* Scarcely half a year elapsed before the Passion. *I go unto him that sent me.*

The idea of His Divine mission is ever prominent with the Saviour. His followers are here taught that they should be so familiar with thoughts of mortality, that they may willingly obey the summons to depart whenever it may come. *Ye shall seek me, &c.* In the days of their distress they would in vain seek the Messiah, who had been among them and been rejected by them. The expression seems to designate a seeking of aid when the right time has passed away. (Comp. Amos v. 11, 12, viii. 12; Prov. i. 28; Hos. ii. 7; Isa. lxxv. 1. *Where I am*—that is, in God's presence. "The present tense," says *Alford*, "is used in the solemn sense of chap. iii. 13 and chap. i. 18, to signify *essential truth*." *Thither ye cannot come*—that is, so long as they continued in their present temper, and refused to believe in Him, they could not come. (See viii. 21, 22, 24.)

35. Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? 36. What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, ¹thither ye cannot come?

¹Isa. xi. 12, James i. 1; 1 Peter i. 1.

Whither will he go, &c. Instead of making use of Christ's admonition, these wicked men carped at His expressions, wondering what He meant by them, or if His intention was to leave them and go where those Jews abode who were scattered among the Gentiles, and living in Gentile countries. *What manner, &c.* The Jews were not able to get over the enigmatical saying of Jesus in verse 34. It was as if they dimly felt that the words implied some grave mystery in reference to themselves. Men betray their corrupt dispositions, when they cavil at doctrine as obscure, and yet never come to Christ or the means He has appointed for its elucidation.

37. ¶ In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

¹Lev. xxiii. 36. ²Isa. lv. 1; chap. vi. 35; Rev. xxii. 17.

Christ returns no answer to their malicious carping, but makes this large offer to them all. This *feast* was the feast of tabernacles. (See on verse 2.) On the *last*, or eighth day of this feast, the ceremonies performed were characterized by more than ordinary impressiveness and solemnity. Opportunities should be the more carefully improved, because they are so

soon likely to pass away. Every day with us is as our last day. (xii. 35, 36; 1 Cor. xv. 31.) *Jesus stood*, perhaps elevated above the dense multitude around Him, most of whom had refused to hear Him during the days that had gone. *Cried*, said with much emphasis and earnestness. There must have been something exceedingly solemn in that attitude, and that voice. He "stood," where all might see: He "cried," that all might hear. The truth of God ought to be proclaimed with courage, fervency, and zeal. *If any man thirst*, &c. It was doubtless in allusion to the pious ceremony they had witnessed day by day for the last seven days, that our blessed Lord now calls and invites almost in the words of their prophet. (See Isa. lv. 1, 2.) The invitation is universal—"any man,"—it extends to all persons without distinction of nation or of privilege, without respect to previous character, Jew and Gentile, bond and free, high and low, rich and poor, the morally correct, and the vicious and abandoned, all who desire the salvation of the gospel. To "thirst," is to supremely and sincerely desire the blessings which are proposed—under dissatisfaction with the world and its enjoyments, to long for happiness in the favor of God. *Let him come unto me*, &c. To "come" to Christ is to believe in Him. The faith required is that act of the heart and mind which corresponds with the act of drinking. Just as the weary traveler assuages his thirst from the cool stream, feeling that he must do this or perish, so the sinner must look to Christ, and receive Him, and rest upon Him alone for the salvation which He needs. The exceeding appropriateness of the representation here made of the blessings of the gospel-covenant under the emblem of water, will be more clearly perceived, by the transfer of ourselves in imagination to the regions of the East, in which the nature of the climate, and the general aspect of the country, require numerous fountains, not only to assuage the thirst of the inhabitants under the intense heat of the sun, in a cloudless sky, but to refresh them by the verdure, shade and coolness which they produce.

38. ¶He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39. (¶But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)
 ¶Deut. xviii. 15. ¶Prov. xviii. 4; Isa. xli. 3 and xlvii. 3; chap. iv. 14. ¶Isa. xlv. 3; Joel ii. 28; chap. xvi. 7; Acts ii. 17, 33, 38. ¶xii. 16 and xvi. 7.

Believeth on me. (See on verse 37.) *As the Scripture hath said.* Who does not recur at once to such passages as Isa. xli. 18, xlv. 3, lviii. 11; Joel iii. 18; Ezek. xlvii. 1-12? *Shall flow.* "To this day," says a modern traveler, "there exists a spring in the heart of the Temple rock, from which flows the living water into the two pools of Siloam, whence (as at this time) the water was brought to the temple service." So from out the hearts of the believers in Christ should issue those fruits of the Spirit, which in their nature, influences and effects, whether as regards themselves, or those around, or the world at large, may well be likened to "living water." Genuine religion is something more than a notion; it does not consist in a dormant creed, or a dead confidence, but it is active, it is a principle, full of life, energy and influence. *They that believe.* By faith we lay hold of Christ in the Word, and, through our union with Christ, we obtain the Spirit. Always according to the measure of the Spirit, and according to the measure of faith, is the measure of Christ in us. (vi. 35, 36; Gal. iii. 14.) *Holy Ghost was not yet given.* All the good ever before this was owing to His influences, but He had not been shed forth in that plentiful measure, in those copious streams, as inaugurating a new era, as fulfilling the prophecies referred to. (See on verse 38; see also xiv. 26, xii. 16, xvii. 5; Luke xxiv. 26; 1 Peter i. 11; Phil. ii. 6-11.) *Jesus was not yet glorified.* The word "glorified" is here used advisedly, to teach the reader not only that the departure of Christ to the Father was *indispensable* to the giving of the Spirit, but that this illustrious Gift, direct from the hands of the ascended Saviour, was God's intimation to the world that He whom it had cast out, crucified and slain, was "His elect, in whom His soul delighted," and that it was through the smiting of that Rock that the waters of the Spirit—for which the Church was waiting, and with pomp at the Feast of Tabernacles proclaiming its expectation—had gushed forth upon a thirsty world.

40. ¶ Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is *the Prophet*. 41. Others said, *This is the Christ*. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? 42. ¶ *Had not the Scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?* 43. So there was a division among the people because of him. 44. And some of them would have taken him, but no man laid hands on him.

⁴⁰Deut. xviii. 15, 18; chap. i. 21 and vi. 14. ⁴¹lv. 42 and vi. 69. ⁴²Verse 52; i. 46. ⁴³Ps. cxxxiii. 11; Jer. xxxiii. 5; Mi. v. 2; Matt. ii. 5; Luke ii. 4. ⁴⁴1 Sam. xvi. 1. 4. ⁴⁵Verse 12; xix. 6 and x. 19. ⁴⁶Verse 30.

Many people were there, and they expressed different opinions concerning Jesus. *The Prophet*, or the messenger that was to be sent before Christ, to prepare His way. (Mal. iii. 1.) *The Christ*, or the Messiah. Another party objected to this belief. They imagined that Jesus had been *born* in Galilee, though He had only been *brought up* there, and they did not know that He was of the family of David. *So there was a division, &c.* Christ's own prophecy began already to be fulfilled, that He came to send division upon earth. (See Luke xii. 51; 1 Cor. xiv. 33; also chap. ix. 16, x. 19 and xii. 42.) An ancient writer says: "In all quarrels and contentions about truth, the Church is the gainer; they stir up more diligent inquiries, bring forth more judicious resolutions; heresies are but the file and furnace of truth, making it shine more clearly. Vehement shakings make the deeper rootings. We have no truths so settled as those that have been most violently opposed." (See 1 Cor. xi. 19, xv. 12.) And yet it is said there should be division of opinion concerning Christ, and that the seamless robe of His doctrine should be rent into so many different pieces, and that endless sects and schisms should mar and mutilate the faith once delivered to the saints. As there is but "one body, and one spirit, and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, we should ever pray and labor, and labor and pray, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of Spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. *And some of them would, &c.* (See on verse 30.)

45. ¶ Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? 46. The officers answered, *Never man spake like this man.* 47. Then answered them the Pharisees, *Are ye also deceived?* 48. *Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?* 49. But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed. ⁴⁵Matt. vii. 23. ⁴⁶xii. 42; Acts vi. 7; 1 Cor. i. 20, 26 and ii. 8.

Then came the officers, who were dispatched, as narrated in verse 32, and who were obliged to make their official return to the rulers, the Sanhedrim, under whose orders they were acting. *Brought him.* He was clearly to be arraigned for trial. These men would, if possible, have anticipated the "hour" of His death. *Never man spake, &c.* The officers confess that they have been held back from any act of force by the transcendent power of Christ's words. The conviction forced itself upon them, in spite of their readiness to believe to the contrary, that He was something more than man, that there was something superhuman about Him. Jesus, in the communication of truth, showed that there was One in the tabernacle, greater than the tabernacle. He gave demonstration that a more than human voice spake, and a more than human mind poured forth its wisdom. No human orator can be named, whose eloquence has produced effects which equal those that followed His, either in persuading, or in confounding, in comforting, confirming or conciliating the hearts of mankind, and in subduing them by its astonishing exhibitions and irresistible charms. What He said attested that in Him were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, that in Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

Are ye also (as well as the multitude) *deceived?* *Have any of the rulers, &c.* "Rulers" was the general name for the members of the Sanhedrim. This question was asked, not to procure information, whether any of the principal men had acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, but, as containing a satisfactory reason why those officers should not allow themselves to be influenced in His favor? *Are you wiser than they?* They thought to carry the matter by the weight of authority. Great men are not *always* wise. (1 Cor. i. 27; see chap. xii. 42. Yet even in this council there was a Nicodemus (verse 50). *But this people*, literally, "multitude," meaning the ignorant rabble, who knoweth not the law, i. e., by school learning, which only subverted it by human traditions, *are cursed*—a cursed set (a kind of swearing at them, out of mingled rage and scorn.) "What availeth knowledge without the fear of

God? An humble ignorant man is better than a proud scholar who studies natural things, and knows not himself. The more thou knowest, the more grievously thou shalt be judged. Many get no profit by their labor, because they contend for knowledge rather than for holy life; and the time shall come, when it shall more avail thee to have subdued one lust, than to have known all mysteries." (Ps. cxix. 97-104.

50. Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them.) 51. *Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?*—iii. 2. *Deut. i. 17, xvii. 8, &c., and xix. 13.*

When Nicodemus had but little faith, he "came to Jesus *by night*"—he durst not openly appear for Christ, but afterward, as he grew in grace and knowledge of Christ, so he grew in courage for Him. At this time, though alone and altogether unsupported in that formidable assembly, he is not deterred from doing his duty. *Doth our law, &c.* Soft as these words are, there is a severe sting in them. This question confounded these unjust judges, and for the present prevented the accomplishment of their design. *Judge, condemn.* The chief men had, by their manner of speaking, denounced Jesus as a deceiver. *Before it hear him, &c.* (See Deut. xix. 15-18; Lev. xix. 15, 16.) "Men's moral probation," says *Bishop Butler*, "may be, whether they will take due care to inform themselves by partial consideration; and, afterward, whether they will act, as the case requires, upon the evidence which they have. And this, we find by experience, is often our probation in our temporal capacity." (Num. xxii. 20, 21.

52. They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth

no prophet. 53. And every man went unto his own house.

Isa. ix. i. 2; Matt. iv. 15; chap. i. 46; verse 41.

They knew that Nicodemus was not of Galilee, but they meant to ask whether *he* also had become a follower of the despised Galilean. *Out of Galilee, &c.* Now Galilee had produced four, or, perhaps, five great prophets, as Jonas (2 Kings xiv. 25), Nahum, Habakkuk, Amos, and, as some indeed maintain, Elisha. Hence several commentators attribute this false assertion to the ignorance or forgetfulness of the priests, or the hurry of anger. Their falsification of historic facts is what might be expected from men who did not hesitate to employ false witnesses (Matt. xxvi. 59, 60; Mark xiv. 55-57) in order to compass the death of Jesus.

And every man went unto his own house, some, perhaps, like Ahab, to eat and to drink, some to suffer the condemnation of a guilty conscience, and some, it is to be hoped, like Elijah (1 Kings xviii. 41, 42), to cast themselves down before the Lord, and wisely consider of His doing. Quietness under one's own roof, and quietness in our own conscience (viii. 9) are two substantial blessings, which whoever barter for show and pomp will find himself a loser by the exchange. Abroad we must more or less find tribulation, yet, as long as our home is a secure and peaceful retreat from all the disappointments and cares, which we meet with within that great scene of vexation, the world, we may still be tolerably happy; but, if that which should be our main sanctuary from uneasiness becomes our principal disquietude, how great must our uneasiness be! (2 Sam. vi. 20; Prov. iii. 33; Luke ix. 58.)

1. Why would not Jesus walk in Jewry? 2. What feast was at hand? 3. Describe it. 4. What did our Lord's brethren say to Him? 5. What was His reply? 6. Where did Jesus teach? 7. What was the effect of His teaching? 8. How may we know of the doctrine, whether it be of God? 9. How did Jesus answer the accusation that He had a devil? 10. Why did not His enemies lay hands on Him? 11. What did Jesus cry on the last day of the feast? 12. What did He mean by "living water"? 13. What report of Christ did the officers make to the chief priests and Pharisees?

CHAPTER VIII.

1 Christ delivereth the woman taken in adultery. 12 He preacheth himself the light of the world, and justifieth his doctrine: 33 answereth the Jews that boasted of Abraham, 39 and conveyeth himself from their cruelty.

JESUS went unto the Mount of Olives. 2. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him, and he sat down, and taught them.

The first verse should have closed chapter viii. On the evening of the last day of the feast of tabernacles, while all the people "went unto their own houses," Jesus, who had no home to go to, went to the Mount of Olives, where it is not unlikely he spent the night in solitary devotion. *Early in the morning*, &c. This was redeeming the time—this was diligence in His business, this was doing good to all, as He had opportunity. It is a certain sign that our hearts are set upon a work, when the thoughts of it cause sleep to depart from us, and we awake readily, constantly, and *early*, to the performance of it. What is a slothful sinner to think of himself when he reads concerning the Holy Jesus, that "*in the morning*," &c. (Mark i. 35.) Jesus chose so early an hour that He might have an opportunity of once more addressing His countrymen, before they left Jerusalem to retire to their respective homes. *All the people*—a great crowd. *Sat down*—the ordinary attitude of teaching among the Jews.

3. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, 4. They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. 5. *Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?—Lev. xx. 10; Deut. xxii. 22.

Brought unto him a woman, &c. The object in bringing her was insidious, and might be two-fold, according to the event. If our Saviour had condemned her, He might be said both to have usurped a civil jurisdiction, and to have sanctioned a breach of the Sabbath, and if He had refused to condemn her, He might be said to have countenanced the crime. *Adultery*—a work of darkness (Job xxiv. 15; Prov. vii. 7. See also Matt. v. 27, 28 and xix. 18; Mark x. 19; Luke xvi. 18, xviii. 20; Rom. ii. 22; James ii. 11; Rev. ii. 22.) "Where the law of Moses is referred to," says *Scott*, "the word 'adultery' always supposes the woman to be the wife of another man, and never denotes the case

of a married man lying with a woman, neither married nor betrothed to another. But the New Testament rule considers this also as adultery." *In the midst* of the people who were then in attendance upon His teaching. *They say unto him, Master*, &c. Observe how the hypocrisy of these Pharisees was gilded over with an appearance of sanctity: they pretended to be great lovers of chastity, and haters of uncleanness, but all this was done only to tempt Christ. (verse 6.) Thus a smooth tongue and a false heart often accompany one another. *Now Moses in the law commanded us*, &c. *but what sayest thou?* "Thou who pretendest to have an authority greater than that of Moses"—referring probably to Matt. v. 21, 22, 27, 28, 31, 32, xii. 8, xix. 9. *Should be stoned*. (See Deut. xxii. 24.) Or, the "command" referred to, may have been the ancient gloss of the scribes on Lev. xx. 10, which only declares that the guilty parties shall "be put to death," without specifying how. This mode of punishing adultery appears, however, to be alluded to in Ezek. xvi. 38, 40.

6. This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground *as though he heard them not*. 7. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. 8. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. 9. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

*Deut. xvii. 7; Rom. ii. 1. *Rom. ii. 22.

Tempting him. (See on verse 4.) *Wrote on the ground*, marked on the ground, perhaps, without writing any words. "Of such power," says one, "was that writing, that each of them knew it to contain his own sins." (iv. 29; Mark xiv. 19.) Jesus wished, by this symbolical action, which was common among the Jews and wise men of old, to show that He would not be drawn into useless disputes. He thus also drew away the attention of the people from the woman to Himself, and prepared them for the very appropriate and solemn remark which, as He sat or stood erect, He was about to make. *He that is without sin*, &c. Our Lord did not mean that no man ought to act as judge or witness in a criminal cause, who is not wholly exempt from sin in his own conduct, because that would

disannul civil government, which is "the ordinance of God." (See on verse 10, 11.) "Before thou reprehendest another," says an ancient writer, "take heed thou art not culpable in what thou goest about to reprehend. He that cleanses a blot with blotted fingers, makes a greater blur." (Ps. l. 16, 17; Rom. ii. 17-22.) "It is the will of God," says another, "that those who punish sin in others should be sensible of their own failings, and that the sense of their own sins make them tender toward others."

And they which heard it, &c. These men seemed righteous, and desired to be so accounted; but our Lord could "a tale unfold," and of this they seemed conscious, and thought it prudent to retire. And so they did, one and all, from the most case-hardened old scribe down to the most forward young Pharisee: while Jesus resumed His former occupation, giving them thus, with generous consideration, an opportunity of retreating with the less confusion. Thus were these ashamed and confounded that sought after His soul to destroy it; thus were they turned backward and put to confusion that wished Him evil. (Ps. xl. 14, lxx. 2.)

Learn, 1. That we are not always obliged to answer those who have a design to ensnare us. We may evade it by some innocent artifice, and such is never wanting when we keep our hearts open to the Spirit of God. 2. That every conviction of conscience is not saving, nor is every one in a state of grace whose conscience finds the edge of the word to make him ashamed of sin. 3. That it is sure evidence of an unsound awakening of conscience when men's convictions make them flee from Christ, and shun either His future convictions or comforts. 4. That we ought not to be ashamed to confess we have been in the wrong. It is but owning what we need not be ashamed of, that we now have more sense than we had before, to see our error, more humility to acknowledge it, and more grace to correct it. 5. That all the plots of wicked men against Christ will at last tend to their own visible and open shame. 6. That it is both prudent and charitable to give persons an opportunity to extricate themselves, without noise and

confusion, out of a business in which they have rashly engaged themselves through passion.

10. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? 11. She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

^aLuke ix. 56 and xii. 14; chap. iii. 17. ^cv. 24.

Saw none but the woman. The accusers, conscience-stricken, had departed (Rom. ii. 1, 16-24), and of those concerned in that conference, none remained but He whom the accusers would in mockery have made a judge, and she whom from no hatred to her crime they had accused. These were surrounded by a group, probably, of the disciples and such of the people as might have been listening to His teaching when this unseemly interruption occurred. And in their hearing and in their midst, He says: *Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? &c.*

"It seems to have essentially belonged to our Lord's mission," says one, "not to act judicially in any respect." "I am come," says He, "not to judge the world, but to save the world." His business was exclusively moral, not judicial. Hereafter He was to come as a judge. As incarnate, and a sojourner on earth, He was to perform the office, not of a judge, but of a Saviour. He therefore in the case of the woman confines Himself to the gracious purpose, for which He had become man. But He does this in such a manner, as to put the moral bearing of the case out of all possibility of doubt: for to His words of mercy He adds those of weightiest admonition—*Go, and sin no more.* Here our Lord guards His leniency against the slightest shadow of misconception. He tells her she had sinned; and this was to say everything. David's confession (which afterward expressed itself at large in Ps. li.) was confined in the first instance to these strong words: "I have sinned against the Lord." Full as his heart at the moment was, this simple acknowledgment did justice to his feelings. In truth, the term sin in Holy Scripture is replete with meaning. It is the opposite, the contradictory to God's pure and perfect nature; and therefore, if not subdued and expelled, the pledge of endless misery to its victim. *Sin no more,* was therefore at once the deepest accusa-

tion, and the most awful warning. It was to tell her, that she had done infinitely more than expose herself to the being stoned to death; that she had exposed herself to the infinitely more dreadful judgment of God; but that she had now further time of trial, on her use of which must depend whether her present escape would be a gain, or an aggravation. (v. 14; Luke xii. 14 and xviii. 13.)

12. Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, ¶ I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.
fi. 4, 5, 9, iii. 19, ix 5 and xii. 35, 36, 46.

As it was early morning when the Lord returned to the temple, it is probable that He borrowed the image of the sun, which, we may well imagine, was coming forth out of his chamber in the east. (See Isa. xlii. 6, xlix. 6.) How fitly does light represent Christ. 1. It is the first object of sight, and Jesus, who is "God over all, blessed forever," is the prime object of the understanding. 2. All things are seen by light, and it by itself. Thus is Christ among spiritual things (Eph. v. 13). 3. As light makes all other things that are in themselves visible to become actually visible, so by the words of this substantial *Word*, Jesus Christ, all things in religion are tried and discovered. (Isa. viii. 20.) 4. Light visits many impure places, and yet remains most pure and undefiled. So Christ sees and takes notice of all the enormities and sinful pollutions in the world, yet He is never stained by them in the least degree. His precious blood is a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness; sinners are purified by it, and it is not defiled by them. 5. The light of the sun is neither parted nor diminished, by being imparted to many people and nations that behold it at one time, nor is the righteousness of Christ, who is the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. iv. 2), either lessened to Himself, or to individual believers, by many partaking of it at once; it is wholly conferred upon each one of them, and remains whole in Himself. 6. The sun has a vivifying power. So Christ is at once the light and the life of men. (John i. 4.) 7. As darkness disappears before the sun, so it was Christ's arising in the world that made the day break and the shadows fly away. The types and shadows of the law

were then abolished. It was His light that dispelled the mists of ignorance and idolatry, and He also delivers the soul from the night of sin and misery produced by it. *He that followeth me*—believes the truth with regard to Christ as the light of the world—the Saviour of men. *Shall have the light of life*—the knowledge, holiness and happiness which Jesus communicates. Continued faith is the appointed means of the continued enjoyment of the Christian salvation.

13. The Pharisees therefore said unto him, ¶Thou bearest record of thyself: thy record is not true. 14. Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go, but ye cannot tell whence I came, and whither I go. 15. Ye judge after the flesh, I judge no man. 16. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. 17. ¶It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. 18. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

ev. 31. bvi. 28 and ix. 29. ivii. 24. Hii. 17. xii. 47 and xviii. 36. iVerse 29. xvi. 32. ¶Dent. xvii. 6 and xix. 15; Matt. xviii. 16; 2 Cor. xiii. 1; Heb. x. 28.

Jesus had shown that, although He dealt in mercy with the sinner (verse 11), He yet did not give His followers encouragement to continue in sin, any more than the light gives encouragement to deeds of darkness (verse 12); this the Pharisees called bearing witness of Himself. *Not true*—or, not valid, alluding to the rule laid down in Deut. xix. 15, also probably to Christ's own words. (v. 31.) *I know whence I came, &c.* I speak from my own certain knowledge, and have already shown that I come with a Divine commission, and therefore you ought to admit my testimony, for the most evident demonstrations of my Divine origin have been given you, both in the nature of my doctrine and in the miracles which I have wrought among you, *but ye* are so perverse, that as often as I have hinted or declared it, ye know not from whence I come, and whither I am going. *After the flesh*, according to the maxims of flesh and sense. *I judge no man, i. e.*, I descend not to the low level of human judgments, of man upon man, or, I judge no man as yet, that function of my Messianic office being reserved for the future. But if I should judge, *my judgment is true and right*, for *I am not alone*, my consciousness is illuminated by the Divine consciousness of the Father. I do not bear witness *alone* of myself in what I say, *but I and the Father*

that sent me, as we are in other respects inseparably united, do evidently concur in the testimony that I give. *Written in your law*, &c. (Deut. xvii. 6 and xix. 15.) *I am one that bear witness of myself*, in a fact, the truth of which I cannot but certainly know, and the *Father that sent me* is another, who also bears His testimony to me, thereby asserting the truth of every doctrine I teach, and the justice of every sentence I might pass.

13. Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, *Ye neither know me, nor my Father: for if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.—*Verse 35; xvi. 3. xiv. 7.

The question of the Jews, *Where is thy Father?* was probably asked in a sneering and sarcastic tone. *If ye had known me*, that I was the image of the Father (Heb. i. 3), and sent of Him into the world, *ye should have known my Father also*. It is here taught that ignorance of Christ and ignorance of God are inseparably connected. The man who thinks he knows anything rightly of God while he is ignorant of Christ is completely deceived.

20. These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him, for this hour was not yet come. 42Mark xii. 41. xvii. 30. xvii. 3.

These words, &c. This sentence seems meant to mark a pause or break in the discourse, and to show also how publicly and openly our Lord proclaimed His Messiahship. *The treasury* was a certain part of the women's court, where the chests were placed for receiving the offerings of those who came to worship, and consequently a place of great concourse. See how exact, how circumstantial is our Evangelist! *No man laid hands*, &c. (See on vii. 30, 8.)

21. Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come. 47vii. 34, xliii. 33. *Verse 24.

Under the name of "departing" (or as the word is here rendered, "going His way") our Saviour speaks of His approaching death and resurrection, thus indicating that submission to death was the act of His own free will. *Die in your sins*, repeated in verse 24, and explained by our Lord Himself. *Whither I go*, &c. As if Jesus had said, "I go to my Father, if He were your Father also, then you might follow me: but since you have received the spirit of the world (see verse 23), as long as you are governed by this spirit, ye

cannot come where I go." Let those who above all things love the world, consider this, and tremble.

22. Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. 23. And he said unto them, *Ye are from beneath, I am from above: ye are of this world, I am not of this world. 24. *I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: *for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

*viii. 31. *xv. 19, xvii. 16; 1 John iv. 5. *Verse 21. *Mark xvi. 16.

Will he kill himself? The Jews seem to have regarded this as a not uncommon termination to the career of disappointed adventurers. The case of Ahitophel (2 Sam. xvii. 23) and others will occur to the reader. They did not venture to put this question to the Lord Himself, but consulted with each other on the subject. He knew their thoughts, and by His reply showed that He had alluded to His death. *Ye are from beneath*, earthly, not spiritual in your dispositions and purposes. *I am from above*—from heaven, and my exposition and aims correspond to my origin. (See Col. iii. 2.) Let us not flatter and deceive ourselves with vain appearances of superficial piety, which float upon the surface of our souls, but be assured that if we find them chiefly fixed upon this world, or any creature in it, we may stand "gazing" with "the men of Galilee," we may contemplate and admire the ascension of our Saviour, but all in vain; whither He goes, we cannot follow Him. *I said therefore unto you*. Christ points out the reason and ground of His sad sentence—their corrupt and earthly disposition—and intimates that this is also a cause of their ignorant mistake of their own danger. "*If ye believe not*," &c. There is a merciful "*if*." *Ye shall die in your sins*, that is, unless renewed by the grace of God, ye shall die in the guilt of your sins, under the power, and undergoing the punishment of your sins. Though our Lord is now upon one particular subject, unbelief, He yet uses the plural "*your sins*," as hinting the manifold consequences, the number of sins and sorrows in which unbelief would leave them tied and bound, the brood of errors bound up in that one pregnant mischief unbelief. (See chap. iii. 16-18, v. 24, 25, also xii. 46-48.) *For if ye believe not*, &c. As the moral change which they needed could only result from the belief in Him as the Messiah, their rejection

tion of Him proved the truth of His declaration, that they would die in their sins, and this is here distinctly affirmed. *That I am he*. The italic word *he* is unnecessarily supplied by the translators. The enemies of Christ knew well enough what He meant.

25. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, *Even the same* that I said unto you from the beginning. 26. I have many things to say and to judge of you: but *the* that sent me is true, and *I* speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.—vii. 28. ciii. 32, xv. 15.

Even the same, &c. The words “the same,” are unnecessarily supplied in our common version, and doubtless arose from a wrong translation of the word rendered *from the beginning*, and the verb “said,” which does not refer so much to what is once spoken or said, as to general speech or discourse. In the original, the word rendered *even*, is so collocated as to belong to the verb. The conjunction *that*, in our English translation is in the original a pronoun, and should be rendered *what* or *that which*. The translation should therefore be: *first of all* (i. e., in very truth), *what I am also saying unto you*, i. e., the very person I have ever declared myself to be, or, as *Alford* says, “in very deed the same which I speak unto you.” *I have many things to say*, &c. As if our Lord had said, you require me to speak and to pronounce about *myself*, but I have rather for the present to speak and to pronounce concerning *you*. Again Christ appeals to His Divine mission, showing that He has the highest authority for what He does.

27. They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. 28. Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself, but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. 29. And *he* that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone, for I do always those things that please him. d.ii. 14, xii. 32. eRom. i. 4. iv. 19, 30. ciii. 11. xxiv. 10, 11. i verse 16. kiv. 34, v. 30, vi. 33.

They understood not, &c. Some of them, for it is scarcely possible to suppose that they could all be, so stupid, did not understand who it was that our Lord referred to when He spake of Him who sent Him. *When ye have lifted up*, &c.—a reference to our Lord's crucifixion. (xii. 32, 33.) This is a prediction that, after His crucifixion, many of those who had taken an active part in it should come to be persuaded that He was indeed the Messiah. *But as my Father*, &c. “Christ,” as one has re-

marked, “has taught us to say, ‘Our Father,’ a form of speech which He never used Himself. Sometimes He calls Him ‘The Father,’ sometimes ‘My Father,’ sometimes ‘Your,’ but never ‘Our.’ He makes no such conjunction of us to Himself, as to make no distinction between us and Himself; so conjoining us as to distinguish, though so distinguishing as not to separate us.” (See chap. xx. 17.) *The Father hath not left me alone*. See on verse 16.) *For I do always*, &c. “In everything I conform myself to the Father's will.” Whatever opinion men might form of His doctrines or His conduct, He knew that in all He said, and all He did, He was the Father's elect servant, upheld and delighted in by Him—“His beloved Son in whom He was well pleased.”

30. As he spake these words, many believed on him. vii. 31, x. 42, xi. 45.

Many believed Him to be the Messiah. With some, as the following context shows, this was a transient impression, which was soon displaced by unbelief and open opposition. Their hearts were warmed for a little time with the Saviour's discourse, but like the stony-ground hearers (Matt. xiii. 20, 21), they had no root in themselves, and dured only for a while. In the case of others, their faith was but weak, and, therefore, though their hearts had been strongly impressed, yet there was need that such impressions should be strengthened, which the wisdom of Christ effected, by turning His discourse especially to them.

31. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; 32. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. eRom. vi. 14, 18, 22 and viii. 2; James i. 25 and ii. 12.

Continue in my word, be steadfast in adhering to my doctrine. We must not “despise the day of small things.” (Zech. iv. 10.) But we must not forget that to begin is one thing, and to go on is quite another. Patient continuance in well-doing is the only sure evidence of grace. (See xv. 9; Luke xxii. 28; Col. i. 23.) Disciples indeed, i. e., my true followers. *Ye shall know the truth*, ye shall have a right discernment of what is true, concerning myself, my nature, my mission, and my gospel, and you will inwardly *feel* this truth. (See Ps. cxix. 113, 131, 165; comp. vii. 17.)

And the truth, this truth, shall make you free. "It will give you spiritual liberty—freedom from the fetters of ignorance, error, guilt, and depravity: in plain words, it will make you wise, good, and happy—it will invest you with a freedom incomparably superior to any which man can bestow on man—a freedom which will end in "the glorious liberty of the children of God." To this priceless boon *Couper* thus beautifully refers:

"But there is yet a liberty, unsung
By poets, and by senators unpraised,
Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the powers
Of earth and hell confederate, take away:
A liberty which persecution, fraud,
Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind,
Which whoso tastes can be enslaved no more,
'Tis liberty of heart, derived from heaven,
Bought with His blood, who gave it to mankind,
And sealed with the same token."

33. They answered him, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, ye shall be made free?" 34. Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." 35. And the servant abideth not in the house forever; but the Son abideth ever. 36. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. 37. I know that ye are Abraham's seed, but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. 38. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

1 Lev. xxv. 42; Matt. iii. 9, verse 39. 2 Rom. xvi. 16, 20; 2 Peter ii. 19. 3 Gal. iv. 30. 4 Rom. viii. 2; Gal. v. 1. 5 vii. 19, verse 40. 6 iii. 32, v. 19, 30, xiv. 10, 24.

We be Abraham's seed, and therefore not servants, but freemen. Let us beware of trusting in the flesh, and as little let us presume that we are blameless, because sentence against our evil works may not have been executed speedily. Delay, as in the case of the unbelieving Jews, may only result in the more terrible destruction. *Were never in bondage*, &c. The Jews did not take our Lord's words in the sense He meant, but let the sentence be taken in their own sense, and a more absurd re-acton of pride is not easy to be imagined. "Never in bondage to any man!" What! had they not the Roman governor, with a division of the imperial guards, in their metropolis? To the latter part of their boastful question our Lord calmly replies: *Whosoever committeth sin, i. e.*, liveth in the commission of sin. The verb is in the continuous present, expressing what is persistently done. (See 1 John iii. 8; Matt. vii. 23.) *Is the servant of sin, i. e.*, the bond-servant, or *slave* of it, for the question is not about free service, but who are in *bondage*. (See 2 Peter ii. 19; Rom. vi. 16.) The great truth here expressed was not unknown to heathen moralists, but it

was applied only to *vice*, for they were total strangers to what in revealed religion is called *sin*. "Every man in his natural state yields himself unto sin. All his senses, members and faculties, are its handmaids and ministers. The eye watches for it, the ear listens to it, the tongue pleads, and the hands toil for it. Fancy is the painter that draws its picture, memory is the recorder that keeps its secrets, the will is its charioteer that drives furiously through all restraints, the passions and appetites are the providers that hunt for its prey. (Rom. vi. 15-23.)

And the servant abideth not, &c. Whatever a man may boast himself, whatever his parentage, whatever his privileges, the commission of sin undoes him. The son of Abraham becomes the servant of sin. He is thereby degraded from a state of sonship to a state of servitude. He is no longer the heir, but a servant. Not now Isaac who shall inherit, but Ishmael, who is cast out. For the Lord was, beyond all doubt, referring to that allegory, that typical teaching of these Scripture characters, which Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians more largely sets forth. (Gal. iv. 21-31.)

If the Son therefore, &c. "If I, the Son of God, make you free, in the sense of delivering you from the guilt, burden and dominion of sin, then you will be free, indeed!" This was the freedom that He wished them to obtain from Him, whose peculiar office and privilege it is to enfranchise forever all who come to Him. Liberty, like this, is the portion of all true Christians in the day that they flee to Christ by faith, and commit their souls to Him. That day they become free men, in reality, *indeed*. (See Luke i. 12; Rom. viii. 14; Phil. ii. 15.) Liberty, like this, is their portion forevermore. Death cannot stop it. The grave cannot even hold their bodies for more than a little season. Those whom Christ makes free are free to all eternity. Let us never rest until we have some personal experience of this freedom ourselves. Without it all other freedom is a worthless privilege. Free speech, free laws, political freedom, commercial freedom, national freedom—all these cannot smooth down a dying pillow, or disarm death of his sting, or fill our consciences

with peace. Nothing can do that but the freedom which Christ alone bestows. He gives it freely to all who seek it humbly. Then let us never rest until it is our own.

I know that ye are Abraham's seed—literal descendants. Our Lord thus reverts to their boast in verse 33, and He is about to convict them of that sinfulness which He laid to their charge in verse 34. This He does distinctly in verse 40. *Ye seek to kill me, &c.* It is a dismal omen when a person is *regardless* of the truth of God, it is more so to be *provoked* against it, but to persecute and endeavor to destroy those who preach it, is the last degree of perverseness and obstinacy. *With my Father*, that is, God. *With your father*, that is, Satan. (See verse 44.) As if Jesus had said, While the instructions which I communicate are in perfect accordance with the will of my Father, you act in accordance with the will of Satan, in disliking and rejecting my instructions. In respect to character, my Father and your father are entirely opposite, just as I and you are entirely opposite. Jesus was thus gradually bringing them to see that He regarded them as exceedingly sinful, and utterly opposed to God, and resembling the evil one.

39. They answered and said unto him, *Abraham is our father.* Jesus saith unto them, *¶ If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.* 40. *¶ But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.*

¶ Matt. iii. 9; verse 33. ¶ Rom. ii. 28 and ix. 7; Gal. iii. 7, 29. ¶ Verse 37. ¶ Verse 26.

Abraham's children, in the sense in which Paul subsequently employed this expression (Rom. iv. 11, 12, ix. 7, 8), as denoting Abraham's spiritual seed, or those of like spirit and temper with him. *Ye would do the works of Abraham*, ye would imitate his character and ready obedience to God. Mark how our Lord, who elsewhere bases everything like His Apostle Paul, *upon faith*, here lays also stress, like James, *upon the evidence of works!* *But now ye seek, &c.* "In this passage, as in verse 37," says *Tholuck*, "the lust of murder is characterized further by a reference to its motive; *only through this motive* does it attain to the character of the diabolical."

41. *Ye do the deeds of your father.* Then said they to him, *We be not born of fornication, we have one Father, even God.*

¶ Isa. lxiii. 16 and liv. 8; Mal. i. 6.

Ye do the deeds, &c. Ye act as under the influence of the devil as your true father, and in communion and concert with him, a very sure evidence that ye are not the genuine and believing children of Abraham. *Fornication* is most probably not to be taken literally, but as denoting idolatry, which is frequently in the Prophets called fornication or adultery. (See for instance Jer. ii. 1–20 and iii. 1–3.) They labor to prove that they were not born in an idolatrous state, but in the true Church, nor were idolaters themselves, but worshiped God according to His word, and therefore were His children.

42. Jesus said unto them, *¶ If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God, neither came I of myself, but he sent me.* 43. *¶ Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.* 44. *¶ Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do; he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.* 45. *And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.* 46. *Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?* 47. *¶ He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.* ¶ 1 John v. 1. xvi. 27 and xvii. 8, 25. cv. 43 and vii. 28, 29. 4viii. 17. ¶ Matt. xiii. 38; 1 John iii. 8. ¶ Jude 6. ex. 23, 27; 1 John iv. 6.

If God were your Father, &c. Can God be your Father, who reject Him whom He sent? *For I proceeded forth, &c.* The full sense is, "I proceeded forth (from God) and am come into the world (as His Legate). The former part of the expression has reference to the character of Jesus as the *eternal Son of God*; the latter to His character as *Legate and Mediator*. *Neither came I of myself, &c., i. e.,* without being commissioned and sent of God. (See on v. 43, vii. 28, 29.) *My speech*—my discourse. *Because ye cannot hear my word.* "Ye cannot hear, listen to, accept my doctrine, there is another relish of things with you, it cannot enter into you." (See verse 37.) "The grossness of our apprehensions in spiritual things, and our many mistakes which we make about them," says an old writer, "proceed from those dull and foggy steams which rise up from our foul hearts, and becloud our understandings." (See on vii. 17.)

The lusts of your father ye will do. "Satan," observes *Fuller*, "hath no impulsive power; he may strike fire, till he be weary (if his malice can weary); except man's corruption brings the tinder, the match cannot be lighted. (Acts v. 4; James i.

13-16.) *He was a murderer, &c.* That the devil was their spiritual father, Christ proves in general from their imitating of him and being actuated by him. Here we have a plain declaration of the *personality* of Satan, if we adopt the Unitarian hypothesis of substituting the principle of evil for the devil, how utterly inexplicable is the representation here made! *When he speaketh a lie, &c.* Not only was Satan a murderer, inspiring hate, anger, malice, murder, inspiring these Jews to slay Jesus even as he urged Cain to kill his brother, but he is also *a liar*; this is his state, his condition, his nature, *because there is no truth in him*. When he utters falsehood, it is not as a thing alien to his nature, with shame and blushing, as one whose heart is not yet altogether hardened, or his conscience seared, but as a thing proper to his evil nature, glorying in his shame, crying, "evil, be thou my good." Such is Satan, a liar, and the father of lies, and so the father of all liars—of all who love falsehood and hate the truth.

And because I tell you the truth, &c. Monstrous disaffection of men's hearts to divine truths, even because they are truth, and because they are divine! *Which of you convinceth me, &c.* The interrogation is equivalent to, "Who of you impeaches my testimony, by convincing me of any sin?" (See xviii. 23.) "Do not," says *Jerome*, "arm thyself with that vulgar and trivial saying, 'it suffices me that my conscience is clear, and I care not what all the world says;' thou must care what the world says and thinks. Christ Himself had that respect, even toward the scribes and Pharisees." (Acts xxi. 20-24; 2 Cor. i. 12, 17, 18.) The expression, "to be of God," is only a short elliptical expression for being born or begotten of Him. "You therefore receive not His words, because you are not born of God." The plain reason why men do not believe the truth, is that they do not like it.

48. Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? 49. Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. 50. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. 51. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. 52. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. 1. Abraham is dead, and the prophets, and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. 53. Art thou greater than our father Abra-

ham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?

vii. 20 and x. 20; verse 52. iv. 41 and vii. 18. *v. 24 and xi. 26. 1. Zech. i. 5; Heb. xi. 13.

To call our Lord a *Samaritan*, was to give Him the most contemptible and odious of all names. It was especially to reproach Him as an enemy of the holy nation, and they not only give Him this name, but affirm that He richly deserved it—*say we not well?* "Is it any reproach? Who, but a sworn foe of our nation, could have represented us, free-born Israelites, as slaves? us, the seed of Abraham—us, the children of God—as the children of the devil?" But, as if no malignity, however great, in connection with a sane mind, could have induced a person to cast out such opprobrious imputations, they represent Him as a demoniac, as well as a Samaritan. *I have not a devil.* Though Christ used some sharpness in reproving the Jews, yet He answers with wonderful mildness and meekness when He refers to the reproaches cast upon Him. In any instance of injustice or oppression to which we may be exposed, let us endeavor to imitate our Master's patience and forbearance, to be ready rather with the soft answer that turneth away wrath, than with those grievous words which stir up anger. *I honor my Father*—He honors the Father in attributing all that is divine in Himself to Him, and vindicating *Him* from all pater-nity to them. *Ye do dishonor me*—in attributing my divinity to the devil. *There is one that seeketh, i. e.,* "that seeketh my glory," requiring "all men to honor the Son, even as they honor the Father," and giving to Him (vi. 37) such as will yet cast their crowns before His throne, in whom He "shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied." (Isa. liii. 11.) *Keep my saying*—my whole doctrine—hold it fast as the rule of life. Having asserted His own nature as God's Son, Jesus now concentrates into one sentence the object of His mission as Son, *eternal life* to all who accept Him. *Nerer see death*—even in dying he shall not die but live. (See v. 12, vii. 37, 38; comp. vi. 50, 54, 57, 58.) *Now we know that thou hast a devil.* Previously they had spoken with some doubt (verse 48), but now to Jesus' solemn assertion (verse 51), they oppose this declaration. *Art thou*

greater than our father Abraham, &c. They misunderstood our Lord's words, as if He meant a freedom from temporal death, and promised a privilege which neither Abraham nor the prophets enjoyed.

54. Jesus answered, "If I honour myself, my honour is nothing; it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: 55. Yet ye have not known him, but I know him; and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you; but I know him, and keep his saying. 56. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. 57. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?"
 ev. 31. ev. 41. xvi. 14. xvii. 1; Acts iii. 13. evii. 25, 29. Luke x. 24. Heb. xi. 13.

It is my Father, &c. As the Jews had inquired before, "Where is thy Father?" Jesus now adds this: "God is my Father, and Him who is indeed my Father, ye vainly boast to be your God. Ye profess to know Him, but in works ye deny Him. But I know Him, and in that special sense in which I alone can say this (see chap. i. 18), even as a Son with His Father: and if, in deference to your clamor, I were to waive this my just claim and prerogative, I should be lowering myself to your level, the teacher of truth would become the son of falsehood. How then can I give up my claim to be the Son of God, though it expose me to your unreasonable charge of blasphemy, to your murderous attempts upon my life? For indeed I know Him in a sense in which neither ye nor any man can know, and I keep His saying, which ye might do but will not. Yea, in this my claim, I am only carrying out His instructions, doing His will, fulfilling His pleasure. I keep His saying, as I am urging you to keep mine." (See verse 52.) *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day.* By "my day," we are to understand the time of Christ's incarnation or appearance on earth. Our Lord expresses yet more distinctly that very thing which was so offensive to these Jews, His superiority over Abraham. Abraham received prophecies in regard to the Messiah (Gen. xvii. 16, xviii. 18, xxii. 16, &c.), and from these proceeded his rejoicing. He rejoiced at the prospect of that at the realization of which those who boasted to be his sons were so enraged. (See Heb. xi. 13-16.) There was no true joy under the Old Testament, but only in the hope of the coming of Christ. The piety of the patriarchs, prophets and other holy persons before the incarnation,

consisted in desiring, praying and looking for the Saviour who was to be born, and in earnestly striving to have a share in the favor and blessing of His coming.

Thou art not yet fifty years old, &c. Thou hast not seen half a century, much less the many centuries since the day in which Abraham lived. Some have inferred from these words that Jesus seemed prematurely old, either from the marks of enduring sorrow in His features, or from His apparent precocious maturity of mind. He was not yet thirty-three, and the *fifty* here named is simply an even sum to measure off the intervening centuries. *Hast thou seen Abraham?* as thou must have done, if Abraham has seen thee. By such a perversion of the plain import of His words, they seek to convict Him of an absurdity, such as no sane man could have uttered. Nothing short of a willful misunderstanding could have led them to suppose that by the term "my day," Jesus intended to convey the idea of His actual abode on earth during the patriarch's lifetime. They, however, in trying to exaggerate His words into absurdity, really elevate them into a higher truth.

58. Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.
 Ex. iii. 14; Isa. xliii. 13; chap. xvii. 5, 24; Col. i. 17; Rev. i. 8.

When Christ's enemies were enraged at His speech, He gently seeks to draw them to the consideration of His Divinity, that thus they might be pacified. *Verily, verily.* (See on verse 34.) *Before Abraham was, I am.* The sentence is at variance with the laws of grammar, the present time is represented as preceding the past. From this apparent confusion, there is no possibility of extricating the words, but by the sublime and mysterious doctrine of the immutable existence of the speaker in His superior nature. "I AM" is the name of God, and it imports, that in His existence the distinctions of past, present, and to come, have no place. Hence our Lord did not say *I was* before Abraham, for in this manner an angel might have spoken of himself, but *I AM*, intimating that in reference to His duration, the two thousand years which had elapsed since the days of the patriarch were annihilated. (See 2 Peter iii. 8; Ps. cii. 26, 27, also on verse 59.)

59. Then they took up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

*x. 31, 33 and xl. 33. †Luke iv. 30.

Our Lord's answer (verse 58), signified eternal existence, which is nothing short of a claim to Divinity (see Ps. xc. 2, and chap. xvii. 5), the Jews therefore take up stones, some probably lying about in that outer court of the temple for the purpose of building or repairs, and proceed to execute upon Him the punishment for the crime of blasphemy. "Satan's kingdom," says an old writer, "stands upon four props especially: railing (v. 48); hypocrisy (v. 53, *Our father Abraham*); sophistry (v. 52)—construing that of death natural, which Christ uttered of eternal; tyranny (v. 59); when reason failed, they came to violence.

(James iii. 14, 16)." *He hid himself, &c.* He who, when His hour was come, yielded Himself as a sheep to His shearers, and was led as a lamb to the slaughter, now, inasmuch as His hour was not yet fully come, withdraws Himself awhile from their ungovernable fury: retired probably at once into the surrounding multitude, and so was lost in the crowd, and departing unobserved amongst the stream of people, for this time escaped the fury of His enemies. "It is," says *Bishop Taylor*, "an office of prudence to serve God so that we may at the same time preserve our lives and our estates, our interest and reputation, for ourselves and our relations, so far as they can consist together." (Matt. ii. 13, x. 23.)

1. Where did Jesus go? 2. Who was brought before Him? 3. What disposition was made of her case? 4. What was our Lord's answer to the charge of bearing record of Himself? 5. What did He reply to the question, "Where is thy Father?" 6. Why did no man lay hold on Him? 7. State the reply of Christ to the question, "Who art thou?" 8. Who is the servant of sin? 9. Who are "free indeed?" 10. What did Jesus say to the claim, "Abraham is our father?" 11. In what sense shall the man who keeps Christ's saying never see death? 12. What is said of Abraham seeing the day of Christ's appearing? 13. Explain verse 58.

CHAPTER IX.

1 *The man that was born blind restored to sight.* 8 *He is brought to the Pharisees.* 13 *They are offended at it, and excommunicate him:* 35 *but he is received of Jesus, and confesseth him.* 39 *Who they are whom Christ enlighteneth.*

AND as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

In the interval between the occurrence with which the preceding chapter closed, and the event here narrated, with its appended discourse, those events took place recorded in Luke x. 25-42, xi. 1-24. Our Lord appears to have returned again to the city (on the supposition that He had left it temporarily, for the reason given in viii. 59), and resumed His public instruction. The rage of His enemies had so far subsided, or their prudence had so resumed its control of their actions, as to render it safe for Him to appear again in public.

Passed by, i. e., passed along through the city. *Blind from his birth.* The sad history of this man may have been already fa-

miliar to the disciples, as he was evidently a well-known beggar in Jerusalem, one with whose story many were acquainted (verse 8), or it may have been one of his ways of stirring pity and compassion in the passers-by, to announce that his calamity reached back so far, and thus it may have come to the knowledge of the disciples, and proved the occasion of their question. More of our Saviour's miracles are recorded as having been wrought on blindness than on any other form of human infirmity. The minute and particular records of His cures wrought on blindness are four in number. (See Matt. ix. 27-31; Mark viii. 22-26; Matt. xx. 29-34; Mark x. 46-52; Luke xviii. 35-43.) Indeed, the record may be said to extend to six cases in all. (See Matt. xii. 22 and xxi. 14.) In like manner the Prophet Isaiah will be found to hint at the recovery of sight to the blind, more frequently than to any

other act of mercy, symbolical of the Day of Christ. (See Isa. xxix. 18, xxxii. 3, xxxv. 5, xlii. 7.)

2. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, ^{who} did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?—verse 34.

In the judgment of some commentators, the belief of a metempsychosis; according to others, the belief of a pre-existence of souls; according to others still, a belief of the possibility that the embryo could sin, is to be imputed to the disciples. "But," says *Tholuck*, "it is doubtful whether we have good reason for supposing such opinions to be current among the people. It seems to us that verse 34 puts us on the track to the true view. The Pharisees, in that verse, say that the man was '*altogether*,' and consequently, in soul and body, '*born in sins*.' As among us, the people have the phrase, '*such a man was born with a mark on him*,' may not this (though, indeed, not clearly expressed), have been the meaning of the disciples?"

3. Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.—verse 4.

Our Lord does not deny that this man and his parents had sinned, but that they had sinned as the cause of his being born blind. He thus turned away His disciples from that most harmful practice of diving down with cruel surmises into the secrets of other men's lives, and, like the friends of Job, guessing for them hidden sins in explanation of their unusual sufferings. "Wise men," says *Cecil*, "will regard the entrance of evil as a man views a fire, already begun in his house. It is now too late to ask, '*How came this?*' or, '*Whence did the fire begin?*' His single question will be, how he, and his family, and his property, can be secured." (Gen. xix. 17; Luke xiii. 23, 24.) *But that the works, &c.* This blindness, Jesus would say, is the chastening of no *peculiar* sin on his own part, or on his parents.' He here asserts the high end for which suffering is sometimes permitted in the world, namely, for the benefit of the individual, and for the manifestation of the glorious works of God. (See xi. 3, 4.)

4. ⁴¹ I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work. 5. As long as I am in the world, ⁴¹ I am the light of the world.

41v. 34, v. 19, 33, xi. 9, xii. 35 and xvii. 4. 41. 5, 9, iii. 19, viii. 12 and xii. 35, 46.

Our Lord proceeds to heal this poor blind man. The malice of His enemies will soon bring His day to a close, will shortly bring on the night that shall shut in His day for going about doing good. Had the Son of man His set and appointed time? His words here may enforce to us the solemn admonition, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest." *As long as I am in the world, &c.* Thus Jesus hints that He will not be in the world long, and He will let His light shine before men all the days of His appointed time.

6. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.

⁴²Mark vii. 33 and viii. 23.

The clay and the spittle were only conductors, not in themselves needful, but which Jesus willingly assumed to be the channels for the conveying of His power, for we observe at other healings of the blind no intervention of such means finding place. (Matt. xx. 30-34.) "Probably," says *Trench*, "the reasons which induced the use of these means were ethical, it was, perhaps, a help for the weak faith of the man to find that something external was done." At all events, Christ magnified His power in making a blind man to see by that method which one would think more likely to make a seeing man blind.

7. And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, which is by interpretation, Sent. ⁴³He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

⁴³Neh. iii. 15. ⁴² Kings v. 10, 14.

Wash—the eyes only. The *pool of Siloam* is a small pond, in an oblong form, at the lower end of the valley of Jehoshaphat, overlooked by the wall of Mount Zion. Its sides are built up with stones, and a column stands in the middle, indicating that a chapel was once built over it. It is in length fifty-four feet, by eighteen in breadth. It is fed, probably, by water from the temple mount. *By interpretation, Sent.* Jesus selected this pool because its name was significant. As Christ Himself is the *fountain, sent* from God, by which our nature is purified, so Siloam is the *fountain, sent* from the mount of God's temple, by which the man is washed from

both his blindness and his clay. The man was *sent* by the Sent to the *Sent*. *He went his way*—of course conducted by some one to the pool. How implicit his faith! How prompt his obedience! (2 Kings v. 10-14.) *Came seeing*, returned to all appearance to his own house, it does not seem that he came back to the Lord. The immediate power of using the eyes was no small part of the miracle. When people recover sight now after surgical operations, it requires a considerable time to learn the use of the newly acquired sense. "What," says an ancient writer, "did this man think when his eyes were now first given him! What a new world did he find himself come into! how did he wonder at heaven and earth! Lo, thus shall we be affected, and more, when the scales of our mortality being done away, we shall see as we are seen, when we shall behold the blessedness of that other world! Let us be obedient to Christ in the use of the means He prescribes, and however simple, we shall find them effectual for good."

8. † The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? 9. Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he. 10. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? 11. He answered and said, "A man that is called Jesus, made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. 12. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not. 13. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. 14. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. ^bVerses 6, 7. ^cv. 9, 16; Matt. xii. 1, 14; Mark ii. 23, 25; Luke vi. 1, 11 and xiii. 16, 17.

Begged—the man was very poor as well as blind. *Some said, This is he*, &c. To explain these doubts and questionings, respecting the man's identity, it has been well observed, that the opening of the eyes must have altered the character of the whole countenance. "The miraculous cures of God," says *Bishop Hall*, "work a sensible alteration in men, not more in their own apprehension, than in the judgment of others." *I am he*. The man when he heard people doubting his identity and looking at him with hesitation, says, "I assure you that I am he who used to sit at the temple-gate and beg." No truths have received so full proofs as those that have been questioned. *Said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam*, &c. It is observed by the learned that our Saviour for the most part never cured any man, but He straight en-

joined him some duty, as to the lepers, "Go show yourselves unto the priests," to another, "Give God praise," to a third, "Sin no more." (iv. 50, v. 11, vi. 10.)

And I went and washed. The soul is constituted to see through the body, as through its glass; and that glass at present is very dark; but when once that glass shall come to be brightened, so soon as the soul shall be discharged from the grossness of flesh, and the cloud of passion, and the stains of sin, it will need no other elevation to behold the face of God, no other capacity to comprehend all the treasures of wisdom, no other strength to bear the weight of Eternal Glory. (1 Cor. xiii. 12.) There is one minute feature in this simple story, which it may be well to observe. The man speaks only of the clay, not of what was mingled with it. For, being blind, he could not see what our Lord *did*, he could only feel what He *applied*. This little coincidence is a great mark of truth. It is one which could not come by design. It may also be observed, that the man's answer, "I know not," to the question, "Where is He?" proves how impossible was any collusion, how little the Lord sought honor from man. *It was the sabbath*, &c. The mention just at this place of the day on which the healing was accomplished, seems inserted as the explanation of their having found it necessary to bring the case before their ecclesiastical rulers—the *Pharisees*.

15. Then again the Pharisees also asked him, how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

Again the man is interrogated: this time officially, and with a view to making him criminate himself, or at the least implicate and injure Jesus. *He put clay*, &c. The man mentions only the clay; not having been able to see how the Saviour "spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle." This statement furnishes proof of the accuracy of the narrative.

16. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. 17. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet. 18. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. 19. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? 20. His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: 21. But by what means he now seeth, we

know not, or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age, ask him: he shall speak for himself. 22. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. 23. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.

13. Verse 33, iii. 2. 14. Verse 33, iii. 2. 15. Verse 33, iii. 2. 16. Verse 33, iii. 2. 17. Verse 33, iii. 2. 18. Verse 33, iii. 2. 19. Verse 33, iii. 2. 20. Verse 33, iii. 2. 21. Verse 33, iii. 2. 22. Verse 33, iii. 2. 23. Verse 33, iii. 2. 24. Verse 33, iii. 2. 25. Verse 33, iii. 2. 26. Verse 33, iii. 2. 27. Verse 33, iii. 2. 28. Verse 33, iii. 2. 29. Verse 33, iii. 2. 30. Verse 33, iii. 2. 31. Verse 33, iii. 2. 32. Verse 33, iii. 2. 33. Verse 33, iii. 2. 34. Verse 33, iii. 2. 35. Verse 33, iii. 2. 36. Verse 33, iii. 2. 37. Verse 33, iii. 2. 38. Verse 33, iii. 2. 39. Verse 33, iii. 2. 40. Verse 33, iii. 2. 41. Verse 33, iii. 2. 42. Verse 33, iii. 2. 43. Verse 33, iii. 2. 44. Verse 33, iii. 2. 45. Verse 33, iii. 2. 46. Verse 33, iii. 2. 47. Verse 33, iii. 2. 48. Verse 33, iii. 2. 49. Verse 33, iii. 2. 50. Verse 33, iii. 2. 51. Verse 33, iii. 2. 52. Verse 33, iii. 2. 53. Verse 33, iii. 2. 54. Verse 33, iii. 2. 55. Verse 33, iii. 2. 56. Verse 33, iii. 2. 57. Verse 33, iii. 2. 58. Verse 33, iii. 2. 59. Verse 33, iii. 2. 60. Verse 33, iii. 2. 61. Verse 33, iii. 2. 62. Verse 33, iii. 2. 63. Verse 33, iii. 2. 64. Verse 33, iii. 2. 65. Verse 33, iii. 2. 66. Verse 33, iii. 2. 67. Verse 33, iii. 2. 68. Verse 33, iii. 2. 69. Verse 33, iii. 2. 70. Verse 33, iii. 2. 71. Verse 33, iii. 2. 72. Verse 33, iii. 2. 73. Verse 33, iii. 2. 74. Verse 33, iii. 2. 75. Verse 33, iii. 2. 76. Verse 33, iii. 2. 77. Verse 33, iii. 2. 78. Verse 33, iii. 2. 79. Verse 33, iii. 2. 80. Verse 33, iii. 2. 81. Verse 33, iii. 2. 82. Verse 33, iii. 2. 83. Verse 33, iii. 2. 84. Verse 33, iii. 2. 85. Verse 33, iii. 2. 86. Verse 33, iii. 2. 87. Verse 33, iii. 2. 88. Verse 33, iii. 2. 89. Verse 33, iii. 2. 90. Verse 33, iii. 2. 91. Verse 33, iii. 2. 92. Verse 33, iii. 2. 93. Verse 33, iii. 2. 94. Verse 33, iii. 2. 95. Verse 33, iii. 2. 96. Verse 33, iii. 2. 97. Verse 33, iii. 2. 98. Verse 33, iii. 2. 99. Verse 33, iii. 2. 100. Verse 33, iii. 2.

This man is not of God, &c. Not a word, it will be observed, about the miracle, not a word about the mercy, not a word about the good done, not a word about the power shown. Their little minds seem fixed only upon the imaginary transgression. This appears to have been the opinion and sentence of the majority. *Others said, &c.* Men think differently of the same thing, because the state of their minds is different. (vii. 40, 41.)

"There is," says *Bishop Hall*, "no word, or action, but may be taken with two hands, either with the right hand of charitable construction, or, the sinister interpretation of malice and suspicion: and all things do succeed as they are taken. To construe an evil action well, is but a pleasing and profitable deceit to myself; but to misconstrue a good thing is a treble wrong—to myself, the action and the author." (Rom. xiv. 10.) *What sayest thou of him, &c.* As they could not get him to deny that Jesus had opened his eyes, they hoped to be able to extort from him some statement derogatory to his Benefactor, something which might give some supposed color to their monstrous position:—"Through the prince of the devils casteth He out devils." *He is a prophet*—a prophet at least. This was what, at the first blush, he supposed Him to be. He could be nothing short of this. That was what the Samaritan woman at first perceived Him to be (iv. 19.) Afterward (verses 35–38), like her, he believed and confessed Him to be the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God. God has promised "to him that hath shall be given." Those who follow the convictions of their consciences shall receive more grace.

Is this your son, &c. Failing in their attempt to draw out something from the man, on which they could legally convict Jesus, they seek to impair his testimony, by denying that he had ever been blind. How ungenerous was the conduct of the beggar's parents! They showed no grati-

tude for the benefit conferred upon their son, nor were they willing to run any risk in order to shield their own offspring from disgrace, but left him to stand alone against the host of his enemies. They sought to escape disgrace, but they have incurred the deepest. *Put out of the synagogue*, be excommunicated. The Jewish excommunication was a severe punishment. There were three degrees of it. The first excluded the person from intercourse with the people, even with his own family, for the space of thirty days, he was not allowed to approach a Jew at a distance nearer than four cubits. If he gave no signs of penitence, the time could be doubled, and even trebled. The second separated the person from all sacred meetings, was accompanied with dreadful curses, and forbade all intercourse with others. The third was still severer, and was regarded as a final and total exclusion of the person from the community.

24. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

This they said, not wishing him to own even to the praise of God, that a miracle had been wrought upon him, but to show more regard to the honor of God than ascribe any such act to one who was a sinner.

25. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

Not that the man meant to insinuate any doubt in his own mind on the point of His being "*a sinner*," but as *his opinion* on such a point would be of no consequence to others, he would speak only to what he *knew as fact* in his own case. The corporeal change with which this poor man had been blessed, is the spiritual experience of every real Christian—he was blind, but now he sees. And like him too the Christian may *know* it. Observe a resemblance in the *limitation* of the knowledge itself—it extends to "one thing," but this is the main thing, and to know this is to know enough. It is not necessary to know the precise time of the change, any more than it is necessary to know precisely when the day begins, in order to know that it is dawn—it is day. Neither is it necessary to be able to know the particular instrumentality employed, whether an afflictive

event, or a good book, or the admonition of a friend, or the preaching of the word. The manner of conversion is very different. In some cases it is more sudden, in others more slow. The Lord addresses one man in thunder, He whispers to another in a small still voice.

I know, &c. Remark what a confidence this man derived from the consciousness of this one thing. These unbelievers wished and endeavored to confound him, but their questions and their cavils had no weight with *him*. He had, he felt, one invincible, undeniable argument—"this," says he, "is sufficient for me. I know what He has done for me, and cannot be mistaken." So he that believeth hath the witness in himself. Like this man, has a satisfaction derived from experience. He has received the truth in the love and efficiency of it. He has felt its power and blessedness. He has a certainty, out of which he can neither be laughed nor reasoned. This qualifies him for dealing with others in Divine things. It excites his zeal, and enables him to speak with earnestness, because he can speak without hesitation.

26. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? 27. He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?

Said they again—proceeding, apparently, to cross-question him, in order to detect some refutation of the miracle. This cross-questioning the man indignantly and sarcastically declines. He refers them to his explicit narrative in his former examination, which they endeavored to slight, and he ironically imputes their zealous questioning to a desire to become His disciples. The keenness with which skeptics scrutinize the Gospel often surpasses the earnestness of its believing students. And it is a striking fact that critical attacks have stimulated Christian scholars to a profounder study of the Word of God, and have thus resulted in a truer understanding of its depths of meaning, and clearer demonstrations of its infinite truth.

I have told you already wherefore would ye hear it again? Infidelity can only go round and round the same topics in an eternal circle, without advancing one step

further. It produces no new forces, it only brings those again into the field which have been so often baffled, maimed and disabled, that, in pity to them, they ought to be dismissed and discharged from any further service. (Acts xix. 28, 34.) *Will ye also* (as well as I, and others to whom I have told the circumstances of my cure) *be his disciples?* The emphasis given in the original to the pronoun *ye*, opposes with the keenest irony the reference here made to their discipleship, to the judgment which in verse 24 they declared themselves to have formed in regard to the character of Jesus. If this were truly a legal court, it may be doubted whether the man did not commit a faulty disrespect, for which the want of self-respect in the court furnishes no full excuse. Yet, when we consider that he was a poor, uncultivated mendicant, we can excuse this single error and still wonder at his martyr-like constancy.

28. Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. 29. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.—viii. 14.

The man's answer stung them to the quick. They felt all the force of his just irony. They were too conscious of deserving all that it implied. They withdrew to the shelter of authority, from whence, as all such debaters under the circumstances usually do, they discharged a shower of abuse, and loaded him with undignified and unmeaning reproaches. *We know that God spake unto Moses, &c.* Their partiality here was inexcusable, for if they believed the mission of Moses, on evidence of *miracles*, credibly attested, indeed, but performed two thousand years before they were born, it was much more reasonable, on their own principles, to believe the mission of Jesus, on at least equal *miracles*, wrought daily among them, when they might, in many instances, have been eyewitnesses to the facts, and one of which, notwithstanding all their malice, they were here compelled to own, or at least found themselves utterly unable to disprove. *We know not from whence he is*—we know not the source whence he obtained His commission, nor the ground of His pretensions to be sent of God.

30. The man answered and said unto them, *Why herein is a marvelous thing, that ye know not from

whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. 31. Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. 32. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. 33. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. 34. They answered and said unto him, "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out."

*iii. 10. *Job xxvii. 9 and xxxv. 12; Ps. xviii. 41, xxxiv. 15 and lxxvi. 18; Prov. i. 28, xv. 29 and xxviii. 9; Isa. i. 15; Jer. xi. 11 and xiv. 12; Ezek. viii. 13; Mi. iii. 4; Zech. vii. 13. *Verse 16. *Verse 2.

The man answered, &c. This man shows not only a spirit of downright, and, what we should almost term dogged honesty, combined with great boldness, but very considerable shrewdness and sagacity. May not this last confirm the old proverb, "*The eyes of the blind see best.*" He seems, moreover, to have already received some of the spirit of wisdom and patience, which marked the conduct of the Saviour, in whose cause he was arraigned; for he made no answer whatever to their personal reviling (verse 28), but only vindicated the honor of that God who *heareth not sinners*. (viii. 48, 49; Isa. xxxvi. 21.) Some have unnecessarily stumbled at the words "God heareth not sinners." Vain, indeed, is the prayer that comes from a divided heart. Vain the petition for pardon, when we have determined not to part with the sin. With what countenance can we ask to be forgiven for any sin past when we intend to go and act that sin over again? But there is nothing in these words to deter any penitent from prayer, any who are grieved and wearied with the burden of their sins. In this sense God *does* hear sinners. "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer." Nay, His ear shall be attentive to the prayer of those who desire to fear His name. (See Neh. i. 11, also Jonah ii. 1, &c., and Isa. xxvi. 8.)

Thou wast altogether born in sins. They allude to the man's natural defect, and taunt him with having come into the world with the penalty of sin branded on his entire person, in that he was born blind. They forget that if blindness were, indeed, the sign of sin, then, to remove blindness proved a power to remove the penalty of sin. *Dost thou teach us?* The man's clear and forcible eloquence is met by one argument alone, namely, "Thou art a sinner, but we are righteous; thou art

ignorant, and we are learned in the Law; we sit in Moses' seat, thou art the blind follower of this Galilean deceiver." So much, then, for *evidence*, as a means of convincing men of the truth of Christianity! Here had been a judicial inquiry, and it was attended with this result! A change of heart, not more light in such matters is the thing needed. The perception of truth is a moral rather than an intellectual act. *And they cast him out*, excommunicated him, not only thrust him bodily from the court-room, but from the synagogue and temple, and from all worship therein. (See on verse 22.) Thus he suffered the loss of all things for his Saviour's sake. He is the *first* whose name is recorded as openly disgraced for confessing Christ. He is the *first* of a glorious train, some of whom suffered reproach, others imprisonment, and others death, because they would not deny Jesus. If we are ashamed of Christ before the world, how does the conduct of this poor beggar condemn us?

35. Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

*Matt. xiv. 33 and xvi. 16; Mark i. 1; chap. x. 36; 1 John v. 13.

When he had found him. By accident? Not very likely. Sympathy in that breast could not long keep aloof from its object. *Dost thou believe on the Son of God?* A question stretching purposely beyond the man's present attainments, in order the more quickly to lead him—in his present teachable frame—into the highest truth. The importance of this question may be inferred from the character of the inquirer, and from the nature of the case itself. Faith in Christ is the principle of all religion. Without it, there is no justification, or sanctification, or consolation, in a word, no salvation. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

36. He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? 37. And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and yet is he that talketh with thee. 38. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.—xiv. 26.

Who is he, Lord, &c. His reply is affirmative, and believing by anticipation, promising faith as soon as Jesus shall say who He is. "What a beautiful exemplification," says one, "of the heavenward tendency of a mind simple and truth-loving, the

guileless and sincere, as the doctrine is stated in this Gospel at i. 47, iii. 21, viii. 47, x. 16, 27." Docility opens the heart to faith: but it is God who gives both. To desire to be instructed in order to believing, is agreeable to the prudence which faith itself requires. When a man begins to inquire about Christ, and asks who He is, it is always a hopeful symptom of his state of soul. *Thou hast both seen him, &c.* We should carefully notice the extraordinary fullness of the revelation which our Lord here made of Himself. In no case but this, and that of the Samaritan woman, do we find Him so unreservedly declaring His own Divinity and Messiahship. So true is it that "the meek He will guide in judgment," and that things "hid to the wise and prudent are revealed to babes." *And he said, &c.* The lowliness and yielding spirit of the man toward Jesus, is in touching contrast with the defiant bearing he maintains toward the leaders of the people. He had been gradually brought into that state of humble belief in the power and goodness of his unknown benefactor, that he no sooner heard the precious and important truth just announced, than his heart yielded assent, and with a simple confession of faith, *Lord, I believe*, he prostrated himself before the Being, who had stooped in such wondrous condescension to one of his low and miserable condition, and endowed him with the twofold blessing of natural and spiritual vision.

39. † And Jesus said, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind."
 iv. 22, 27; see iii. 17 and xli. 47. *Isa. vi. 9, 10; Matt. xlii. 13.

The meaning is, the Gospel should make the poor, ignorant, humble, teachable, who are reckoned to see nothing, wise and knowing in the things of God, but that it should make those who are wise in their own conceit, know less than they did before. In the two characters of the Pharisees, and the person they thus cast out, we have a pattern of the believer and the unbeliever, which will hold true to the end

of the world: where the temper of the Pharisee is, there will Christ be unknown or rejected; where the other temper is, of the man that was born blind, there will Christ be valued, and nowhere else. (See on Luke ii. 35.) Let us seek so to live that, if the world should cast us out, we may be found of Him whom the world crucified, that, having followed the light of His truth in this world, we may, through His own merits and mediation, have with Him the Light of Life in the everlasting glory of the world to come. (Ps. xliii. 3.)

40. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? 41. Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see, therefore your sin remaineth.—Rom. ii. 19. *xv. 22, 24.

By their own proud boast, "*We see*," they cut away any plea of ignorance from under their feet. And so their sin remained, witnessing against them. And so long as they remained in that state of wilful and proud prejudice, able to see but unwilling, they were in a state of sin, which was in danger of increasing, proceeding to more ungodliness, even to the killing of the Prince of Life. Let us learn, from what the Lord here teaches, to walk according to the light we have, to do faithfully what we know of our duty. This is the way to know and to receive more of His good gifts. "He that hath, to him shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have." If we would prevent any fatal event of sins flowing from ignorance, we must take care, that our ignorance itself be not criminal: and that it will not be, if our hearts be sincerely disposed to our duty, and if we use moral diligence to know it, if we be impartial, humble and honest, and have that concern for the knowledge and practice of our duty, that is in some sort proportionable to the importance of it. The more we know, and the better we understand, the more severely shall we be judged, unless our life is more holy.

1. What did our Lord's disciples ask Him about the man blind from his birth? 2. What was His answer? 3. State the particulars of the miracle He wrought. 4. How did the Pharisees regard this miracle? 5. What did the blind man's parents say to them? 6. What did he say himself? 7. What did the man who had been blind say when he was reviled? 8. What did Jesus ask him after he had been cast out? 9. State his reply. 10. Explain verse 39.



SHEEP FOLLOWING THEIR SHEPHERD.



CAMEL GOING THROUGH A NEEDLE'S EYE.

CHAPTER X.

¹ *Christ is the door, and the good shepherd.* ¹⁹ *Divers opinions of him.* ²⁴ *He proveth by his works that he is Christ the Son of God:* ³³ *escapeth the Jews,* ⁴⁰ *and went again beyond Jordan, where many believed on him.*

Our Lord had intimated that the Pharisees, though they thought themselves both clear-sighted and far-sighted in spiritual matters, were indeed blind, and therefore ill-fitted for the office of teachers of religion, into which they had intruded themselves (ix. 39-41.) Now, by a sort of parabolic representation, He makes a discrimination between true and false shepherds, and shows that these self-constituted guides of the people were false teachers and unworthy of confidence.

VERILY, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

The sheep-fold in that age and country, where more protection against beasts of prey was needed than with us, was very different from ours. It was enclosed within high walls, and was entered by a door. This door was kept by a porter, who would of course open it to none but those who had a right to go in. Whoever pretends to feed and guide the flock of God, to teach and instruct His people, and yet does not come to them in that way which God has appointed, but follows the method of his own inventing, according to his own fancy or corrupt inclination, is certainly, notwithstanding any pretenses of zeal or authority, an enemy and a hinderer of man's salvation. Only intending to elevate and enrich himself, so he compasses that, he cares not how many souls perish by his means, or through his neglect. Every one that sincerely, and without worldly designs, intends to teach and instruct men in the way of salvation, will proceed by that method only which God shall think fit to appoint, and will submit entirely to His directions.

² But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. ⁴ And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers. ⁶ This parable spake Jesus unto them, but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

In the latter part of the allegory or par-

able (v. 11, 14), Jesus styles Himself "the Good Shepherd," but here, when He says, *he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep*, He is probably speaking of an under-shepherd, a minister of the Gospel. *To him the porter openeth*. These words might signify, generally, that to such a person the obstacles that stood in the way of his becoming an overseer of the flock of Christ are removed in a regular manner, and he is, after the due order, introduced as a shepherd into the fold. This explication goes on the principle that the admission by the porter, through the door into the fold, refers to an original call to, and investiture with office in Christ's Church, and this is the ordinary mode of viewing the figure. But, it would seem that the reference here is not to an original call to, and investiture with, a new office, but to the ordinary exercise of the functions of an office already possessed. The person introduced as entering by the door is already a shepherd, may have been long a shepherd, and is here represented as performing his daily work. Ere the sun rises, he goes to his much-loved occupation. He arrives at the gate of the fold. He does not leap over the wall. He finds no difficulty in getting admission—the porter opens, he passes through the gate, utters the pastoral cry, and returns again through the gate followed by his own flock, whom he leads out and feeds, and when night comes he conducts them back again to the fold.

Taking this view of the matter, the natural explication of the allegory seems to be "the genuine pastor performs all his duties under the guidance of Divine influence, and with a constant regard to the mediation of the Saviour" It then follows, *the sheep hear his voice, i. e., they attend to—they understand—they believe His doctrine*, not because it is *his*, but because it is not *his*, but his and their Lord's. It is one mark of a genuine Christian pastor, that real Christians cordially approve of his teaching. *His own sheep*. A real shepherd, according to Eastern custom, knowing *his own flock*, calls them at once by their names, and proves his relation to

them by so doing. *Leadeth them out*—from the pen-fold into the open pasture, verse 9. "There is no one of God's children," says *Bishop Hall*, "whom He doth not both know and call by his name. What a comfort is this to a poor wretched man to think. Here I walk obscure and contemptible upon earth, in a condition mean and despised of men, but the great God of heaven is pleased to take such notice of me, as even from heaven to call me by my name, and to single me out for grace and salvation, and not only to mention my name from above, in the gracious offer of His ordinances, but to write it in the eternal register of Heaven. What care I to be inglorious, yea, causelessly infamous with men, whilst I am thus honored by the King of Glory?"

He goeth before them, &c. This verse is simply a continuation of the description of a true and faithful shepherd. Whenever such an one takes his flock out to pasture, he walks before them, as an Eastern shepherd always does, never requiring them to go where he does not first go himself. (See Num. xxvii. 16, 17; Ex. iii. 1; Ps. xxxiii. 2.) Such a pastor is an "example to the flock"—*the sheep*—the truly pious, those who are taught of God, and are influenced by His Spirit, follow him as he follows Christ, *for they know his voice*, they know that what he says corresponds with what Christ is saying to them in His Word, and with what, too, He is working in them by His Spirit. *And a stranger will they not follow*, &c. It was a fact well known to all our Lord's hearers, that sheep accustomed to one shepherd's voice would not obey a stranger's voice, but would rather be frightened at it. Just so true Christians have a spiritual taste and discernment by which they distinguish a false teacher, and will not hear him. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things." (1 John ii. 20.) Poor and illiterate believers often illustrate this in a very extraordinary way. *But they understood not*, &c. So dull of understanding were they, that they did not perceive the point or application of this illustration of our Lord.

7. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the

sheep did not hear them. 9. *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. 10. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.—xiv. 6; Eph. ii. 18.

Verily, verily, the usual formula the Saviour employs when anxious to impress a very solemn truth upon His hearers. *I am the door of the sheep*. Jesus here declares that He Himself is the door through whom, and by faith in whom, both shepherd and sheep must pass, if they would go inside God's fold. (See on verse 9.) The "sheep" here spoken of, are the true people of God, the real servants of Christ. They are not, therefore, the mingled throng of evil and good that are found in the visible Church of Christ on earth. They are the "Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven"—the mystical body of Christ—the "Lamb's bride." Their place of safety—the fold which shelters them, where they can rest in peace—which surrounds them on every side—which keeps off all that would harm them—is the everlasting power of Jehovah.

All that ever came before me, &c. They "came," they were not sent. The reference is to those who were false prophets, not as claiming the prerogatives of Messiah, but as perverters of the people from the way of life. *Thieves and robbers*, not true shepherds, careful for the welfare of the flock, but intent on their own gain and emolument. (See on v. 1.) *The sheep did not hear them*—the instinct of their divinely taught hearts preserving them from seducers, and attaching them to the heaven-sent prophets, of whom it is said that "the Spirit of Christ was in them." (1 Peter i. 11.) If for a while any of them were unhappily deceived or led astray, they did not continue in that error, but repented and returned.

I am the door. In common folds there might be different flocks with their several shepherds, but in the spiritual fold to which Jesus refers, there is but one flock and one shepherd. He is "*the door*." (xiv. 6.) The expression is metaphorical. A door is the medium of passage, and Jesus stands between God and us. He is the Mediator of the new covenant. God comes to us through Him, and conveys all His blessings to us by Him. And we ap-

proach God through Him. *By me*—there is salvation in none other than in Him, who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification. In the Lord alone have we righteousness and strength. “If *any* man”—this door is not for righteous, but for sinners—not for those who need no salvation, but for those who do. It is open for one and all who apply for admittance. Any poor sinner that cries sincerely, and knocks heartily, shall enter in and be saved. It is as good for the persecuting Saul as for the loving John, and it is as needful for John as for Saul. It stands as wide for the penitent robber expiring on the cross as it did for the inquiring Nicodemus, who came privately to Jesus, and Nicodemus must look at it as steadily, and enter it as humbly, as the penitent robber. And what are the advantages the man obtains who thus enters in? 1. Safety—he *shall be saved*—saved from the curse of the law, the wrath to come, the roaring lion who goeth about seeking whom he may devour, from the king of terrors, a world lying in wickedness, an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God—saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. 2. Liberty—he *shall go in and out*. Sheep, under the care of a good shepherd, go in at night for protection, and in the morning go out for food. The expression denotes that what is done for the Christian's safety, does not compromise his liberty. He knows the truth, and the truth makes him free: and he is free indeed—free to go wherever he pleases in Immanuel's land—free to partake of all the privileges of God. (See Ps. cxliii. 8; Jer. xxviii. 20.) 3. Plenty—and *find pasture*. Said one who realized this: “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, he leadeth me beside the still waters.” So Isaiah, “They shall feed in the ways”—the ways of God's commandments, ordinances and dispensations.

I am come that they might have life, &c. It was the infinite dignity of Christ's person, which derived that infinite merit on His sacrifice, whereby it became an equivalent to the infinite demerit of our sins. Nay, of such an infinite value and worth was

His sacrifice, that it not only countervailed for the punishment due to our sins, but did abundantly preponderate it; upon which account God engaged Himself, not only to remit that punishment, in consideration of it, but also to bestow His Spirit and eternal life on us; both which are as well the purchase of Christ's blood, as is the remission of our sins. For God might have remitted our punishment, without superadding the gift of His Spirit and eternal life to it: and therefore, since in consideration of Christ's blood, He hath superadded these gifts to the remission of our punishment, it is evident that His blood was equivalent to both; that is, that it was not only a valuable consideration for the pardon of our sins, but also for the assistance of His Spirit, and our eternal happiness. (Heb. ix. 13, 14; Rom. v. 15–21.) We have life more abundantly than Adam. His life was suspended on the fallible will of man, but this life can never be destroyed; because Jesus lives, His people shall live also. Had Adam remained innocent, though he would never have died, yet must he have experienced a change before he could have been capable of enjoying the blessedness which the poorest Christian expects, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. We have life more abundantly than the *Jewish Church*. They derive their life from the same source with us, and it was essentially the same with ours. But we have it more plenteously as to knowledge, liberty and enjoyment. Christians are not satisfied without increase in the Divine life. More is desirable. More is attainable. Vital religion, though imperfect, is growing and progressive. Under the influences of the Holy Spirit, we go from strength to strength in our course, and are renewed day by day in our experience.

¹¹ I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. ¹² But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. ¹³ The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.
¹⁴ Isa. xl. 11: Ezek. xxxiv. 12, 23 and xxxvii. 24: Heb. xiii. 20; 1 Peter ii. 25 and v. 4.

How endearing is the relation in which Jesus stands to us! The very figure under which He describes His office (that of Shepherd), and the title which He claims

so justly to Himself (the good Shepherd), are peculiarly winning and attractive, and His own immediate hearers would probably see still more of this tender and winning character in His words than we generally perceive in them. In that country the flock is often assailed by the wolf and other beasts of prey, and from its rocky and precipitous surface, there is especial need of care and tenderness in conducting the flock from one pasture to another, so that there is more need than with us for skill, courage and fidelity on the part of the shepherd. Our Lord intimates that He was prepared to encounter every peril, nay, even to lay down His life in behalf of the flock. He would not flee (as a hireling might do) when He should see the wolf coming, He would not leave the sheep to be the prey of their enemy; He would stand in the gap and meet the foe, and even lay down His life for those whom He had not only received in charge from the Father, but also possessed as His own. (See on verse 15.) He knew that if He would be their Shepherd, He must bleed and die. And how did He redeem the pledge which He then gave? What say the Scriptures? "All we, like sheep, have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." What says Christ Himself? "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." And all this He suffered, not complainingly, but with inexpressible alacrity and pleasure—"I delight to do thy will." "How am I straitened till it be accomplished!" Nor was this all. After redeeming them by His blood, Jesus has to search and find them, and bring them from their wanderings into His fold. (Luke xv. 3-7.) And when restored, He grants them rest as well as food. He recalls them when wandering, defends them, and kindly and tenderly accommodates Himself to their age and weakness. He has prepared a better, a heavenly country, to receive them. There is, indeed, a dark valley to pass, before they can enter it. But it is safe, and short, and their Shepherd is with them there, and His rod and His staff will comfort them.

14. I am the good shepherd, and ⁴know my sheep, and

am known of mine. 15. *As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

⁴² Tim. ii. 19. *Matt. xi. 27. *xv. 13.

I am the good shepherd. (See on verse 11.) Between these verses and verse 13, there is a very marked antithesis. The *good shepherd* is opposed to the *hireling*. The words *I know my sheep*, to *careth not for the sheep*; *I lay down my life for the sheep*, to *fleeth*. The words *am known of mine*, refer to the same thing as *know his voice*, in verse 4. Jesus has an affectionate regard, or love, for His flock, and He is known and loved by them as their Saviour and Friend. Observe how He *first knows* them, and *afterward*, in like manner, they *know* Him. (Gal. iv. 9.) He knows them every one. He knows them, like Moses (Ex. xxxiii. 12, 17), "by name." And they know Him—know His voice and follow Him, trusting in Him, whithersoever He leads or bids.

As the Father knoweth me, &c. It is generally believed that this sentence ought to be read in close connection with the last verse, and without any full stop between. The meaning would then be that the mutual knowledge and communion of Christ and believers is somewhat the same in kind with that which subsists between the Father and the Son. Some, however, understand the sentence as though Jesus would say, "The office of mediating between God and man is fitly committed to me, who, being in my own Person, God and man, have communion in knowledge and nature with both, and unite both natures in myself. On the one side, "as the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father;" on the other, "I know my sheep, and am known of mine (verse 14), knowing the perfections of the Godhead, and being touched with a feeling of the infirmities of the manhood, I alone am qualified to mediate between the Father and His flock." *I lay down my life for the sheep.* He had not done so then, but He was going to do so very soon. It was in His mind—His fixed and settled purpose. He came to give His life a ransom for many, an atoning sacrifice for their sins—to die in their place, to redeem them from sin and death, and nothing could lead Him to draw back, because nothing

else could save His sheep. A candid interpretation of the words "for the sheep," ought to go far to establish the special relation of the vicarious death of Christ to the Church.

16. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. [Isa. lvi. 8. Ezek. xxxvii. 22; Eph. ii. 14; 1 Peter ii. 25.]

Jesus soars beyond that narrow space to which these selfish ones would confine all benefit. With prophetic eye He views other sheep on distant hills, in distant times, not of this but of many another fold yet to be collected, and enjoy the love and care of the Good Shepherd. He means the perishing Gentiles, *already* His "sheep" in the love of His heart and the purpose of His grace to "bring them" in due time. This is one of the encouragements to missionary exertion amid abounding iniquity. The work by which a sinner is brought to God is God's alone, yet sinful man may be the instrument in His hand. *They shall hear my voice.* This is a prophecy and a promise combined. From these words which Jesus spake upon earth, we cannot doubt that He is still, as Intercessor above, as mindful of those who have not yet entered into the fellowship of His Church. Although living in ignorance and sin, they are dear to Him as persons for whom He shed His blood. He looks forward to their conversion as the reward of His sufferings, and it is owing to His appearance in their behalf that the Holy Spirit is sent to "open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness for their sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith." (Acts xxvi. 18.)

And there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. This denotes the result of the preceding collection of the sheep from different quarters. The word rendered *fold*, is here, literally, *flock*. This passage embraces in its merciful promise and provisions of grace, the great family and household of the faith included in the covenant of the Father with His Son, whatever may be the minor diversities of belief and practice, which occasion their formation into separate religious commu-

nities and brotherhoods. There is in reality but one faith, one baptism, and one Saviour. We must be careful not to make this one Church either too narrow or too broad. We make it too narrow, when, like the Jews and the Papists, we exclude any believer who does not belong to our particular fold. We make it too broad when we include every professing Christian, whether he hears Christ's voice or not. It is a flock of "sheep." "One flock, one Shepherd." Things are now tending to this consummation among all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and one day the bright vision of unity, too bright, perhaps, for earth, shall be all fulfilled.

17. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 18. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. [Isa. liii. 7, 8; Heb. ii. 9. iii. 19. lvi. 38 and xv. 10; Acts ii. 21, 32.]

Any one has power to lay down his own life. Any one who will, may kill himself. (Chap. viii. 22.) But Christ says, "I have power to lay it down," in such sense, that no one can do it against His will. . . . He alone has the disposal of His life, which is not true of us. (1 John iii. 16.) Since, as a sacrifice (Lev. i. 3), Christ was to be innocent, and to be under the punishment of our sin, He could not be the one, and do the other, without His own free consent and approbation. (Matt. xx. 28; Gal. i. 4; Titus ii. 14.) This is the thing which renders His love more worthy of our gratitude and love. He was sacrificed, because He was willing to be sacrificed, and He was willing out of love to us, and out of obedience to His Father.

This commandment, &c. The reference is, we think, to the whole commission given to the Son as the Good Shepherd, the appointed Saviour. (See vi. 38.) The "power" referred to, denotes the power which Jesus essentially possessed, and on account of the possession of which, He was qualified for the work to which He was appointed, and to which He never would have been appointed had He not been thus qualified. "It is," says an old writer, "a greater miracle to convert a sinner, than to raise one from the dead; and, in effect,

the salvation of a sinner is a far greater work of God, than the creation of the world; wherefore, we ought only for this end, to see what the one and the other cost Him. The creation of the world cost Him only a word. 'He said, and all things were made: He commanded, and all things were created;' but the salvation of men cost Him far dearer than words; they cost Him both His blood and His life. Does not Jesus Christ Himself sufficiently signify to us, of how great value it is, in the sight of God, to employ ourselves in the salvation of souls, when He says in John, *It is for this reason that my Father loves me, because I laid down my life?* *S. Thomas* (Aquinas) marks very well, 'He says not that His Father loves Him, because by Him all things were created, but only that His Father loves Him, *because He lays down His life.*' And wherefore does He give His life, but to save men? Whereby we may consequently see, that nothing is more pleasing to God, than to labor for the salvation of souls." So ends the discourse of the good Shepherd. The whole subject should kindle and confirm in us these two feelings: hearty love toward and confidence in Him, who sets Himself forth to us under this touching similitude, and continual carefulness to prove ourselves His true, faithful, loving and obedient sheep. How many since this discourse was written have felt as they read it, "Truly this was the Son of God! How precious are His words! How sweet are His promises! May the Heavenly Shepherd own me as His sheep at the last day!"

^m19. There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. 20. And many of them said, "He hath a devil, and is mad, why hear ye him?" 21. Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind? 22. ¶ And it was at Jerusalem, the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. 23. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. 24. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.

^mvii. 43 and ix. 16. ^vvii. 20 and viii. 48, 52. ^eEx. iv. 11; Ps. xlv. 9 and cxlvi. 8. ^pix. 6, 7, 32, 33. ^aActs iii. 11 and v. 12.

The audience are not all one willfully opposing mass. As at ix. 16 and vii. 43, there is a *division*. But the opposers are *many*, and the susceptible are only *others*. *He hath a devil*, &c. When our Lord either gave evidence of supernatural knowledge, or delivered doctrines of extraordinary

sublimity, the resource of His sinful hearers was to ascribe His words to demoniacal possession. On this occasion they call Him *mad*. It was the charge which Festus brought against Paul. (Acts xxvi. 24.) Let not the followers of Christ be surprised if they should be spoken of as their Master was. They can scarcely meet with a worse reception than being accused, 1. Of having the spirit of evil. 2. Of being mad. 3. Of being not worth hearing. *Others said*, &c. Among these probably were Gamaliel, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. They defend Him on the score both of His words and works. They argue that the calm, solemn, loving, God-glorifying language just used, was the opposite to that which might be expected of a demoniac, and that no devil, however powerful, could work such a miracle as to open the eyes of the blind.

The feast of the dedication. This was the name of the festival of eight days, occurring in the month Kislen, corresponding to our December, instituted by Judas Maccabæus in commemoration of the purifying of the temple, after its profanation by the cruel and impious Antiochus Epiphanes about one hundred and sixty-five years before the coming of the Lord, and the renewal of the temple worship. The Evangelist tells us it was at *Jerusalem*, because unlike those great festivals which might be held at Jerusalem only, this might also be celebrated in other parts, and he tells us that it was *winter*, in order perhaps to explain why our Lord should be found in that particular part of the temple mentioned in the next verse.

Solomon's porch. It looked toward the East, and is therefore called by Josephus, *the Eastern porch*. It appears that several porticos or piazzas were erected round the temple, in which persons might walk, and the doctors and other masters might communicate oral instruction to their followers, sheltered from the inclemency of the weather. By some this porch was called "Solomon's," not as having been *built* by him, but as standing in the same place, and erected chiefly of materials supplied by the ruins of Solomon's portico. *The Jews*, probably the Pharisees, and particularly members of the Sanhedrim. The

sequel shows that impure motives alone prompted the question. *Make us to doubt, literally, keep us in excitement*, not knowing, &c. *Tell*—as if indeed He had never told and shown them. (See v. 19, viii. 36, 56, 58.) *Plainly*—openly, expressly.

25. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. 26. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

*Verse 33, iii. 2 and v. 36. *viii. 47; 1 John iv. 6.

I told you, that is, I am the Christ. *And ye believed not: and, for but*. They pretended that they only doubted. Jesus tells them they did not believe. "Skepticism in religion," as *Matthew Henry* says, "is no better than infidelity." "The evidence of religion," remarks *Bishop Butler*, "not appearing obvious, may constitute one particular part of some men's trials in the religious sense, as it gives scope for a virtuous exercise, or vicious neglect of their understanding, in examining or not examining into that evidence. There seems to be no possible reason to be given why we may not be in a state of moral probation, with regard to the exercise of our understanding upon the subject of religion, as we are with regard to our behavior in common affairs. *The works*—which even might have convinced those who do not believe words. *Of me*—that I am the Christ.

Ye are not of my sheep. Our Lord refers again to the allegory He had recently delivered of the shepherd and his sheep. *Ye believe not*. Need we wonder that they did not believe in Him, who would not even hear Him? That is, hear Him with any patience, with any readiness to believe, with any freedom from prejudice and teachableness of spirit, any docility of mind. (See chap. viii. 43.) "That they were not of His sheep, was proved by their unbelief. The want of faith in the doctrines of Christ," says an eminent theologian, "arises out of want of faith in the Teacher, and the want of faith in the Teacher arises out of want of faith in His credentials, and want of faith in these arises out of their not being rightly apprehended, and want of right apprehension arises out of want of right examination, and want of right examination arises out of—it can arise out of nothing else—some modification of immoral principle, profligacy, thoughtless-

ness, or pride—the pride of worldly distinction, or of wisdom, or of self-righteousness. It is unbelief in the first of these phrases, to which our Lord refers here, and He traces it to its true cause."

27. *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:—Verses 4, 14.

My sheep attend to, they believe they obey me. (See verse 3.) *And they follow me*—they acknowledge me as their Leader, their Teacher, their Exemplar—they take the course I point out to them, and not only point out to them, but in which I go before them. Such is the character and conduct of my sheep. Such is not your character and conduct. *And I know them*. "I know who are sincere believers in me, and, knowing who are my sheep, I know who are not my sheep—and I know that ye are not of my sheep."

28. And I give unto them eternal life, and *they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29. *My Father, *which gave them me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. 30. *I and my Father are one. *xvi. 37, xvii. 11, 12 and xviii. 9. *xiv. 23. *xvii. 2, 6, &c. *xvii. 11, 22.

Only one thing further our Lord now tells us concerning His sheep; concerning His dealings with them, but it is the crowning mercy. *I give unto them eternal life*. And because they were exposed to danger, "sheep in the midst of wolves," He adds, *and they shall never perish*. They shall not perish forever. They shall not be cast into that "outer darkness." They shall not enter into the miserable portion of those "to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." And because their "adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour," and his angels are ever seeking the destruction of the sheep, and some unhappy men lend themselves also to be agents in such soul-murder, He adds yet, *neither shall any*, whether man or devil, *pluck them out of my hand*. Here He is glancing at the final security of His flock. Observe how He connects them with Himself, their safety with His hand. They are in His hand, whence it is impossible to pluck them. How vivid it is! the hand which is the emblem of power and of protection. And, as though His own word were not enough, and to show His perfect correspondence and union with the Father, though He is yet on earth, He adds: *My*

Father, which gave them me, is greater than all. He is greater than their foes. He is omnipotent. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" *And none, whether man or devil, is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.* If they are in my hand, then they are in His hand.

Having thus made His power to be the same with His Father's, our Lord, lest His hearers should wonder at this, shows them the reason why He said so, adding immediately, *I and my Father are one*—one in essence, and therefore one in power, which otherwise could not be. For, if He was inferior to, or any way different from, His Father in His Essence, He must needs be so in His power too; and therefore the occasion of His uttering these words sufficiently demonstrates that to be His meaning in them. (Chap. xiv. 11, xv. 24; Deut. vi. 4.) And yet He speaks of Himself and the Father, as two distinct persons, and He names Himself first, because speaking here of His Divine Essence, which is the same in both, it is no matter which is named first, there being no such thing, in that respect, as first and last between them, for they are both one and the same Eternal God. (Chap. i. 1, 2, xvi. 3.)

31. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. 32. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father, for which of those works do ye stone me? 33. The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. 34. Jesus answered them, *Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?* 35. If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; 36. Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? 37. If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.

viii. 59. cv. 18. *Ps. lxxxiii. 6. *Rom. xlii. 1. cvi. 27. [†]John. 17, v. 36, 37 and viii. 62. [‡]Is. 17, 13; verse 30. [§]Luke i. 35; chap. ix. 35, 37. ^{||}xv. 24. ^{|||}iv. 36 and xiv. 10, 11. ^{||||}xv. 10, 11 and xvii. 21.

Took up, literally, *bore* in the hand. They held the stones in readiness to throw at Him. *Again.* (See viii. 39.) The stones were in all probability large blocks lying hard by for the repairs of the temple. "Behold," says *Augustine*, "the Jews understood what Arians do not understand." *Jesus answered*, &c. Our Lord might have commanded fire to descend from heaven, and consume them for their sin, but He replies by putting a very touching, melting question, one would think enough to move them. Observe, 1. His *works*. He came

into the world not to live a life of idleness and ease, but to work. 2. Their quality—"good works." His works were works of mercy and power. Either consideration should have weighed with these men who were the subjects of such works. The mercy of them appealed to their sense of gratitude, the power of them to their sense of justice. The former showed how He had felt for these, the latter how He had proved His claim. Notice that Jesus does not shrink from His statement in verse 30. 3. Their number. "Many." His enemies acknowledge this. "This man doeth many miracles." His miracles tended to confirm one another. We have many recorded, but the half is not told us. (See xxi. 25.) There is enough to assure us that He is the Son of God. 4. Their manifestation—"have I showed you." These vile creatures who attempted to stone Him had been eye-witnesses of many of His wonderful works. They were shown, not for ostentation, but for conviction. 5. Their appointment—"from my Father." As Mediator, He acted as the Father's servant. They were works out of the ordinary course of nature, above the power of a mere man to perform. For these good works they ought to have admired, loved and received Christ, but how different was the conduct they evinced! How deep and dark the depravity of man! Jesus is still stoned in His religion, His cause, and His people. An injury done to them He considers as done to Himself. "If in the hour of prosperity, our hearts should be lifted up, or in the day of adversity depressed, if we should murmur that our good deeds are treated with contempt, and our benevolence returned with ingratitude, let us fix our eyes on the cross of Christ, and tremble and repent." (See Ps. cix. 1-4; Gal. vi. 9.)

For a good work we stone thee not, &c. Observe how exactly our blessed Lord's true meaning was apprehended by these sinful men, namely, that He is of *one substance with the Father*. Clear-sighted enough were they to see in His words the assertion of that sublime truth which modern unbelievers have professed themselves unable to discover there. *For blasphemy*—whose legal punishment was stoning. (Lev. xxiv.

11-16.) *Thou, being a man, i. e., a man only, makest thyself God.* Twice before they understood Him to advance the same claim, and both times they prepared themselves to avenge what they took to be the insulted honor of God, as here, in the way directed by their law. (v. 18, viii. 59.) Would not Christ have corrected them in a point of such unspeakable moment, if they had really mistaken His meaning? Would He not, like Paul and Barnabas at Lystra, have disavowed with horror and indignation all pretensions to Divinity, had He not in deed and in truth been Divine? Would He, like impious Herod, have acquiesced, remarkable as He was in meekness and lowliness of heart, in the supposed arrogation of deity, if He had not been God and man in One Person? (John i. 19-23; Acts xii. 22, 23; Rev. xix. 10.)

Is it not written in your law, &c. The term "law," here as elsewhere in this Gospel, is not to be restricted to the five books of Moses, but comprises the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures. In this answer, which is a conclusion from the less to the greater, Jesus shows, 1. That His claim is perfectly sustained by the Old Testament, that the term *God* is and may be extended down from God to one "being a man," so that it is no blasphemy to suppose that it includes His human person. But, 2. He has a supernatural claim to the *Divine*, running upward they know not how high. 3. His works, performed in unison with His words, authenticate from God whatever claims He presumes to make. If his works are from God, then His words are *from the Father*. And, then, His Sonship is demonstrated. Thus does this argument furnish a bridge for these Jews to admit His Divinity. Nothing but their unchanging preference for a human hero-Messiah prevents their ascending the bridge He presents with the step of a firm faith. When magistrates and judges are in Scripture called *gods*, the Holy Spirit always adds something, which excludes them from a true Divinity, as that "they shall die like men" (Ps. lxxxii. 6), or they are "rulers of the people." (Ex. xxii. 28.) Whereas, when Christ is called God, it is either with some epithet belonging to the Supreme God, as "God over all" (Rom. ix. 5), "the great

God" (Titus ii 13), "the true God" (1 John v. 20), or with addition of some operation proper to God, as when it is said, "The Word was God, and all things were made by Him. (John i. 1, 3.) *Unto whom the word of God came.* This refers probably to their commission as judges, which being in conformity with the requisitions of the Mosaic law, was ordained of God. This establishes the point of comparison between them and Jesus, whom the Father had consecrated to the work whereunto He had been sent. *The Scripture cannot be broken, i. e., loosed, or untied.* This is a decisive testimony of our Lord to the Divine inspiration of the Old Testament.

Whom the Father hath sanctified. Let it be noted, that Jesus does not say, "of Him, whom God hath sanctified," but "of Him, whom the Father hath sanctified," intimating that His original claim to have God for His Father was not because He was sanctified by God, that is, chosen and set apart to the office assigned Him, and so sent into the world, but, contrariwise, that by God, already His Father, He was sanctified and sent into the world. *Sent into the world.* It may be said of every man, that God "sent him into the world." It is, however, *not said* in Scripture of any other man except our Lord, but of Him frequently. "To send," applied to rational creatures, presupposes a capacity of being sent, as moral agents, and to "send into the world" in this sense, evidently implies pre-existence. (vi. 36-40, xvi. 25-30, verses 28-30; 1 Tim. i. 15, 16; verse 15; Heb. ii. 10-15.) *If I do not the works of my Father, &c.* What are the Jews to believe? That He is "the Son of God," a conception whose purport is unfolded in verse 38; see also verse 25. This they were to regard *Him* as being, and to believe therefore in His *word*, and in the impression which it produces. (viii. 43.) If they cannot, however, dispense with the mediation of something which addresses the senses, His works can furnish testimony, corresponding to chap. xiv. 10, 11. These can lead to an acknowledgment that Christ works in unity with the Father. (Comp. v. 19, 30.) *That the Father is in me, and I in him.* "By these words," says Bloomfield, "our Lord meant communion of mind and equality of

power. It is plain that the Jews clearly understood that He claimed and ascribed to Himself the attributes of Godhead, and made Himself equal with the Father." Such language can never be reconciled with the views of Socinians.

39. "Therefore they sought again to take him, but he escaped out of their hand." 40. "And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized, and there he abode."—vii. 33, 44 and viii. 59. "1. 28.

Reason and argument, mercy and miracle, Divine power and Divine goodness, all were lost upon these men, whose hearts were harder than the stones which they held in their hasty hands. Again they attempted with murderous hearts and impious hands, to lay hold on the Prince of Life. But, for that His hour was not yet come, again He exerts His Divine power (see viii. 59), and by a miraculous exertion of it again escapes their hand, preserving for the present that life which now they took in intent, as, by and bye, in reality. *Beyond Jordan*—to the department of Herod Antipas, to Bethany, in fact, in the district in which John had commenced his ministry, and had uttered the testimony given, i. 19, &c. How long the Saviour remained here, depends on the time we allow for His staying in Ephraim (xi. 54), from whence He journeyed to the passover. His operations were interrupted by the message from the family of Lazarus.

41. "And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true."—xiii. 33.

Many came to Jesus, to listen to His instructions, and to be healed of their infir-

mities. *John did no miracle.* Here, a very important testimony against those who would explain the miracles of Jesus as fables, springing from the morbid love of marvels, is found in the observation, that the Baptist, though it might certainly be looked for from him as a prophet, performed no miracle. It has been well said of John, that, "performing no miracle, he was himself a miracle through all future ages. Though he did no miracle, while so many far less distinguished saints accomplished many, yet no saint exists in whose person, and for whose sake, so many miracles were vouchsafed."

42. "And many believed on him there."—viii. 30 and xi. 45.

Delightful and refreshing is it, amid the many examples of the "contradiction of sinners" (Heb. xii. 3), to meet with the many brief notices, such as this, of the Church's early increase. Silently and calmly in the despised Galilee, in the hated Samaria, in the parts beyond Jordan, at Bethany, in the hostile capital itself—silently and secretly are the living stones found to have been wrought into beauty by the hand of the Divine Artist, whereby *that* came to pass in respect of God's spiritual temple which had been exhibited in type in the construction of His material temple—"the House, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor ax, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building." (1 Kings vi. 7.)

1. What is said of the sheep-fold? 2. Who is the door of the sheep? 3. What is said of any man entering in by the door? 4. Who is the good Shepherd? 5. Why is Christ the good Shepherd? 6. What does the Saviour say of "other sheep?" 7. What effect had these sayings on the Jews? 8. What did the Jews ask Jesus? 9. What was His answer? 10. What did He say when they threatened to stone Him? 11. Where did He go when He escaped from their hands? 12. What occurred there?

CHAPTER XI.

¹ Christ raiseth Lazarus, four days buried. ⁴⁵ Many Jews believe. ⁴⁷ The high priests and Pharisees gather a council against Christ. ⁴⁹ Caiaphas prophesieth. ⁵¹ Jesus hid himself. ⁵⁵ At the passover they enquire after him, and lay wait for him.

"The question," says Dr. Wordsworth, "why the raising of Lazarus, related in this chapter, is not described by the three Evangelists who wrote before John, may be a perplexing one to those who do not acknowledge that all the Gospels are but one Gospel, that they are all from One Everlasting Spirit, who, when He was inspiring Matthew, *foreknew* that He would also inspire John, and when He wrote some things by the first three Evangelists, knew *what* He would write by the fourth and last. But they who believe that this was the case, are not staggered here. They do not read the Sermon on the Mount in John, but in Matthew. But they read other Divine discourses of our blessed Lord, in John, concerning the highest mysteries of the truth, which they do *not* read in any of the other three, and they expect to find Divine works also in John's Gospel which they do *not* find recorded in them. The Holy Spirit doubtless exercised His Divine influence over the minds of the Evangelists, not only by suggestion and dictation, but also by *restraint*. He inspired them not only in what they *wrote*, but in what they did *not* write. There is inspiration in their silence."

Bayle observes of Spinoza, "I have been assured that he said to his friends, that if he could be convinced of the reality of the resurrection of Lazarus, he would dash to pieces his entire system, and would embrace, without reluctance, the ordinary faith of Christians." And wherefore was it that the Jewish philosopher believed not this narrative? When we consider the place, the time, the circumstances, and the singular publicity of the miracle, it really seems to require more credulity to deny it than to believe it. The difficulties of disbelieving it are far greater than those of believing it. "If all the circumstances do not establish the truth of the miracle," says Tittman, the German commentator, "there is no truth in history." "It is

more largely recorded than any other of Christ's miracles," remarks Matthew Henry, "not only because there are so many circumstances in it so very instructive, and the miracle itself is so very great a proof of His mission, but because it was an earnest of that which was to be the crowning proof of all—Christ's own resurrection."

NOW a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.—^aLuke x. 38, 39.

NOW. In the original *but*, to show why the privacy of our Lord was interrupted, and He deemed it proper to return again into Judea. Lazarus is not mentioned by the other Evangelists: his name occurs for the first time in this passage. Lazarus, or rather *Eleazar*, which is the same word, and which occurs twenty or thirty times in the Old Testament, first, in Ex. vi. 25, denotes one "whom God aids." It may be inferred from many things, that Lazarus was the younger, and his sisters older. *Bethany*, a village on the eastern declivity of the Mount of Olives. *The town of Mary &c.*—the place where they lived. It was thus distinguished from the Bethany of His baptism and retirement. It will be observed that the Evangelist presumes his readers to be acquainted with this family; he subsequently, indeed, designates Mary more particularly; he has also placed her name first, yet so as to show that he supposes her work of love to which he alludes, already known. It seems that Martha was the elder sister, verse 5, 19. Both these pious sisters were affectionately attached to our Lord, and although the elder manifested her affection by her constant and unwearied services for Him, and the younger by sitting at His feet (Luke x. 33-42), there can be no doubt that each was equally the object of our Saviour's love, and preparing, though by a different education, for His kingdom and glory.

2. ^bIt was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

^bMatt. xxvi. 7; Mark xiv. 3; chap. xii. 3.

That Mary. This note of distinction is added, lest any might mistake her for one of those other Marys mentioned in the Gospels. John proves her pious affection

toward Jesus at the present, as he elsewhere proves the traitor's disloyalty, by a subsequent act. (xii. 3.) By one marked act, either good or bad, one may become forever notable. *Which anointed, &c.* (See on Matt. xxvi. 7-13; Mark xiv. 3, &c.) Not merely by her brother's restoration was Mary first stimulated to such a work.

3. Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.—Phil. ii. 26, 27.

Behold, &c. "This was a very short letter," says *Bishop Patrick*, "and their grief perhaps would not allow them to write a longer. Oh, how great power was there in these few words! They say no more to move Him. He could not choose but go, when He heard this charming word, *he whom thou lovest is sick*. He who loves needs but know, this suffices. The sisters' strong affection for their brother here appears. In sickness we should implore the aid and presence of Jesus. He only can restore us and our friends: He only can cheer us with the hope of a blessed resurrection.

4. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.—^aix. 3; verse 40.

He said, that is, to the person who brought the tidings, that he might bear back the reply to Mary and Martha. *Not unto death*. The expression, in the original, is not designed to exclude altogether the idea of dying, but (as the words "but for the glory of God" show) the *remaining* in death. The dying, however, was to prove only the means to the glory of God, and of the Son of God. (See on ix. 3.) Verse 11 shows that Jesus knew of the death of Lazarus. *But for, i. e.*, for the sake of, *the glory of God, &c.* The raising of Lazarus from the dead opened the eyes of the people to the truth of our Lord's claim to the Messiahship, more than any other miracle which He had performed. (See verse 45; also xii. 9, 10, 11, 17.) But so intimate and essential was the union between Him and the Father, that the glory of the one was that also of the other. Hence, the glory of both Father and Son is represented as resulting from this event of Lazarus' sickness. (verse 23 and xiii. 31.) "Taught of God," says *Cecil*, "we should view our losses, sickness, pain, and death, as the several trying stages, by which a good

man, like Joseph, is conducted from a tent to a court, sin his disorder, Christ his physician, pain his medicine, the Bible his support, the grave his bed, and death itself an angel, expressly sent to release the worn-out traveler, or crown the faithful soldier. (Ps. lxxi. 18, cxviii. 18.)"

5. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

What a picture! one that in every age has attracted the admiration of the whole Christian church. No wonder that those miserable skeptics who have carped at the ethical system of the Gospel, as not embracing private friendships in the list of its virtues, have been referred to the Saviour's peculiar regard for this family as a triumphant refutation, if such were needed. They were wont to receive Jesus at their house. God is well pleased when the doors of hospitality are freely opened to the poor and needy and persecuted, for His Name's sake. (See Gen. xviii.; 1 Kings xvii. 9; 2 Kings iv. 8; Matt. x. 41; Acts xvi. 15.)

6. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

^aChap. x. 40.

Two days still, &c.—at least twenty-five miles off. Jesus did not reach Bethany till Lazarus had been four days in the grave. (Verse 17.) Lazarus must therefore have been at his last extremity when the sisters sent to Christ. Jesus saw reasons for suffering Lazarus to remain so long dead. Thus He would be the more abundantly glorified by his final restoration to life, for it should seem less difficult to restore to life the recently dead, than those in whom the process of corruption has commenced. It may also have been part of His design to allow the grief of the sisters for the loss of their brother to reach its height, so that the relief He meant to bring might make the more abiding, and therefore more salutary, impression, acting thus after the manner of our Heavenly Father, who often affords the first relief in the moment of greatest sorrow and extremest need. (See iv. 47-49; Mark v. 24-25.)

7. Then after that salth he to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again. 8. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again? 9. Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. 10. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

^aix. 31. ^bix. 4. ^cxii. 35.

After that—when the period both of waiting and duty had expired. Our Lord moves by the clock of His Father's time-keeping. *Master, the Jews of late, &c.* It is observable that our Lord's delay (verse 6) in going to Bethany seems to have occasioned no surprise to the disciples, though they were indeed surprised, as this verse shows, at His afterward proposing to go. They even remonstrate with Him against it. That which is here done by our Divine Master, in order to raise a dead person, teaches His ministers that nothing ought to hinder them from using their utmost endeavors to raise those souls which God either particularly intrusts or providentially recommends to their care.

Are there not twelve hours in the day? He that expects to look back hereafter with satisfaction upon past years, must learn to know the present value of single minutes, and endeavor to let no particle of time fall useless to the ground. (Luke xix. 13.) "A chief part of David's arithmetic in numbering our days," says Gurnall, "lies in that which we call *division*, to cast the account of this our short life, so as to divide the whole little sum thereof into the several portions of time, due for the performing of every duty in. (Gen. xlvii. 9; Ps. xc. 12.) *If any man walk in the day, &c.* The Lord's answer is addressed not so much to the direct question of His disciples, as to the state of mind which prompts that question. The whole is this: There is no danger to men who walk while the light lasts, the danger is only after the sun has set, and when darkness has come on. Then indeed a man may stumble, because he has no light which shall supply the place of the natural luminary which has departed. But as for me, it is still broad daylight with me. My day is not yet come to its close. I can still see my way clearly. And as for you, for doubtless they had hinted also danger to *themselves* (see verses 12, 16), when they intimated danger unto *Him*, fear not. Your safety is bound up in mine.

11. These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth* but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.
12. Deut. xxxi. 16; Dan. xii. 2; Matt. ix. 24; Acts vii. 60; 1 Cor. xv. 18, 51.

Jesus here breaks the fact that Lazarus is dead to His disciples. He does it in

words of matchless beauty and tenderness. The announcement would be more literally rendered, "Lazarus, the friend of us, has been laid asleep." Lazarus had shown them kindness, as well as Himself. "*Sleepeth*" means, "is dead." (See Luke viii. 41, 42, 49-55.) It is a gentle and pathetic way of expressing the most painful of events that can befall man, and a most suitable one, when we remember that after death comes resurrection. In dying we are not annihilated. Like sleepers, we lie down to rise again. The Christian, however, is the only one who can truly regard death as a sleep—that is, as a healthy, refreshing sleep, which can do him no harm. The idea of a man being awakened out of the sleep of death was not confined to Christianity, it is to be found also in the Old Testament, and among the Jews. Even to a more cultivated Paganism it was not altogether unknown. But how different the *quietus* or repose some of their sublime philosophers hoped for, to that which, through Christ, the simplest believer now may be sure of. Each one of Christ's believing people is His "friend." He is the "friend of Christ" even after he is dead. The expression "our," attached to friend, teaches the beautiful lesson that every friend of Christ is or should be the friend of all true Christians. Believers are all one family of brothers and sisters, and members of one body. *I go that I may awake him, &c.* These words proclaim Christ's deliberate intention and purpose to raise Lazarus from the dead. He boldly challenges the attention of the disciples, and declares that He is going to Bethany to restore a dead man to life. Never was bolder declaration made. None surely would make it but One who knew that He was very God. "There seems to me," says Dr. Arnold, "to be contained in these few words one of the most powerful charms in the world, to lull the bitterness of death, and to make us anxious to become such, as that we may humbly venture to apply them to ourselves. (Rom. viii. 1,)"

12. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he *sleep*, he shall do well. 13. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. 14. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

The disciples seem to have misinterpreted-

ed the words in verse 4, of a promise that Lazarus should recover from his sickness, and hence they regarded the declaration in verse 11 as referring to natural and refreshing rest indicating his speedy restoration to health. *Shall do well*, literally, *shall be saved* from death, i. e., shall recover his health. *Howbeit Jesus spake*, &c. In order that the omniscience of Jesus may not be questioned, the Evangelist expressly declares that He referred to the death of Lazarus, although His disciples so misconceived the meaning of His words. This is rendered still more certain in ver. 14, where Jesus announces in plain terms the death of Lazarus, which He could have obtained from no human source. *Then said Jesus unto them plainly*. It is the way of the Scriptures, after hard things, to join other things that are plain. *Lazarus is dead*. He is dead in respect of me, as I am a man, he *sleeps* in my bosom, as I am the living God.

15. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe, nevertheless let us go unto him.

We are said to *believe*, when faith has its increase in our souls, as well as its first beginning. Here we see, 1. Not only that our Saviour is alive to the welfare of His disciples, but that there is nothing He is so much concerned to promote in them as their faith. 2. That the Saviour can accomplish His purposes in a manner peculiarly His own. All the friends of Lazarus would have supposed that as soon as ever He was informed of his affliction, He should have hastened to the scene of distress, and at least have expressed His sympathy. But hear Him: "All has been proper and necessary. I know what I have done, and why I have done it. I know it now, and you will know it soon. Then you will be glad with me. Then you will see that it was far better that Lazarus should be raised from the dead after he had lain in the grave four days, than have been only recovered from a bed of sickness." Thus Jesus brings the blind by a way that they know not. *Nevertheless let us go unto him*—not to *them*, but to *him*—not to the sisters, but to the brother. "Lazarus is dead, and it would be too late for you, but not for me. Your extremity is my opportunity." Jesus is never too

confident in His resources, nor too late in His movements. Let Christ's all-sufficiency encourage us with regard to others. Let those who in doing good meet with unlikely materials to work upon, let ministers who seem only preaching many of their hearers into impenitence, let parents whose hearts are bleeding over ungodly children, think of Him who was taking this seemingly useless, but really successful journey, and never abandon their endeavors or hope.

16. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.—[Luke xxii. 23.]

Thomas is always distinguished by the name of Didymus, that is, two-fold; to show, say some, the twins, struggling in him, of faith and unbelief, of flesh and spirit. (xx. 24, 25; Gen. xxv. 22.) What our Saviour, in saying that *Lazarus was dead, and I am glad*, &c., urged expressly for an encouragement of their faith, Thomas's reasoning turned immediately into an argument of distrust; as is apparent from what he said to his fellow disciples upon this occasion. *Let us also go, that we may die with him*. When he saw his Master resolved to go, he wound up all into this sort of reasoning despair—"Lazarus is dead, and all his pains and fears are over: and better it were for us, if ours were so too. The Jews' malice is bent upon the destruction of us all; and if our Master could not save His principal friend from death, what hope is there of His saving us? Let us go then and meet our doom as patiently as we can." (Verses 7, 8.)

John in but three instances furnishes us with traits of this disciple; namely, here and in xiv. 5, and in xx. 24, &c., but they are in such harmony as to furnish a picture of character. Intellectual reflection predominates in this disciple, immediateness of self-surrender and of trust was in defect, here, consequently he is unable to lift himself up to Christ's word; he gives proof, indeed, of some devotion, as for love of Him he will not shrink from death, but he shows faint-heartedness enough to doubt whether their lives will be saved.

17. Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already. 18. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: 19. And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to

comfort them concerning their brother. 20. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat *still* in the house. 21. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. 22. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.—*ix. 31.*

Had lain in the grave four days. Martha and Mary had not, probably, ventured to send to the Lord for help, till the sickness of their brother had assumed a most alarming character, and he had most likely died upon the same day that the messenger announcing his illness had reached the Lord, else he would scarcely have been four days in his grave when Jesus came. *Fifteen furlongs off*—about two miles. *Many of the Jews, &c.* The nearness to Jerusalem is mentioned to explain why so many Jews were present. The number that had come suggests that the family of Bethany was held in high esteem. Thereby the miracle was plentifully witnessed and published. Few of these comforters sympathized with the Christian hopes of these sisters. But the true Comforter was on His way. Jesus visits His “faithful among the faithless.”

Then Martha, as soon as she heard, &c. The burial over, according to the custom of the Jews, the sorrowing sisters were within, surrounded by sympathizing friends, and fulfilling the days of their mourning. At length, but, alas! how much too late, they hear the clamor of the approaching multitude, that Jesus, attended by His disciples, is drawing near the town, Martha, who, even in the extremity of her sorrow, is still the same energetic being that she ever was, hastens forth to meet Him, while Mary, absorbed in grief (how true to nature is the narrative), *sat still in the house.* The undesigned coincidence (See Luke x. 38-42) marks the identity of character and the truthfulness of the Evangelist. Quietness before God is one of the most difficult of all Christian graces, to sit, where He places us, to be what He would have us to be, and this as long as He pleases. (xiii. 37; Gen. xxiv. 48.)

The sisters, both of them, though so different in their turn of mind, greet Jesus with the same pathetic salutation, *Lord, if thou hadst been, &c.* (See verse 32.) How truly the heart, when deeply moved, is the same in all—and how much all grief is alike! In this address, 1. There

is the feeling that the event *might* have been otherwise. “*If thou hadst,*” &c. Both were pious women, yet both betrayed the weakness of their faith. (Verse 39.) Were they not aware that, though He was not there, yet, if He had so ordered it, and but spoken the word, their brother would not have died? We must look beyond second causes to Him who is the first Cause of all things. We should believe and be sure that the circumstances which we regret as the occasion of our affliction are but the appointed means of bringing about what He determines, and what, without them equally well as with them, He might accomplish. If evil come upon us, if our brother die, it is not because this or that accident prevented relief; it is not because He was not there in time, but because it was His will. 2. There may be somewhat of the feeling that the event *should* have been otherwise. When our friends are removed by death, we should, as Christians, remember that God may have many purposes in view with which we may be unacquainted, which, indeed, we could not as yet comprehend, and rest in the assurance that all things will work together for our good. 3. There is apparent a sincere, though melancholy satisfaction in meeting with Jesus at last. He had not come so soon as they expected and desired, still He is come for good, and gratefully do they receive Him. Happy will it be for us, if in like circumstances we are enabled to feel as these sisters felt, and to meet our Saviour’s gracious advances as they did.

But I know, that even now, &c. Martha’s faith, though still imperfect, rises immeasurably in degree between the utterances of these two sentences. (See verse 21.) In the first she appears to believe that all was lost; in the second, she has already attained to the conviction that the prayer of Christ would be undeniable, she wants but one step more, viz.: that the will of Christ was as omnipotent as His prayer, and her belief would be perfected; and even this advancement was not long withheld.

23. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.
24. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

¹Luke xiv. 14; chap. v. 29.

As Jesus did not declare when her brother should rise, nor that He Himself would bring him to life, Martha regarded His words only as a source of consolation, arising out of the doctrine of the resurrection. She cannot believe that they mean more than that he, with all other faithful Israelites, will stand in his lot at the last day. This, at any other time, she would be far from being disposed to undervalue; but now it seems to her so remote, while her loss is altogether recent. Hence, with a slight movement of impatience at comfort that so little met the present longings of her heart, which were to have her brother now, she answers, *I know that he shall rise, &c.*—words which indicate the common faith of the Jews of her day in the resurrection of the body, on the closing day of this world's history. But see how the Lord proceeds to instruct and to elevate her mind, how graciously He bears with this passing fretfulness, how tenderly he touches these still open wounds, how He leads her from grieving over her brother, to believe yet more fully in her Saviour, how he raises her from dwelling upon Lazarus dead, to repose implicitly in Him who is the Lord of life, how He diverts her from thinking only of a remote and general resurrection, to confide in Him who is even at this present the Resurrection and the Life.

25. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 26. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? *Mat. vi. 21 and vi. 39, 40. Luk. 4, vi. 35 and xiv. 6: Col. iii. 4; 1 John i. 1, 2 and v. 11. Phil. 3; 1 John v. 10, &c.*

This is the only true comfort in respect to the future state. He is the only true Comforter, who can speak, not merely of the immortality of the soul, and of the resurrection of the body, but of Himself as the life of the immortal soul, and the quickener of the risen body, the first begotten from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep. Christ is the resurrection and the life, 1. As He is the announcer of the doctrine. It is a truth of pure revelation. The book in which it is contained is called "the Word of Christ." 2. As He affords the pledge. He passed through the regions of the dead, and reached the crown that He now wears. And there is a union between Him and His people, be-

cause He lives, they shall live also. 3. As He procures the privilege. Jesus has redeemed our whole nature, and the body being ransomed, as well as the spirit, by no less a price than His own blood, shall be equally claimed, and renewed, and glorified. 4. As He is the Pattern. He "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." *He that believeth in me, &c.* Here, as often in our Lord's words, the temporal death is taken no account of, but quite overlooked, and the believer in Him is contemplated as already lifted above death, and made partaker of everlasting life. (John vi. 47.) The deceased Christian, since he believed in Jesus, while he lived, is not to be properly accounted among the dead now, for his soul, his better part, is now alive, and his dead body shall live again, as soon as Jesus shall call for it. The power, which Christ here asserts, in regard to a two-fold death, one of the body, and another of the soul, furnishes full and clear proof of His equality with the Father. *Believest thou this?* "Believest thou that it is I who am this Lord of life and death? Does thy faith in the Divine verities of the resurrection and eternal life after death center in me?" It is neither the certainty, nor the goodness, nor the greatness of anything, but the lively faith which we have of it implanted in our souls, that will make us seek and labor for it.

27. She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: for I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

Mat. xv. 16; chap. iv. 42 and vi. 14, 69.

"Yea, Lord, I believe. I have believed it, in spite of my petulance, all along. I believe it now more than ever. I trust Thee after this my loss even more than before. I have not lost, but rather increased my sure confidence in Thee." "Her answer," says an old writer, "may seem irrelevant: He questions her about the resurrection, she professes her faith in His incarnation. No, she speaks, like a right believer: yield thy faith to that great work of His birth and incarnation, thou wilt never shrink from the hardest truths and most improbable, as this one was, a dead man's resurrection."

28. And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. 29. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. 30. Now

Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. 31. *The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily, and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.

*1 Thes. v. 11; Heb. xii. 12. †Ps. xxvii. 8 and cxix. 59, 60. ‡Verse 19.

She went her way, &c. Jesus may have directed her to go. Or Martha may have understood the turn which the conversation had taken, as a call for the presence of her sister, whom she may have regarded as better able to answer the searching questions of Jesus, and as likely to take a deep interest in the subjects upon which she was herself receiving instruction. *Secretly*—so that she might enjoy a more private and uninterrupted interview with Jesus, than if she should openly announce His presence in the hearing of the Jews who were with her. *Master* means literally *teacher*, and was a title which He claimed for Himself. (See Matt. xxiii. 8, 10.) *Call-eth for thee*. It is not actually recorded that our Saviour asked for Mary. That He “called her,” we learn from these words of her sister. In this way, many little circumstances, perhaps unsuspected by careless readers, are revealed both in the Old and New Testaments. *She arose* from her posture of grief. (See verse 20.) *Quickly*, being incited to haste by the love which she bore her Lord, and by the hopeful, cheerful expression, which appeared in Martha’s tone and countenance. *But was in that place, &c.* Jesus had not entered the village. Why was this? Was it that He desired to avoid display? According to the ordinary view, it was simply because of the fact that the place of sepulture was outside of the village, and this view is favored by verse 31. *When they saw Mary, &c.* The Orientals, to this day, repair frequently, as in ancient times, to the graves of their loved ones. “For three days the grave of the dead is visited.” As Mary hastens to the vicinity of the place of burial, the Jews who were present (verse 19) suppose that she is about to perform that duty, and hasten after her.

32. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

†Verse 21, on which see notes.

The same faith in Christ, as being “the Son of God,” which Martha at fuller length expressed by her words, Mary more

concisely declared by her act of adoration. She utters, like Martha, her double note of sorrow over *what is*, and *what, alas!* as she thinks, *might have been*, but, unlike Martha, she utters no saving clause of hope. (Verse 22.) Grief has choked her utterance, and overmastered her soul. How apt we are, in seasons of affliction, to waste our time and our thoughts in dwelling on second causes, on that fruitful, yet most unfruitful, monosyllable, “*if!*” How much better would our time and thoughts be employed in meditating on Holy Scripture, and especially in remembering for our comfort, that when we are found in the path of duty, however dark or crooked that path may be, we can never with any truth complain, *If thou hadst been here!* (Ps. lxxiii. 21–25.)

33. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, 34. And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.—^aHeb. iv. 15 and v. 7, 8.

Saw her weeping. No more effectual, no more mighty prayer, than are our tears. Tears brought to pass, what words could not, that Jesus was troubled in His spirit. (Ps. lvi. 3, xxxix. 13; 1 Sam. i. 10, 13; Luke vii. 38, 44.) *He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled*, was filled with painful emotion. He sympathized deeply with these afflicted sisters, for He possessed all the tender sensibilities of human nature. *Where have ye laid him?* Jesus asks the initiatory question in relation to His wondrous work, not of course as needing the information, but in accordance with the conversational customs of the East, and as leading the way to the invitation. All through we may observe the absence of all haste, the shrouding and obscuring of Deity in humanity, till the due moment come, when the clouds give way, and the Divine Sun breaks forth shining in His strength. *Come and see.* It was important that Christ should avoid any appearance of collusion, or deceit, which the Pharisees of those days, and the infidels of future ones, might have urged against Him, had He gone directly to the sepulchre. This is wholly precluded by the earnest desire of His friends to show Him the way thereto.

35. Jesus wept.

Job xxx. 25; Luke xix. 41; Heb. ii. 16.

Is it for nothing that the Evangelist,

some *sixty years* after it occurred, holds up to all ages with such touching brevity the sublime spectacle of the Son of God in tears? What a seal of His perfect oneness with us in the most redeeming feature of our stricken humanity? But was there nothing in those tears beyond sorrow for human suffering and death? Could these *effects* move Him without suggesting the *cause*? Who can doubt that in His ear every feature of the scene proclaimed that stern law of the kingdom—"The wages of sin is death," and that this element in His visible emotion underlay all the rest? O what a friend is this! What a brother, yea, and far more than a brother, and how confidently may we come to Him, as Christian mourners, in every season of trial. Our complaints, our regrets, our expostulations, our very remonstrances almost, and upbraidings, may all be expressed to Him. The weeping of Christ shows us that it is not sinful to sorrow. It also shows us that deep feeling is not a thing of which we need be ashamed. To be cold and stoical and unmoved in the sight of sorrow is no sign of grace. There is nothing unworthy of a child of God in tears.

38. Then said the Jews. Behold how he loved him! 37. And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? 38. Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. 39. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been *dead* four days. 40. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God? ix. 6. *Verses 4, 23.

The exclamation, *Behold how he loved him*, was made by some of the Jews present, who were moved to good will by this lively sympathy of the Lord with the sorrows of those around Him. Others, perhaps, invidiously said, *Could not this man, &c.* He weeps over this calamity now, but could He not have hindered it? (See ix.) *Again groaning.* As before. (Verse 33.) It is not improbable that Jesus, who before groaned in Himself for compassion of their tears, now groaned for their incredulity. Nothing could so afflict the Saviour of men, as the sins of men. *It was a cave, &c.* The Jewish sepulchres consisted of subterranean caves hewn out in the rock, or (as in so rocky and cavernous a country as Judea) shaped into proper form, with a *foramen*, closed with a huge

stone, instead of a door. This stone was called *gole*, the *roller*. The corpses were placed in repositories hollowed out on the sides of the cave. *And a stone lay upon it.* The particle rendered "upon," should be rendered *at, against*, for the Jewish tombs opened on the side.

Take ye away the stone, &c. "The dead man beneath the stone," says *Augustine*, "is the guilty sinner under the law. (Gal. iii. 21, 22.) The letter, that killeth, is the stone, that keeps us down." "*Remove,*" He says, "*the stone.*" Take away the dead weight of the Law. Preach the grace of the Gospel. (Ex. xxxi. 18; 2 Cor. iii. 6.) *Martha saith unto him, &c.* He who has studied the human heart, he who has studied his own heart, will not regard as strange things those rapid changes of feeling, and quick flows and ebbs of faith, in any one, much less in one so susceptible to instant impression as Martha. But Jesus reminded her that He had already in effect, perhaps in the conversation He held with her when she went out to meet Him, told her that if she would believe, she should behold the glory of God. At these words, faith once more gushed up in her heart, like a spring of water, and the Redeemer was no longer obstructed by her unbelief. *See the glory of God.* See here the connection between faith and sight. We believe first, and then see.

41. Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead was laid. And Jesus *lifted up his eyes*, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. 42. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.—xii. 30.

Then they took away the stone, &c. What man can do, man must do, or God will never interfere to effect what man is unable to perform. *Lifted up his eyes.* We have no other recorded instance of a prayer offered by Jesus previous to His performance of a miracle. The design would seem to have been to prevent those present from inferring that He raised Lazarus by any act of His own dissociated from the Father, or that in this, as well as in every other proof which He gave of His Divine mission, He was not acting in submission to the will and purpose of Him who sent Him. *Father, I thank thee, &c.* "I praise Thee, O Father, that Thou hast always heard my secret prayers, and I

know that Thou *will* always hear them, but now I pray aloud on account of the people which stand by," &c.

43. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and this face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

xxx. 7.

With a loud voice—as was not His ordinary custom. This was in order to call the attention of the entire multitude to the act demonstrating His miraculous intention, and to furnish a powerful emblem of the mighty call by which He will summon the nations of the dead to the resurrection. *Come forth.* It is spoken, it is done; nature hears His voice, and confessing her Author instantly obeys the dread command. (Ps. cxlviii. 5.) *And he that was dead, &c.* By a power Divine the disembodied spirit was fetched back from the world of spirits, reunited to the body, fitted for its habitation. The damage done by “decay’s effacing fingers” already repaired, death’s work undone, corruption’s hideous task retrieved “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.” Notice the progressive stages in the three instances recorded in the Gospels of resurrection from the dead. First comes the daughter of Jairus, recently departed; then the widow’s son at Nain, at the gates of the grave, being carried to his burial; lastly, this of Lazarus, rescued even from corruption. *Bound hand and foot, &c.* Bandages were often, in the East, bound around each limb of the corpse. These bandages, however, were not so very tight as entirely to hinder motion, when life was restored to Lazarus. *Loose him, and let him go.* They are not to throng him, to pry in upon the awful secrets of the grave, to ply him with curious questions, but let him depart in peace—to the privacy which is most healthful for soul and body, and to the society of those loving sisters who may best minister unto him. Jesus will no more “loose him” Himself than “roll away the stone.” The one was the necessary preparation for resurrection, the other the necessary sequel to it. *The life-giving act alone He reserves to Himself.* So in the quickening of the dead to spiritual life, human instrumentality is

employed first to prepare the way, and then to turn it to account.

How strikingly simple, how truly sublime, is every portion of this impressive narrative! What absence of all effort, of all display! It was no greater effort for Jesus to pour the tide of life anew into the stagnant veins, to reanimate the mouldering frame, to call that tainted and corrupted corpse back from the sepulchre, than in the garden of Gethsemane to awaken the sleeping Peter. Most convincing evidence of the power of the only-begotten Son of God! A single word from Him is sufficient to impart spiritual life to a soul in the shadow of death, natural life to a body amid the corruption of the grave, and life forever to all the generations of Adam upon the resurrection day. (See v. 26, 28, 29.)

45. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did believed on him. 46. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

47. Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.

Which came to Mary. Such as come to do good unto the godly in their need may readily meet with more good by this means. *Believed on him.* It might be anticipated from what has preceded, that among the friends of the family there would be susceptible hearts. *But some of them went their ways, &c.* Death itself more readily yielded to the power of Christ than did these men’s infidelity. (See xii. 37–41.) Here was a miracle proving and enforcing a solemn parable. (Luke xvi. 19.) There is a Lazarus in each case. The very name should have served to remind them of His warning word.

47. ¶ Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. 48. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. 49. And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, 50. Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. 51. And this spake he not of himself; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; 52. And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

¶ Ps. li. 2; Matt. xxvi. 3; Mark xiv. 1; Luke xxii. 2. xxii. 19; Acts iv. 16. ¶ Luke iii. 2; chap. xviii. 14; Acts iv. 6. xxviii. 14. ¶ Isa. xlix. 6; 1 John ii. 2. ex. 16; Eph. ii. 14, 15, 16, 17.

If we let him thus alone, &c. No one could now deny that Jesus had wrought many miracles, and a fear was expressed lest this crowning act of power, wrought so near Jerusalem, and upon a person so

well-known as Lazarus, might excite the enthusiasm of the people in our Lord's favor, and lead to some movement which might attract the attention of the Romans and occasion the loss of the few internal liberties which the nation had been permitted to retain. And yet the Jews did not escape what they dreaded; nay, indeed, they brought it upon themselves, by this very course. It is ever the way of those who rule the earth, to leave out of their reckoning Him who rules the universe. (Ps. xciv. 1-11.) The conduct of the Jews toward Jesus was the counterpart of the wicked husbandman in the parable, the fulfillment of the cruel counsels of Joseph's brethren, those types of a worse fratricide. "As they, thinking to defeat the purpose of God concerning their younger brother, help to bring it to pass, so the Jewish rulers were the instruments to fulfill that purpose of God concerning Christ, which they meant to bring to nothing.

Named Caiaphas, &c. The high priesthood, by Divine appointment, was to continue in the same person for life, but the Romans changed the high priest at pleasure, and made the office, for the most part, annual. There is some doubt whether the participial clause, "but being high priest," &c., is to be regarded as denoting the cause or occasion of what follows, in the sense of *inasmuch as he was high priest*, &c., or as a simple announcement that Caiaphas was the high priest on that memorable year. The latter is Tholuck's view, the former that of Stier and Olshausen. *Ye know nothing at all, &c.* An expression as it seems of displeasure and impatience with the council. *It is expedient, &c.* The good of the whole, the preservation of our nationality, as you confess, from Roman despotism, requires the death of one, innocent or not. So let all pleas in behalf of His piety and goodness be silenced. *For us.* If He gains the people, we know that neither He nor the people would be friends to *us*.

Whole nation perish not—by the Roman sword, as you see it will, if this man prevails. *Being high priest that year, he prophesied, &c.* A Divine interpretation, truly, of that evil man's unsuspected prophecy!

The meaning of Caiaphas was insincere, mean and timid. The meaning of the Holy Ghost his words was awful, mysterious and Divine. All that Caiaphas *intended* to say clearly amounted to this: that our Saviour's destruction must any how be effected, and that speedily. His argument was that the death of One would thus be productive of general good—by diverting from the nation the wrath of their Roman masters. But his speech was overruled by a higher power, and the words which fell from his lips proved susceptible of a double meaning; the Holy Ghost deigning to employ even this sinful organ (as He had already spoken by the mouth of Balaam), to convey nothing less than a wondrous prophecy concerning the propitiatory nature of the approaching sacrifice of Christ's death, and its marvelous result to "the Israel of God" (Gal. vi. 16) scattered throughout the world, not only (that is) to the Jewish nation, but to the Gentile as well. (1 John ii. 2; chap. x. 16.)

53. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

God's overruling Providence is a power, which veils its interference, and moves so as not to shock the tenor of man's responsible action, in the course of trial and duty. (xix. 11.) In this sense, the miracle of raising Lazarus was "for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." (Verse 4.) For this miracle prepared the way for our Lord's death; and by His death, the Father was glorified (xvii. 1), and Christ Himself "entered into His glory." (Luke xxiv. 25.)

51. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews, but went thence into a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

Ev. 1, 3 and vii. 1. See 2 Chron. xlii. 19.

Our Lord, though ready to be offered, and, when His hour was come, "led as a lamb to the slaughter," would not now needlessly expose Himself to the malice of these wicked men. As His good works had failed to convince them, He retires. He now escapes into the region of Jordan lying north of the Dead Sea, as in chap. x., after the commotion, He went to Perea. It is the Divine appointment that we should decline persecution, till a necessity of obeying God, or charity for the souls of

men, oblige us to appear. Happy the country which affords a retreat to the Son of God persecuted. But more happy the heart which opens itself to Him while the world persecutes Him, which adores Him, which is wholly taken up with Him, which fills itself with His word, which is nourished by His truth, and which continually excites and quickens its faith and love by meditating upon His mysteries.

55. ¹And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand, and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves. 56. ²Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast? 57. Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should show it, that they might take him.

¹Chap. ii. 13, v. 1 and vi. 4. ²Verse 8; chap. vii. 11.

And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand, &c. While the Lord was hidden in His retreat, the Jews were assembling to keep the Passover at Jerusalem. To judge from the numbers that flocked thither, one would have supposed that they were a very religious people. They came from distant parts of the country, and they arrived at an early period, in order to go through various purifications and washings commanded in the law, but they did not, like David, wash their hands in innocence, before they approached the altar of their God. (Ps. xxvi. 6.) There may be a full attendance at the house of God, and even at the Lord's Supper, while there are but few spiritual worshippers. Such religious acts obtain for those who perform them a *name* to live among men, but they may be performed while the heart is *dead* before God. Never were the Jews in a more dangerous state than when, having ceased to worship graven images, they observed

with strictness the ceremonies of the law.

Then sought they for Jesus, &c. Then or therefore in consequence of the fame of Jesus, especially that which resulted from His great miracle at Bethany, which could not but have been noised through the whole land. What think ye, &c. The form of this question implies the opinion that He rather *would* come. Our Lord, on a former occasion, had not come up to the Passover. (See John vi.) Hence there was room for some doubt whether He would come now. Now both . . . priests . . . Pharisees, &c. This verse shows the first steps which had been taken after the session of the council which adopted the advice of Caiaphas to kill Jesus. A general order had been given that if any man knew where Jesus was, he was to give information, that He might be apprehended. Probably this order may only have referred to Jerusalem, and the house where our Lord might lodge when He came to the Passover, if He did come. It can scarcely be supposed that the enemies of Christ could be ignorant where He was between the miracle of Bethany and the Passover, and they dared not perhaps run the risk of a tumult or rebellion, which might be caused if they sent into the rural districts to apprehend Him.

"Let us even now," says an old writer, "show the Jews where Christ is. Oh, that they would hear and understand, whosoever are the seed of those, who gave commandment that it should be shown them where Christ was! Let them come to the Church, out of the Gospel let them hear." (Ps. xiv. 7.)

1. Who was sick at Bethany? 2. What did the sisters of Lazarus do? 3. What did Jesus say to His disciples who seemed to wonder that He would go into Judea again? 4. How is verse 15 to be understood? 5. How is Jesus the resurrection and the life? 6. What did Martha and Mary say to Jesus? 7. What does the weeping of Jesus teach us? 8. How was Lazarus raised from the dead? 9. What was the effect of this miracle? 10. What did Caiaphas say? 11. Did Jesus walk any more openly among the Jews? 12. To what place did He go? 13. What does His example teach?

CHAPTER XII.

1 *Jesus excuseth Mary anointing his feet.* 9 *The people flock to see Lazarus.* 10 *The high priests consult to kill him.* 12 *Christ rideth into Jerusalem.* 20 *Greeks desire to see Jesus.* 23 *He foretelleth his death.* 37 *The Jews are generally divided: 42 yet many chief rulers believe, but do not confess him: 44 therefore Jesus call- eth earnestly for confession of faith.*

WHEN Jesus, six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.—xi. 1, 43.

Then connects the approach of Jesus to Jerusalem, which is now about to be related, with this excitement in regard to the question, whether, in face of such danger, He would make His appearance at the paschal feast. The verse is logically connected with the close of the preceding chapter. *Six days before the pass-over, i. e.,* on the sixth day before it, probably after sunset on *Friday* evening, or the commencement of the Jewish *Sabbath* preceding the Passover. *Bethany*, from which unbelief had banished Him, but where were yet faithful hearts and loving hands ready to minister unto Him, come, at least, that had not bowed the knee to Baal.

2. Where they made him a supper, and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.—Matt. xxvi. 6; Mark xiv. 3.

Made him a supper—to show respect and affection for Jesus. The entertainment took place at the house of Simon the leper. (See Matt. xxvi. 6.) We should have expected from the traits of Martha's character, given in chap. xi. and in Luke x. 38, &c., that she would attend to the domestic arrangements. Before she was "cumbered about much serving," now she had learned the lesson from the Lord, and we read here that she simply *served*. So in regard to Mary, before she "sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word," now, having through that word believed, she makes her costly oblation, the fruit of her love, treating Him "not as man, but God." (2 Peter iii. 18.) Martha no longer objects, as on a former occasion (Luke x. 40), nor makes more of the entertainment than of Him who was intended to be honored by it. But Lazarus was one of them, &c. This is stated as evidence of his complete restoration. To eat and drink proves the reality of a corporeal, as distinguished from a merely spiritual pres-

ence. *Sat at the table with him.* So do the righteous, after their resurrection, sit down in heaven at the Marriage Supper, and are "forever with the Lord."

3. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. 4. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, 5. Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? 6. This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. 7. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. 8. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always. Luke x. 38, 39; chap. xi. 2. Chap. xlii. 29. Matt. xxvi. 11; Mark xiv. 7.

On verses 3-8; see on Matt. xxvi. 6-13; Mark xiv. 3-9.

Then took Mary, &c. It was not unusual to connect the anointing of the feet with the ablutions which took place previous to entertainments. (Luke vii. 46.) *Three hundred denarii or pence*, are worth about \$45.00. The price of this oil seems conclusively to prove that the family were in good circumstances. "The Spirit of heavenly love," says Bishop Horne, "was 'the oil of gladness' which Jehovah poured 'without measure,' on Him who is the High Priest and Head of His Church. Insinuating and healing, comforting and exhilarating, it is diffused from Him over His Body Mystical, even down to the least and lowest members." "Of His fullness have we all received," and, as it is said of Mary's box of spikenard in the Gospel, *The house is filled with the odour of the ointment.* Nor did the dew of heaven, in time of drought ever prove more refreshing and beneficial to the mountains of Judah, than are the influences of Grace, when descending in soft silence from above upon the Church in the Union and Communion of which God hath "commanded the blessing, even life forevermore." Oh, come the day when division shall cease, and enmity be done away; when the tribes of the spiritual Israel shall be united in a bond of eternal charity, under the true David, in the Jerusalem which is above, and saints and angels shall sing this lovely Psalm together! (Ps. cxxii. 5-8; see also 1 Cor. i. 2, 3.)

Given to the poor. (Deut. xv. 11.) Covetousness and irreverence are here covered under the cloak of benevolence. *This*

he said, &c. This one trait of Judas unlocks his soul to a glance, which renders clear all that follows. He could prevail upon himself, not once only, but repeatedly, to purloin from the money which served at once for the wants of Jesus and for the poor, and which was supplied entirely by charity (Luke viii. 3), and yet could present himself in the presence of Jesus, and was so hypocritical withal, as to wish to seem the friend of the poor at the very time he was robbing the poor. Such a man had already smothered conscience—such a man had no longer power to pray. Judas, who had betrayed his trust, soon after betrayed his Master. And those who are entrusted with any moneys of others, may incidentally learn hence to have clean hands and a pure heart, to preserve the most scrupulous integrity the less likely they are to be called to account, to be the more ready at any time to render an account, and the easier the opportunity to defraud, the more carefully to guard against that danger.

Let her alone, &c. "It is not sufficient to carry religion in our hearts, as fire is carried in flint stones, but we are outwardly, visibly, to serve and honor God, and that, too, not only with our souls, but our bodies, and not only with our bodies, but with the best of our goods. If we have anything in all our possessions of more value and price than another, to what should we convert it, rather than unto Him? (Prov. iii. 9; 2 Sam. xxiv. 22-4; Mal. i. 8.) *Against the day of my burying, &c.* As the time was so near at hand when our Lord's dead body would have to be anointed, and she was not to have that privilege even after the spices were bought for the purpose (Mark xvi. 1), He lovingly regards it as done *now*. How much more may be involved in an act of Christian kindness than we think! Even to give a cup of cold water out of love to Christ, shall not lose its reward. *The poor always, &c.* We are to show to the poor the kindness we would have shown to the Lord Himself, had He been with Mary at Bethany. *But me ye have not always.* Soon He was to be withdrawn from them, and they should see Him no more. The time draweth nigh. Six days more, and they

shall see Him die a cruel death. No more opportunity of testifying love to His person. Soon He is to be laid in His grave. Shall He reject this appropriate anointing? In the anticipation of that awful hour, how welcome this tribute of a full and loving heart, this offering of the lavish hand which owns no niggard gift! So a gifted poet enjoins.

"Give all then canst, high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely calculated less or more!"

9. ¶ Many people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. 10. ¶ But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death: 11. ¶ Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

¶ xi. 43, 44. ¶ Luke xvi. 31. ¶ xxi. 45, v. 18.

To such a pitch had these chief priests come of diabolical determination to shut out the light from themselves, and quench it from the earth! How necessary, in many cases, the concurrence of the will is toward the production of faith, daily experience may convince us. We see men rejecting the strongest evidence, when opposed by interest, prejudice and passion, and accepting the slightest which falls in with them. The best arguments in the world avail nothing on one side, when pride, pleasure and profit are engaged on the other. *The chief priests consulted, &c.* What can be done with such people as these chief priests? Or, what effect would the appearance of Christ among them after His resurrection have produced, but that of provoking fresh blasphemies and fresh insults? (Verses 39, 40; Rom. x. 21; Acts x. 41.)

12. ¶ On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13. Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, ¶ Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. 14. ¶ And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon, as it is written, 15. ¶ Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. 16. These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him. 17. The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. 18. ¶ For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. 19. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, ¶ Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold; the world is gone after him.

¶ Matt. xxi. 8: Mark xi. 8: Luke xix. 35, 36, &c. ¶ Ps. cxviii. 25, 26. ¶ Matt. xxi. 7. ¶ Zech. ix. 9. ¶ Luke xviii. 31. ¶ vii. 39. ¶ xiv. 25. ¶ verse 11. ¶ xxi. 47, 48.

On verses 12-19, see on Matt. xxi. 1-11, 14-17; Mark xi. 1-11; Luke xix. 29-44.

Next day. Jesus is supposed to have arrived in Bethany on the evening after

the Sabbath, and to have remained there during the next day. *Much people.* At this time the holy city was already filling with the crowds of people, pilgrims, who had trooped in from all the country far and near, to prepare for their great annual festival of the Passover. *Took branches, &c.* It was customary with the Jews, at the feast of the tabernacles, to carry about branches of palm and other trees in their hands, and to sing, *HOSANNA*, "Save now, I beseech Thee." (Ps. cxviii. 25.) *Had found a young ass, &c.* Jesus desired to declare Himself the King of Israel, but only as the King of peace, He selected, therefore, the animal that was usually ridden in time of peace, while the horse was reserved for war. (Hos. xiv. 4; Prov. xxi. 31; Jer. xvii. 25), and points directly to that prophecy (Zech. ix. 9), which likewise depicts the Messiah as King of peace. Our Lord, it is particularly noted, rode the *colt*, according to the prophecy, not the parent animal which accompanied. Having seen the humility of Zion's King in His first coming, let us now from it lift up our eyes as it were to the throne of God, and consider how He shall appear, and how also it shall be with us, at His second coming. In this accepted time let us turn to Him in penitence and faith, who once came to visit us in great humility.

These things understood not his disciples, &c. While the miracle, the triumph, and the cross are passing in rapid succession before their eyes, they are confused in their perceptions. But when all are past and rise up as one *whole* before them, when they see the accordance of prophecy and event, as taught by the voice of the risen Jesus (Luke xxiv. 25-35), and by the refreshing power of the quickening Spirit (chap. xiv. 26), they comprehend the entire symmetrical plan. Then they understand the CHRIST, and thenceforward are competent to herald Him forth to the world. How eminently honest and satisfactory such convictions as these! how entirely remote from all enthusiasm and deception! (See chap. ii. 22; also Luke xxiv. 6-8.) In the case of false christs, of false religions, the faith, or rather the credulity, is strongest and most fanatical at the outset, and then it wanes, and grad-

ually declines, and sometimes ends in a strong reaction, and in an immortal hate: but the faith of the disciples was the growing conviction of their minds, it was ever waxing onward, all these circumstances were gradually confirming it, here a little and there a little; it was as the shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day.

The people therefore bare record. The sentiment is, that the people who were eye-witnesses of the miracle, attested the reality of its performance, and thus frustrated the attempts made by our Lord's enemies to throw discredit upon the whole transaction. *The world is gone after him, or, as we say, everybody,* a form of hyperbole common in almost all languages. "And now began to work the greatest glory of the Divine Providence: here was the case of Christianity at stake. The world was rich and prosperous, learned and full of wise men, the Gospel was preached with poverty and persecution, in simplicity of discourse, and in 'demonstration of the Spirit.' . . . On the one side there was the scandal of the Cross, on the other the patience of the saints, and what was the event? They that had overcome the world, could not strangle Christianity. But so have I seen the sun with a little ray of distant light challenge all the power of darkness, and, without violence and noise, climbing up the hill, hath made night so to retire, that its memory was lost in the joys and sprightfulness of the morning. And Christianity, without violence or armies, without resistance and self-preservation, without strength or human eloquence, ... with its humility and meekness, with toleration and patience, with obedience and charity, with praying and dying, did insensibly turn the world into Christian, and persecution into victory. (Matt. xii. 19, 20; Rev. xix. 16.)"—*Bishop Taylor.*

20. † And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast.

*Acts xvii. 4. †1 Kings viii. 41, 42; Acts viii. 27.

These "certain Greeks" were probably of those Gentiles—of whom Cornelius is a specimen (Acts x. 1)—who had embraced the truth respecting Jehovah, the only true God, as taught in the Jewish Scriptures, and observed what were termed the

seven Noachian precepts against idolatry, profanity, incest, murder, dishonesty, eating blood and things strangled, and allowing a murderer to live—but had not formally enrolled themselves among the Jews. In the time of our Lord, this seems to have been a considerably numerous class.

21. The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. 22. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew : and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. 23. And Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified."

vi. 44. *xiii. 32 and xvii. 1.

Bethsaida. There, perhaps, those Greeks had been wont to lodge on their journey to Jerusalem. *Sir.* They address Philip thus, with sentiments of respect. *We would see Jesus.* "We would count it a great favor if you could bring us into His presence." This desire was of a higher character than Herod's. (Luke xxiii. 8.) These men from the West represent, at the end, what those from the East did at the beginning of Christ's life. But these come to the cross, as those came to the cradle. Jesus is as really present, though in a spiritual and invisible manner at all the sacred festivals appointed by God, as He was at the Jewish Passover. *Philip cometh,* &c. Philip first consults with Andrew, apparently through a doubt, whether it would be proper to bring uncircumcised persons into the presence of their Master, after the inhibition He had formerly given them. (Matt. x. 5, 6.) Jesus then thought proper to declare that the time was approaching, when there was to be no difference between the Jew and the Greek; but that the same Lord was to be "rich unto all that call upon Him," and that all were to be "One in Christ Jesus." . . . He seems to have viewed their application to be admitted into His presence, as an earnest of the flowing-in of all the Gentiles to Him. *The hour is come,* said He, *that the Son of man should be glorified;* and, if His hearers made a suitable use of this doctrine, they may have been instrumental on their return home in disposing the hearts of their countrymen to receive the saving truths, which the messengers of the Gospel would shortly propose to their acceptance. Thus, we find in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles, that the Greeks are frequently mentioned by name among the

heathen converts, as having embraced the proffered mercy of God. (Acts xiv. 1, xvi. 1, xvii. 4; Gal. ii. 3.)

24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

*1 Cor. xv. 36.

From our Lord's connecting this parable with what He says of the glorifying of Himself in the preceding verse, it is evident that if His great work was to be finished in redeeming the lost, and bringing many sons and daughters unto righteousness, it could alone be through death. In death He becomes the principle of our life. When Jesus went down to the grave He went *alone*—He by Himself "endured the grief and despised the shame"—"of the people, there was none with Him." A solitary being, a spectacle to men and angels, He hung for a brief period on the accursed tree, and then disappeared in the grave. Then it was that His work obtained its full reward. He rose again, like the bright, fresh, green blade which rises from the ground where the corn of wheat lay, telling that death was resolved into life; and when at length the harvest time shall come, He will be found like the corn of wheat which has passed through its stages, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear, to be no longer "alone," but to have brought forth "much fruit."

A grain of corn, as is well known, multiplies by yielding other grains like itself. If, therefore, Jesus be compared to seed, and He be sown to multiply, He will produce others like Himself. If barley be sown, barley comes up, if wheat be sown, wheat appears, if Christ be sown, Christians are brought forth. They are predestinated to be conformed to Him; and as "they have borne the image of the earthy, they must also bear the image of the heavenly." Here, indeed, the likeness is not complete—but it will be perfect in due time. There is one thing here which will afford the benevolent mind a delicious pleasure—the largeness of the crop—"much fruit." Jesus is leading "many sons unto glory," and when He has collected them all together, they will be found "a great multitude which no man can number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues."

25. "He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

^aMatt. x. 29 and xvi. 25; Mark viii. 35; Luke ix. 24 and xvii. 33.

Jesus applied to His disciples the general rule, that, if a person should love life on earth so much that he would not part with it for His sake, he would lose eternal life, and that, if a person should love *Him* more than life on earth, so as to be willing to expose himself to death for the sake of the Saviour, he would secure life eternal. (See notes on the parallel passages referred to.) So far was Christ from all customary and popular methods of courting and complimenting those who came to Him, in order to make proselytes, that His usual practice was rather to repel them, at least for a time, that they might have leisure to examine their motives, and to count the cost of following a rejected Master and a persecuted religion. This is not what an impostor would have done. (vi. 15, 25, 26; Luke viii. 4, 5, xiv. 25-33.)

26. If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

^{xiv.} 3 and xvii. 21; 1 Thes. iv. 17.

Jesus here claims the same absolute subjection to Himself, as the law of men's exaltation to honor, as He yielded to the Father. The clause, *if any man serve me*, (*i. e.*, would enter into my service), is twice expressed, first with the duty, and then with the promise. *Follow me*—imitate my example, and endure suffering and even death itself, to promote that cause for which I am about to lay down my life—this is his duty and his interest. *Honour*—reward gloriously. These words were remarkably fulfilled in the death of Stephen, the first martyr.

27. "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

^aMatt. xxvi. 38, 39; Luke xii. 50; chap. xliii. 21. ^cLuke xxii. 53; chap. xviii. 37.

Now is my soul troubled, &c. This sentence implies a sudden, strong mental agony which came over our Lord, troubling, distressing, and harassing Him. What was it from? Not from the mere foresight of a painful death on the cross, and the bodily suffering attending it. No doubt human nature, even when sinless, naturally revolts from pain and suffering. Yet mere bodily pain has been endured for weeks by many a martyr without a

groan or a murmur. No! it was the weight of the world's imputed sin laid upon our Lord's head, which pressed Him downward, and made Him cry, "now is my soul troubled." Let us notice here the reality of Christ's substitution for us. He was made "a curse" for us, and sin for us, and He felt it for a time most deeply. (Gal. iii. 13; 2 Cor. v. 21.)

And what shall I say, &c. The Saviour speaks as one in a strait, as if struggling between inclination and conviction, His feeling and His work. There is no real difficulty here. He was human as well as Divine, and the Godhead did not absorb the humanity, or change its attributes. The Word was made flesh, and had all the passions and infirmities of our nature, sin only excepted. But suffering in itself can never be agreeable to our nature—for then it would be no longer suffering. If therefore we submit to it, it is not from pleasure, but for some reason or purpose. This reluctance, instead of being inconsistent with submission, serves to enhance it, and is even necessary to it. There is no resignation in giving up what we do not value. In our Saviour's mode of expressing His acquiescence in the event, observe two things concerning His death: 1. It was not casual: *For this cause*, &c. It was written in the volume of the book. It was a covenant transaction. He assumed a body and entered our world for the very design. He became incarnate to die. 2. It was voluntary: *Came I unto this hour*. He was not compelled or deceived into the business, but as it was foreappointed, so He foreknew and foresaw it, and acted from independence and choice. He loved us and gave Himself for us.

28. Father, glorify thy name. "Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.—^aMatt. iii. 17.

Glorify thy name. As if Jesus had said, "If my sufferings will be for Thine honor, let them fall upon me, regardless of my feelings." Did He then question this? By no means. His language is rather the expression of confidence. "I know that my death will infallibly and infinitely advance Thy praise, and therefore I cheerfully bow to Thy pleasure." In the scheme of redemption through the Cross of Christ, the brightest form of the Divine glory

shines. *Then came there a voice*, &c. Thrice was the Divine voice heard from heaven: first, at our Lord's baptism, when He seems to have been specially designated to His *Priestly* office: next at His transfiguration, when, by the departure of Moses and Elijah, He was discovered as the great *Prophet* of His people: lastly, on the present occasion, when He is not only revealed to Zion as her *King*, and beholds the first fruits of those Gentiles who should hereafter press so largely into His kingdom, but is invested, although in mockery, with all the insignia of royalty, and wears His title ("the King of the Jews") upon the very cross.

I have both glorified it, &c. Reference is had to the glorification of the Father in and through the Son, the relation between them being so intimate and essential, that the glory of the one was that also of the other. In all the revelations and manifestations of the invisible God, made by Jesus Christ, especially in the days of His incarnation, the Divine name had been glorified, and thus it would continue to be in the perfected results of the redemptive economy throughout the ages of eternity. *I have and will*, has a tone which comprehends all the past and the future.

^{29.} The people therefore that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

Some, who stood at a distance, hearing only a sound, said, *it thundered*, others who heard an articulate, but to them unintelligible voice, said, *an angel spake to him*. Not concealing the doubts of the people, is an evidence of John's veracity. If the Evangelists had wished to deceive, they might, perhaps, have related that thunder was a voice from heaven to Christ, but they could never have related that any said that a voice to Christ was thunder. Here is a refutation of rationalism.

^{30.} Jesus answered and said, "This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes."—Chap. xi. 42.

This voice came not, &c. That is, not for my sake, as though I needed such a testimony from heaven for my own satisfaction, *but for your sakes*, that ye, hearing the voice, may believe that *the Father hath sent me*. (Comp. chap. xi. 42.)

^{31.} Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.
Matt. xii. 29; Luke x. 18; chap. xiv. 30 and xvi. 11; Acts xxv. 18; 2 Cor. iv. 4; Eph. ii. 2 and vi. 12.

Now is the judgment of this world—the world that "crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. ii. 8), considered as a vast and complicated kingdom of Satan, breathing his spirit, doing his work and involved in his doom, which Christ's death by its hands irrevocably sealed. *Now shall the prince*, &c. How differently is that fast-approaching "hour" regarded in the kingdoms of darkness and of light! "The hour of relief from the dread Troubler of our peace—how near it is! Yet a little moment and the day is ours!" So it was calculated and felt in one region. "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out," is a somewhat different view of the same event. We know who was right. Though yet under a veil, He sees the triumphs of the cross in unclouded and transporting light.

^{32.} And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. ^{33.} This he said, signifying what death he should die.
siii. 14 and viii. 23. ¹ Rom. v. 13; Heb. ii. 9. ² xviii. 32.

If (or, when) I be lifted up, &c. Christ's being lifted up on the cross, and dying the death of the vilest malefactor, was done, as we are expressly told, "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," in order that His outward condition might fitly correspond with His real state, as being made a curse for us, that we might inherit a blessing. Jesus lifted up on the cross is, in other words, the Lord of glory bearing in His own person the awful curse due to our sins, and yielding Himself up as a willing victim to that death, which, through eternity, we had deserved to die. *Will draw all men unto me*. The drawing here intended, if it may not altogether and exclusively be understood of a friendly attachment, a drawing with sweet constraint and love, must certainly be viewed as mainly intending that. Our Lord's connecting this drawing with His being lifted up or crucified, imports, 1. That such must have been the design of His crucifixion. It was "for the joy that was set before Him"—the joy, namely, of being the author of eternal redemption to all that should believe on His name—for that joy "he endured the cross, despising the shame." 2. That there was a fitness in Christ's being lifted up for drawing all men unto Him, or that His crucifixion was the most apt, powerful and effective means for pro-

ducing such a result, as the drawing of men to Him. 3. That there is a power going along with Christ's dying on the cross, sufficient absolutely to secure the end in view.

The general idea which the passage embodies, on being carefully considered in the light of other Scripture declarations, will be found to imply in it three things: Christ's making all men, without exception, the subjects of His Mediatorial government, His making all men, without exception the objects of the invitations of His Gospel, and His making all whom the Father has given Him—and who are a vast multitude, Gentiles as well as Jews—men of all ages, conditions and characters—of every kindred, and people, and tongue, and nation—partakers of the blessings of salvation. All these, though not in the same way, our Lord draws to Himself in consequence of His being lifted up from the earth. It is right to remark that the word *men* is a supplement; the original words are, "I will draw *all* to me."

34. The people answered him, "We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?" 35. Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. 36. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

†Ps. lxxxix. 36, 37 and ex. 4; Isa. ix. 7 and liii. 8; Ezek. xxxvii. 23; Dan. ii. 44 and vii. 14, 27; Mt. iv. 7. †vii. 38, ix. 4. †Jer. xiii. 16; Eph. v. 8. †xi. 10; 1 John ii. 11. †Luke xvi. 8; Eph. v. 8; 1 Thes. v. 5; 1 John ii. 9, 10, 11. †viii. 59 and xl. 54.

Christ abideth forever. "Christ" is but the Greek form of the Jewish word *Messiah*, and these people had cherished the interpretation of the *law*, that is, of the Old Testament, that the Messiah should come, establish a kingdom, and reign forever. The question, *Who is this Son of man?* in all probability means, "Who, and what kind of a person dost Thou claim to be, calling Thyself the Son of man, and yet talking of being lifted up on the cross? Dost Thou mean that one and the same person can be a dying person, and yet also the eternal Christ? Dost Thou claim to be the eternal Christ, and yet talk of being lifted up on a cross? Explain this apparent contradiction, for we cannot understand it." It is just the old story over again. The Jews could not and would not understand that Messiah was to suffer as well as to

reign, to die as a sacrifice as well as to appear in glory.

Then Jesus said unto them, &c. Instead of answering the cavils of the people, our Lord gave them a solemn warning. He saw with sorrow that they were wasting the *little* time during which they would enjoy His instructions. He exhorts them to make a faithful use of His presence. (viii. 21.) *Darkness*, the period when the salvation is no longer personally among them—the result of which is that the footstep is no longer secure. *Children of light*, used also, Luke xvi. 8 (on which see notes) a Hebraistic designation of the relation of dependence, as the child is dependent on the mother. *Did hide himself from them*, is meant to designate only His withdrawal from *public* labors. Our time for getting good is short and limited, let us take heed that we make good use of it.

37. ¶ But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: 38. That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, "Lord, who hath believed our report?" and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? 39. Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, 40. "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. 41. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

†Isa. liii. 1; Rom. x. 16. †Isa. vi. 9, 10; Matt. xiii. 14, 15. †Isa. vi. 1.

It is the manner of this Evangelist alone to record his own reflections on the scenes he describes, but here, having arrived at what was virtually the close of our Lord's public ministry, he casts an affecting glance over the fruitlessness of His whole ministry on the bulk of the now doomed people. *That the saying of Esaias, &c.* The prophecy was not the *motive*, or the *cause* of their wickedness; in other words, the unbelief of the Jews did not happen because it was foretold, but it was foretold as something which it was known by the Spirit of inspiration would take place, and which actually did take place, precisely as it was foretold. *Our report*, our instruction. *The arm of the Lord been revealed.* This phrase may allude to the habit generally worn by the Easterns, and especially by persons of rank, which was a long robe without sleeves, so that when the *arm* was stretched out to perform any action requiring strength, it would appear *uncovered*. (Comp. Isa. liii. 1.) In this connection it seems strongly to imply, that whenever

true faith is produced in the mind, it is to be considered as the effect of a *divine energy*. (See Eph. i. 19 and Col. ii. 12.)

They could not believe, not from want of physical, but moral ability—they would not. If a man willfully shuts his eyes against the truth, God may seal those rebel eyes in a confirmed blindness. *Because that Esaias said again, &c.* (See on Matt xiii. 10–15.) It is evident that the Evangelist was far from intending to say, that the inability to believe was superinduced and caused in order that the prediction of the prophet might be accomplished, still less that the miracles in question were wrought with a view to incredulity on the part of those who should witness them. We are to suppose that the fact of their unbelief is represented to bespeak a state of mind and heart which rendered them the awful examples of such blindness and insensibility as the prophet foretold.

He hath blinded their eyes, &c. In all ancient languages, especially the Hebrew, any one is often said to do anything, who tells, narrates, and shows a thing to be, or be done, and thus verbs active are to be understood *declaratively*. (Comp. 2 Kings i. 16.) The meaning, therefore, of Isa. vi. 10, is this: Go, show and *declare* to the people that their heart is heavy, &c., equivalent to, "This people's heart is gross," &c. And so the Sept. have expressed it, and have been followed by Matthew and Luke. But John expresses it simply, "He hath blinded," &c., without adding *who* has done so, which may be understood from Isaiah, for he who is *taxed* with blindness must be the *author* of his blindness.

These things said Esaias, &c. These words, when compared with the place in which the prophecy occurs, are a direct testimony to the Divinity of our blessed Lord. Isaiah has a vision of the Lord in His glory. How divinely glorious it was!—"the smoke, the hearing unutterable mysteries, the beholding the Seraphim, the lightning which leapt from the throne, against which those powers could not look." But the main point in Isaiah's heavenly vision is, that there he had a glimpse of the glory which Christ had with His Father before the world was. It was *Christ's* glory which

Isaiah saw in heavenly vision, for, if the words "his glory," are not to be understood of Christ, what use have they, or what purpose do they serve? What need is there for the Evangelist to tell us here that Isaiah then saw the glory of God the Father, and spake of Him? The prophet tells us it was the glory of the Lord, Jehovah, God over all: our Evangelist tells us it was the glory of *Christ*. The conclusion is inevitable, that Christ is God. Isaiah's vision of God's glory, and John's testimony to Christ's Divinity, here meet. As the Evangelist here applies the prophet's words to Christ, and the Apostle (Acts xxviii. 25–27) speaks of the same words as proceeding from the Holy Ghost, we have thus a testimony to the Holy and Undivided Trinity.

42. Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: 43. For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.—vii. 13 and ix. 22. wv. 54.

The Scripture, says an old writer, hath observed very justly, that "as the fining pot for silver and the furnace for gold, so is a man in his *praise*" (Prov. xxvii. 21.) This tries him thoroughly, and soon discovers, whether his virtue be true standard, or of a base alloy. For, as metal, if it be good, is not hurt, but purified, by the fire, but, if bad, turns into dross and fume, so is a good or bad man affected with commendations. How many do we see puffed up and even transported beyond all sober sense by a general applause; and as dejected and despicably melancholy again by contempt and a common cry going against them. What more extravagant, more absurd, than to neglect the service of God, for anything the world will say, or think of us? What will it signify to us in the next life how people censure or commend us here? Allow this but one serious and impartial thought, and then I will venture to appeal to thine own conscience, whether the world and the love of it, in this respect, be not the very abstract of vanity itself. (Matt. x. 28; Acts iv. 19, 20; 1 Cor. iv. 3.) A Christian, observes another, runs greater hazard from commendation than from calumny. (Prov. xvii. 3.)

44. ¶ Jesus cried and said, ¶ He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

¶ Matt. ix. 37; 1 Peter i. 21.

This final summary of the public testimony of Jesus to the Jews, consists mainly of memoranda collected from His various teachings. *Believeth not on me*—not on me simply as man, but as the incarnation of Jehovah, of the Jehovah seen in vision by Isaiah.

45. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.
*Chap. xiv. 9.

This is an advance on the declaration of the preceding verse. Not only was a belief in the Son a belief also in the Father who sent Him, but also the sight of the one was that also of the other. There is not the shadow of doubt that reference is had here to actual vision, such as Isaiah had been favored with, and such as was vouchsafed to all who had seen Jesus with the bodily eye.

46. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.
*Verses 35, 36; chap. iii. 19, viii. 12 and ix. 5, 29.

It is here evidently implied that Jesus found the world in darkness, in which if men wish not to remain, they must believe on Him. He once said to His disciples, "ye are the light of the world" (Matt. v. 14) but He did not say, "*ye are come a light into the world*," &c. All Christians are lights, but they are so by faith—because they are enlightened by Him, from whom to withdraw is darkness. (See Col. i. 13; 1 Peter ii. 9.) Observe that the very form of the expression in this verse, shows, 1. That Christ existed before His incarnation, even as the sun exists before it appears above the eastern hills. 2. It is implied that He was the one Saviour of the world, as there is but one sun. 3. That He came not to one nation only, but to *all* (see chap. i. 9), even as the sun's "going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the end of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof." (Ps. xix. 6; see notes on parallel verses.)

47. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. 48. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

*Chap. v. 45 and viii. 15, 26. bChap. iii. 17. cLuke x. 16. dDeut. xviii. 19; Mark xvi. 16.

Here two periods are distinctly spoken of, a present and a future. The meaning is, not that Christ will never judge, but that He judges or condemns not now.

Now is the time of mercy. The Lord's first advent was in great humility to save. (See iii. 17.) Happy those who timely hearken unto His words and believe in Him. But there is also, as the Lord goes on to say, a time of justice. The day is coming when He shall come in His glorious majesty to judge both the quick and dead. But though He shall be the Judge of all, for this place by no means excludes Him from that office, yet the work, so to speak, shall be already done. As we say of a manifestly-guilty and justly-convicted criminal, even before the judge opens his mouth to pass upon him the awful sentence of the law, that he is self-condemned, so the word of Christ shall be the witness in that dreadful day. In that time of trial, at the great assize, it shall be produced, and the sinner's life shall be reproduced, and be put side by side to see how they tally. (See Prov. i. 23-31.) The *day*, thus designated, signifies a portion of duration set apart for the judgment, for which one might suppose an eternity would scarcely be too great, when we consider the immensity of the subject, and the multitude of the persons concerned. But we must recollect that God can in a moment let in such light as would equal what, according to our present ideas, it would require eternity to disclose, just as our Saviour could in a few moments impress on the woman of Samaria such a sense of His omniscience that she went away declaring, "He had told her all that she ever did," and demanded, "Is not this the Christ?" (Ps. l. 19-22, xc. 8.)

49. For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak.
*viii. 38 and xiv. 10. dDeut. xviii. 18.

Here Christ declares again that mighty truth which we find so often in this Gospel—the intimate union between Himself and His Father. "I have not spoken of myself, of my own independent mind, and without concert with my Father in heaven." (See on verse 50.) *Which sent me*. When we read of the Father "sending" Christ, and giving Christ a "commandment," we must carefully dismiss from our minds all idea of any inferiority to God the Father on the part of God the Son. The expressions are used in condescension

to our weak faculties, to convey the idea of perfect oneness. We are not speaking of the relation that exists between two human beings, like ourselves, but between the Persons in the Divine Trinity." The "*sending*" of the Son was the result of the eternal counsel of that blessed Trinity, in which Father, Son and Holy Ghost are co-equal and co-eternal. The eternal Son was as willing to be "sent" as the eternal Father was to "send" Him. The "*commandment*" given by the Father to the Son, as to what He should teach and do, was not a commandment in which the Son had no part but to obey. It was simply the charge or commission arranged in the covenant of redemption, by all Three Persons in the Trinity, which the Son was as willing to execute as the Father was willing to give.

50. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

I know. (See iii. 11, v. 32, vii. 29, viii. 14, 16, 55.) Our Lord, in all these passages, refers to personal, intuitive knowledge, not to that which He has received from Divine illumination or revelation, like the prophets and inspired writers of

the Old Testament. *His commandment.* (See on verse 49.) *Is life everlasting.* The commission or direction which the Father gave me, was intended to secure men's eternal happiness. It was *salvation*, then, for which Jesus was sent into the world. The instructions which He imparted were in accordance with this design, but if they are rejected, they will issue in the condemnation of men.

As the Father said . . . so I speak—and, therefore, rejecting my words is rejecting God's words, and rejecting me is rejecting God. When Israel, therefore, rejected Christ, she rejected the ancient Israel's God, and all history since proclaims that she is of God rejected. And this thus far concludes our Evangelist's history of the public ministry of Jesus to His countrymen and the world. It is a conclusion for weeping, and yet he is solemnly calm.

Through the remainder of this entire Gospel (xiii.-xxi.), being nearly half of the whole, we have Jesus' private ministry within his Apostolic college, until He comes forth for the sacrifice, with the consummation.

1. When did Jesus come to Bethany? 2. Who made Him a supper? 3. Who "served?" 4. What did Mary do? 5. What did Judas say? 6. State the reply of Jesus. 7. Why did many Jews come there? 8. What did the chief priests consult to do? 9. What took place when Jesus was coming to Jerusalem? 10. What is said about "certain Greeks?" 11. What did Jesus answer to Andrew and Philip? 12. How is verse 27 to be understood? 13. What did the voice from heaven say? 14. What did Christ say He would do when lifted up from the earth? 15. Explain verse 40. 16. Is believing on Christ believing on Him by whom He was sent? 17. Explain the words "his commandment is life everlasting."

CHAPTER XIII.

1 *Jesus washeth the disciples' feet: exhorteth them to humility and charity. 18 He foretelleth, and discovereth to John by a token, that Judas should betray him: 31 commandeth them to love one another, 36 and forewarneth Peter of his denial.*

NOW before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.—^aMatt. xxvi. 2. ^bxii. 23 and xvii. 1, 11.

The touching incident we are now to consider is said to have taken place *before the feast of the passover*, though indeed it was

on the very evening when they had just partaken together of the paschal lamb, type of that very Paschal Lamb to be offered on the morrow. But this is in strict accordance with Scripture phraseology, which commands that the lamb be slain and eaten on the evening of the fourteenth day, and yet calls the fifteenth day the first of the feast, the first of those seven holy days, the first day of that solemn week, which looked back on one deliver-

ance and looked forward to another; which had respect to a former signal interposition and to a future infinitely more so: a double commemoration, memorial of the escape from Egypt, type of the redemption from sin.

When Jesus knew, &c. So perfect was His foresight of the event, that He knew not only the fact itself, but the incidents attending it, and as He attempted not to escape, He evinced not only His wisdom, but His devotedness to His work. *That he should depart out of this world.* Jesus was in the world for thirty-three years. Many of His people are in it a shorter, and many a much longer period. It was a sad world to Him. It knew Him not, but hated and rejected Him, and could not be satisfied till it had shed His blood. And *they* find it a vain, deceitful injurious, vile and wicked world. *Unto the Father.* As Christ's death was "a going to the Father," so is that of His followers, that is, going to heaven, for the Father is there. *Having loved,* from the foundation of the world. (Eph. i. 4, 5, 11.) *His own,* is not to be restricted to His immediate disciples, but embraces all in every age who should believe on Him. (Comp. xvii. 24.) *Which were in the world, i. e.,* which belonged to the human race. *Unto the end,* to the end of His life. He persevered in giving them proofs of His love. Notwithstanding their imperfections, His love persisted even to His ascension, and remains forevermore. We should learn to strengthen our faith by the experience which we have already had of God's great goodness toward us; by those things which we have known performed, learn to hope for those things which are promised. "When you doubt what you shall have," says *Hooker*, "search what you have had at God's hands. Make this reckoning, that the benefits, which He hath bestowed, are bills obligatory, and sufficient sureties that He will bestow further. His present mercy is still a warrant of His future love, because *whom He loveth, He loveth unto the end.*" (Ps. xxiii. 6; 2 Tim. iv. 18; James iv. 6.)

2. And the supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him:—Luke xxii. 3: verse 27.

Supper being ended, rather, "supper being come," which is the sense in which the

word is often used elsewhere. (xxi. 4; Luke iv. 42; Acts xii. 18, xvi. 35, xxi. 40.) The supper was not ended, except as to the preparation of it. (See verses 26–28.) *The devil having, &c.* "Judas having now yielded to the temptations of the devil, and the enticements of his own covetous inclinations." (See notes on Matt. xxvi. 14–16 and Luke xxii. 3.) *Judas Iscariot, &c.* The dishonored name is given in full that he may never be confounded with any other of that name.

3. Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

4. Matt. xi. 27 and xxviii. 18; chap. iii. 35 and xvii. 2; Acts ii. 36; 1 Cor. xv. 27; Heb. ii. 8. cviii. 42, xvi. 28 and xvii. 8.

The truth that *the Father had given all things into his hands*—had intrusted Him with the redemption of a lost world, with all the glories of His character, all the interest of His government as involved in this—and with all the power and authority that are necessary to enable Him successfully to execute so high a trust, that *he was come from God*, that He was not only sent by Him, but had come from Him, from His bosom; and that through the appointed way of a complete expiation of the sins of men, by intense sufferings, bodily and mental, and a violent death, thus doing the will of God in the sacrifice of Himself, He was just about to return to His Father, and receive the rich reward of His generous interposition, this truth was full before the mind of Jesus. This observation of the Evangelist proves that to him the scene that follows appeared as one of the sublimest in the life of our Lord. "In fact," says *Tholuck*, "we might, in contemplating this scene, say with Claudius, such an ideal of man, as presents itself here, never entered the heart of man. Whatever of greatness and glory antiquity may present—a dying Epaminondas, a dying Socrates—vanishes before this ideal of Deity in humiliation, and of a divine form of a servant."

4. He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. 5. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6. Luke xxii. 27; Phil. iii. 7, 8.

The supper had been prepared, but was not yet eaten. (See on verse 2.) *His garments*—the *pallium*, the outer garment.

The Hebrews themselves expressed, as here, the pallium in the *plural* (for honor) as it was very wide and flowing. *Took a towel*, &c. To be thus girded was considered by the ancients in the same light as, with us, a person's wearing an *apron*, namely, as indicating the exercise of some servile or handicraft occupation. (See on Luke xxii. 26, 27.) *Poured water*, &c. This was the office of the lowest servants. *Began to wash*, &c. Not in the present instance alone did Jesus give us an example of service. In taking upon Him our nature, He did what is here represented, He "took upon Him the form of a servant," and even His precious blood He poured forth that therein He might wash us from our sins; that He might cleanse us with the washing of water by the word. Our Lord here teaches us, that it is our duty, in whatever station Providence shall place us in the world, to stoop to the lowest offices of love and service toward our brethren.

6. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? 7. Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. 8. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

^aMatt. iii. 14. ^bVerse 12. ^cIll. 5. ^d1 Cor. vi. 11; Eph. v. 26; Titus iii. 5; Heb. x. 22.

Peter's feelings, when he viewed Christ's dignity on the one hand, and his own insignificance on the other, revolted at the idea of having the work of a menial servant performed to him. The words "then cometh," &c., do not involve the idea that Peter was the first. Affecting scene! what believing heart can thus contemplate Jesus thus stooping to wash His disciples' feet, and not feel a glow of love kindled in his heart toward Him, and an ardent desire to imitate so lovely an example! When we think, too, of the circumstances under which this act of love was performed, our wonder and admiration is increased, for it was the same night in which He was betrayed, a night in which it might have been thought His own approaching trials would have engrossed His whole attention.

What I do thou knowest not now, &c. This intimation refers to the design of this washing, which was two-fold: first, exemplary—to enforce upon them condescension, humbleness of mind, brotherly

kindness. And, secondly, symbolical—to lead their minds impressively to things of a higher nature. In an extended sense we may apply this assuring sentence, "What I do thou knowest not now," &c. "Submit to all my dispensations. Believe that there is good reason, though for the time it be hidden from thine eyes." "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face: now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known."

"Till Death the weary spirit free,
Thy God hath said, 'Tis good for thee
To walk by faith and not by sight:
Take it on trust a little while;
Soon shalt thou read the mystery right
In the full sunshine of His smile."

Thou shalt never wash my feet. As though Peter had said, This is too much, and what I can never submit to! We may sin against Christ, under a show of modesty and reverence for His name. The resistance of Peter after he was assured that his Lord had a good reason for what He did, though he at present did not comprehend it, was setting up his own wisdom and will against His. *If I wash thee not*, &c. Though this declaration intends nothing less than the necessity of obedience in this instance, it surely comprehends much more. Jesus, therefore, now does not mention the washing of Peter's feet, but of Himself: if I wash thee not. And the threatening, "thou hast no part with me," seems too dreadful to be denounced against an unwillingness to comply with this ceremonial observance, which sprang from something good as well as evil in the Apostle, and was, therefore, a mixed action, a sin of infirmity. Besides, we know that our Saviour was accustomed to teach by facts and imagery, to pass from the body to the mind, to ascend from particular hints to general truths, and to express more than is immediately perceived, in order that it might be discovered by repeated meditation, or illustrated by subsequent events. Jesus stood ready to wash Peter, and stands ready to wash the foulest of sinners.

9. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head. 10. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11. For the knew who should betray him, therefore said he, ye are not all clean. 12. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done unto you? 13. ^aYe call me Master and Lord: and ye say well, for so I am.

^bLxx. 3. ^cIvi. 64. ^dMatt. xxiii. 8; Luke vi. 46; 1 Cor. viii. 6 and xii. 3; Phil. ii. 11.

Lord, not my feet only, &c. "Let me be entirely washed by Thee, that I may have full participation with Thee." Peter's apprehensions were indistinct, but his love was fervent. He was ready to do or submit to anything, rather than be excluded from having part and lot in Christ, and in His salvation. *He that is washed needeth not, &c.* Reference is had to the washing of the whole body in the bath. The full bath was taken before the principal meal, and when this was done, there was no necessity for further ablutions, except to remove the defilement contracted by the feet, as the person walked about the house. Here is the very point of the resemblance. Peter had given evidence that he had been subject to this moral cleansing, there was no need, therefore, that he should be regenerated anew, thenceforward he would need only that cleansing process, which was well represented in bodily purification by the washing of the feet. The cleansing which takes place at the commencement of the Christian life, or in justification and regeneration, embraces complete absolution from sin as a guilty state, and entire deliverance from it as a polluted life. (Rev. i. 5; 1 Cor. vi. 11.) This cleansing is effected *once for all*, and is never repeated. But Christians, from their contact with earth, require another cleansing, here described as that of "the feet." It is this cleansing which we are taught to seek *daily*, when in the spirit of adoption, we say, "Our Father which art in heaven—*forgive us our debts*;" and, when burdened with the sense of manifold shortcomings, as what tender spirit of a Christian is not? is it not a relief to be permitted thus to wash our feet after a day's contact with the earth?

Ye are clean. Peter and the great body of the disciples were genuine believers in Christ, and therefore sanctified in Christ, purified by Christ, devoted to Christ. They were sincere, but far they were from being perfect. They were clean—clean through the word which Jesus had spoken, and they had believed—so clean, as not to need to be wholly washed anew. *But not all.* These words were added by our Lord, if so be He might thus reach the seared conscience of the covetous, insincere, unloving

one, to touch, and, if it might be, to turn that traitor's heart. *For he knew, &c.* Jesus knew who was about to betray Him, for He "searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men." *Therefore said he, &c.* Christ had, in all probability, washed the feet of all the twelve, but as no external ablutions can purify a hypocrite or a traitor, therefore Judas still remained unclean. By not naming the traitor, our Lord left him space for repentance before He exposed his secret wickedness to his brethren, and brought down on himself swift and fearful destruction. *Was set down again*—had reclined again at the supper. *Know ye—do ye understand?* *Master and Lord*, literally, *the Master and the Lord*, using the titles as the disciples applied them to Him. After this mystically preparing and sanctifying the Apostles for the work of the ministry, and consecrating them as "Holy unto the Lord," well may we speak of them, saying, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. x. 15; Eph. vi. 15.)

14. "If then, *your Lord and Master*, have washed your feet, *ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*"
 *Luke xxii. 37. *Rom. xii. 10; Gal. vi. 1, 2; 1 Peter v. 6.

It is evident that this *mode* of expressing our love one to another, was not intended by Christ as a *permanent* law, but a direction adapted to the prevailing custom of the people to whom it was originally given. That the Apostles did not take Christ's words in a literal sense, is clear, since this washing was neither observed by them, nor by the primitive Christians. The Saviour intended that His disciples should behave toward one another as He had behaved toward them: who, though He "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," had become their servant (see Matt. xxiii. 1-12), who though He was rich, yet for their sakes had become poor, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Thus they should imitate that spirit which would stoop, if needful, to this or any other act of charity, set to the surrounding pagans that sublime example, and draw from a wondering world, as we know it did, the just exclamation, "See how these Christians love!"

15. For *pl* have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.
 pMatt. xi. 29; Phil. ii. 5; 1 Peter ii. 21; 1 John ii. 6.

The word rendered *example*, literally signifies, a *sign, form, pattern*, consisting in some outward manifestation. *That ye should do*, &c. The literal order of construction is, *that as I did* (in the original the aorist tense is employed) *to you, you also may do* to one another. It is to be noted that the language is not, *what I did* to you, ye also must do, &c. Identity of act is not the thing enjoined, but identity of spirit and temper: *as I did to you*, &c., that is, "you should exercise the same humility and love which I have manifested in this act. It is needless to say that this example, in its spirit, is binding upon the followers of Jesus in every age and land. We are to serve the saints on earth, even to the performance of the lowliest offices.

16. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.*

qMatt. x. 21; Luke vi. 40; chap. xv. 20.

The servant is not greater, &c. If the master has condescended to perform such an act, surely the servant ought not to think it beneath him. Let us be less disposed to criticise the defects of those around us, and more anxious and active for their rectification. Let him who cannot bear with the folly and the vileness of sinners, look upward to Christ: if the Holy One of God could bear with Judas so long, and continue to the last the manifestation of kindness, mingled with all needful warning and reproof, if still He is dealing in this manner with us, then ought we to deal tenderly with each other.

17. *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*—James i. 25.

If ye know do. If this lesson has entered your understanding, cease all strife for predominancy, and only surpass in service to each other. Knowledge, obedience and happiness, are essential elements of true piety. "He doth not only sin by not doing good, but he sins also by knowing how to do it, and yet not doing it; and so is guilty of a double sin, one, in neglecting his duty, as it is commanded by God, and another in neglecting it, although he himself knows it to be his duty. And, by consequence, he sins both against God and his own conscience too, and will fare ac-

cordingly in the other world, where it will be more tolerable for those that never heard of the Word of God, than for such as heard it, and yet refused to conform their faith and actions to it. (ix. 40, 41; James i. 12.)" It is love alone, interposed between knowledge and duty, which completes the spiritual circle of Christianity. (ix. 21.)

18. *I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.*—Ps. xli. 9; Matt. xxvi. 23; verse 21.

The words, *I speak not of you all*, are equivalent to, "what I have said about your being washed by me, and having part in me—of your being clean, of your being my disciples and servants, of your knowing these things, doing these things, and being happy in knowing and doing them—is true of the great body of you, but it is not true of every individual among you." *I know whom I have chosen.* Some understand this thus: "I know who the persons are that are ultimately to be saved by me, and I know that though the greater part of you do, you do not all belong to that number. There can be no doubt that our Lord did know the chosen ones, them who were "chosen in Him before the foundation of the world," by the Father. But this cannot be the truth here taught. It cannot be supposed that it was our Lord's purpose to furnish Judas with an apology for his crime, by telling him that he was not one of the chosen of God, and, therefore, whatever he did or did not do, salvation was to him impossible—perdition was certain. With the great body of Christian interpreters, therefore, we consider the choosing here referred to, as being the choosing to the Apostleship, as Jesus said elsewhere, "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (vi. 70, 71.) Our Lord had chosen them all to this office, and He knew the hearts of all whom He had chosen, and He knew that among them there was one unsound, insincere, covetous, a traitor, ready to betray, only waiting for opportunity.

He that eateth bread with me. To eat with one was a proof of friendship. (See 2 Sam. ix. 11; Matt. ix. 11; Gen. xliii. 32.) This means that Judas had been admitted to all the privileges of friendship, and had

partaken of the usual evidences of His affection. These words of David (Ps. xli. 9), are supposed to have been originally uttered in reference to the treachery of Ahithophel toward him. (See 2 Sam. xv. 12, 31.) But we learn from this passage, that they were spoken prophetically of the treachery of Judas toward Christ, of whom David was a type. *Hath lifted up his heel*, &c. The metaphor is supposed to be taken from an animal of such vicious propensities, that it suddenly turns and kicks at its owner, even when he is treating it with kindness, and perhaps proffering it its accustomed food. Thus insidiously did Judas, like Ahithophel of old, plot the ruin of one, to whom he should have felt himself bound by the strongest ties of gratitude and love.

19. Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.

*xix. 29 and xvi. 4.

"The end of prophecy is," says *Bishop Horsley*, "not to give curious men a knowledge of futurity, but to be, in its completion, an evidence of God's all-ruling Providence, who, if He governed not the world, could not possibly foretell the wants of distant ages. It is gradually to clear up, as the events should approach, and acquire *from* the events, when brought to pass, the most entire perspicuity; that thus men might remain in that ignorance of futurity, which so suits with the whole of our condition, that it seems essential to the welfare of the world, and yet be overwhelmed at last with evident demonstrations of the power of God. (ii. 22, xvi. 1-4.)

20. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. 21. "When Jesus had thus said, He was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. 22. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. "Matt. x. 40 and xxv. 40; Luke x. 16. "Matt. xxvi. 21; Mark xiv. 18; Luke xxii. 21. "xii. 27. "Acts i. 17; 1 John ii. 19.

Verily, verily, &c. Jesus returns, after the sad parenthesis (verse 18), to the main subject from which He had digressed, resuming it with the usual solemn formula. And, inasmuch as what He had said to His Apostles, had partaken of the nature of rebuke and warning, He proceeds to comfort them with words of strength and consolation. *Receiveth whomsoever I send*, &c. The fulfillment of my prediction, in

the treason of Judas, proves that your commission is from the Son of God; and the truth remains sure, that he who *receiveth you* whom I send, receiveth the Son of God, and receiveth the Father who *sent* Him. (See on Matt. x. 40.) *Troubled in spirit*. Again does the image of the dark treason of Judas arise before the mind of the Saviour, and again the agitations which lately had so frequently shaken his human spirit now return. (See on xii. 27.) There is a melancholy emphasis upon the word "*you*." One of you, of whom I have just been speaking, *shall betray me*, shall take advantage of your intimacy with me, and knowledge of my ways and my whereabouts to guide the enemy to my retirement, and deliver me into the hands of those who seek to take my life. *The disciples looked one on another*, &c. (See on Matt. xxv. 22.) The mention of the manner in which the disciples received this startling announcement is most natural. Their minds had been so full of what He had just done for them, that His former statement concerning this sad and shameful deed seems to have fallen upon the ear in vain, or to have passed unheeded. From the doubtful glances which they exchanged one with another, it appears that however deep-seated was the meanness and covetousness of Judas, he had hitherto managed to conceal it from his fellows, and had indulged his sinful propensity in secret, or that it was not yet sufficiently developed to attract their notice.

23. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. 24. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. 25. He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

*xix. 26, xx. 2 and xxi. 7, 20, 24.

Leaning, rather, according to the original, "*lying in Jesus' bosom*," *i. e.*, reclining at table in the place which was next to and immediately in front of our Lord. This situation was one chiefly assigned to near and dear connections. *Whom Jesus loved*. John was the youngest of the disciples, and without claiming any proud pre-eminence, he tenderly remembers that Jesus had for him a peculiar love. He was the youngest, tenderest, feeblest lamb of the flock. "Jesus did not love John more than the rest, with His infinite, eternal, saving love," says *Dr. Lightfoot*, "but

He favored him more with some outward kindness, and more intimate friendship and familiarity. And why? because John had promised that he would take care of Christ's mother after His death. For the words of our Saviour upon the cross to John do carry a fair probability with them, that *that* was not the first time that John heard of such a matter, but that long before he had so promised." *Beckoned*, with a motion of the head, *i. e.*, "nodded," made signs to John, who was so placed as to inquire without being heard by the rest. Between John and Peter there seems to have been a strong friendship. We find them continually, as here, associated together. *Lord, who is it?* This was asked privately. (Comp. verses 28, 29.)

26. Jesus answered, He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. 27. And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. 28. Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. 29. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast, or, that he should give something to the poor. 30. He then, having received the sop, went immediately out: and it was night.

²⁶Luke xxii. 3; chap. vi. 70. ^{exil.} 6.

He it is, &c. It appears from this that Judas must have taken his place at the table so as to be near to the Lord. This brings the prophecy more home—"Who did eat of my bread?" (Verse 18.) This answer of our Lord was probably returned in the same undertone in which the question was proposed to him. *Dipped the sop, &c.* Here we must understand that after the second cup of wine at the paschal feast, the father of the family took a piece of unleavened bread, broke it into pieces, and gave a bit to each of those present, commonly dipping it first in the broth. Our Lord took one of these morsels, as He said these words, and dipping it in the dish, gave it to Judas.

Judas had, doubtless, observed and construed these successive movements, and deeming himself marked out to the other Apostles, and Satan now entering into him for the last time, his heart became filled with wrath, and fancying that now at last he had some justification for his conduct, he cast all remorseful thoughts to the winds, and became fixed in his fell and traitorous purpose.

Observing that this was the man's state

of mind, Jesus could no longer endure his presence. He wished to declare to His beloved ones the anguish He felt at parting with them, to comfort them in that sad prospect, and to declare to them the great blessings which His death would work out for the race of man. This He could not do in the presence of one whose contemplated act was to be the proximate cause of all this anguish, and whose heart was alien from His and theirs. He therefore told him to depart. "*That thou doest, do quickly,*"—words which the traitor, and John, and Peter could construe aright, but from which the other Apostles, still in their simple-mindedness, concluded only that he had been sent to make some further preparations for the festival, or to take some alms to the poor. Even Peter and John may not have supposed that the treasons of Judas were so near at hand.

The statement that Judas "went out" is full of awful meaning. In departing from that upper chamber, he, like Cain, "went out from the presence of the Lord," cast himself forth from what was a type of "the Marriage Supper of the Lamb"—a scene of light and joy, into the image of that "outer darkness," which is spoken of in the Gospel as the portion of the damned. *It was night.* What a moral is here, and what a fine tragic effect has the mention of this simple incident! (Ps. civ. 20.) Darkness, the short twilight of the East, closes upon them, and shuts in the gloomy scene. A fitting time for such a deed! A fit type of what was about to be done! Literally, the traitor loved darkness rather than light, because his deeds were evil (chap. iii. 19, 20), ready subject of the ruler of the darkness of this world.

Note, 1. Satan, who from an angel became a devil, would easily teach an Apostle how to become an apostate and a traitor. But he could not teach him how to betray the religion of Christ, when he betrayed Christ Himself. Neither could they, who put Christ to death, extinguish that religion. On the contrary, by so doing, they took the only way that could be taken to perfect the great work and to establish it in the world. 2. As after the sop Satan entered into Judas, so by the believing reception of the holy elements

of bread and wine Christ enters into the hearts of His people, becomes the food and nourishment of their souls; He diffuses Himself through all their faculties, and animates them with His life and Spirit, that it may not be any more they, but "Christ that liveth in them." 3. From verse 29 we learn that charity to the poor was an habitual characteristic of our Lord's life, although known only to the Apostles and to the recipients of His bounty. That bounty seems to have passed into the Church, as the mark of a true disciple (Gal. ii. 10), having been sealed and sanctified, as by the Lord's example, so by those ever-memorable posthumous words of His, which seem to stand as a ninth Beatitude. (Acts xx. 35.)

31. Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him."

Exil. 23. xiv. 13; 1 Peter iv. 11.

He whose spirit was just now so troubled at the dark side of events before Him, now rises into exultation at the glory that crowns the darkness. Again the entire scenes of crucifixion and ascension are concentrated and brought into a *now*, and the whole is seen to be a *glory*. *God is glorified in him*. Never was the glory of God so displayed as when Jesus expired on the cross; hence this event was typified from the foundation of the world, the whole Gospel is called the preaching of the cross, an ordinance is established to show it forth, the praises of the heavenly state regard the Lamb as worthy, because He was slain, and the angels desire to look into these things, as discovering more of the perfections of Deity, than is to be seen in nature and Providence.

32. "If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him."

Exil. 1, 4, 5, 6. Exil. 23.

The "if" here is not conditional, but expressive of a fact which is as a stepping-stone to another fact. *God shall also*—in return and reward of this highest of all services ever rendered to Him, or capable of being rendered, *glorify him in himself*, referring to the resurrection and exaltation of Christ after this service was over, including all the honor and glory then put upon Him, and that will forever encircle Him as the Head of the new creation.

33. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come, so now I say to you.

vii. 34 and viii. 21.

The endearing appellation, *Little children*, given by Christ to His disciples, expresses the tender affection which He bears them, though now upon the point of departing from them. Whatever Christ's dealings are, or may be, with His people in respect of His removing and withdrawing from them, yet He still retains the relation of Father to them, and will in His absence from them exercise such a care over them as parents have of their young and tender children. *As I said unto the Jews*. Though Jesus said to the disciples the same thing as He said to the Jews (vii. 34, viii. 21), yet it was not in the same manner—to the unbelieving Jews it was a solemn warning, lest, continuing in their unbelief, they should never attain the presence of His glory. *So now*, &c. Jesus, whose death was the very next day, plainly tells His disciples that He was going to heaven, and, though they should follow Him their Fore-runner afterward, yet at present they should not do so, as they had not yet finished the work which He had for them to do.

34. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

Lev. xix. 18; chap. xv. 12, 17; Eph. v. 2; 1 Thes. iv. 9; James ii. 8; 1 Peter i. 22; 1 John ii. 7, 8, iii. 11, 23 and iv. 21.

The word "new" as applied to the "commandment," does not, regarded as used with reference to the Old Testament, express *antithesis*, but *distinction* merely. The novelty of the command consisted much in the manner of its enforcement. *I give unto you*. Observe how Jesus delivers this precept by way of gift and privilege. This was His farewell sermon: He was now making His will, and among other things that He bequeaths His disciples, He takes this commandment (as a father would do his seal-ring off his finger) and gives it to them. (2 Cor. viii. 9; Rom. viii. 15, 16.) "They, that are indeed lovers of God," says *Archbishop Leighton*, "are united, by that their hearts meet in Him, as in one center: they cannot but love one another. When a godly man sees his Father's image, he is forced to love it; he loves those whom he perceives godly, so as to delight in them, because that image is in them;

and those, that appear destitute of it, he loves them so as to wish them partakers of that image. And this is all for God; he loves a friend in God, and an enemy for God. And, as the Christian's love is pure in its cause, so in its effects and exercise. His society and converse with any tends mainly to this, that he may mutually help and be helped in the knowledge and love of God; he desires most that he and his brethren may jointly mind their journey heavenward, and further one another in their way to the full enjoyment of God. . . . There is, in this 'fervent love,' sympathy with the griefs of our brethren, desire and endeavor to help them. . . . Receiving of the same spirit from their Head, Christ, brethren are most strongly bent to the good of one another; as in the natural body, if there be but a thorn in the foot, the back boweth, the head stoops down, the eyes look, the hand reaches to it, and endeavors its help and ease; in a word, all the members partake of the good and evil, one with another. . . . Let that love begin here, which shall never end." (Gen. xiii. 8; Acts ix. 4; Rom. viii. 29; 1 Cor. xii. xiii.)

35. *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.
†1 John ii. 5 and iv. 12, 20.

Observe, 1. Although Christians should not be ostentatious, nor self-seekers, yet as they ought to assure their own hearts of their good condition before God, so they ought in their station to shine and appear such as they are, for it is their duty by consistent deportment to make all men know that they are Christ's disciples. 2. As true love of the brethren is an infallible evidence of regeneration (1 John iii. 10, 14 and iv. 7), so this love is the badge of Christians, by which they are known to the world. (See 1 Cor. xii. 31, with chap. xiii. 1-3, &c.; also Rom. xii. 10, xiii. 8; 1 Cor. i. 13; Gal. v. 13; Eph. iv. 2.) We should fervently pray God to write the new law of love in our hearts. Remember, this is the measure, nothing short of it will suffice, "*As I have loved you.*" We know how Christ loved us: even so ought we also to love one another. No knowledge, no gifts, no greatness without this will suffice.

36. † Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards.—xxi. 18; 2 Peter i. 14.

Peter passed over what his Master had said about mutual love, and asked, *Whither goest thou?* As Jesus had not expressly said that He was about to die, the disciples did not thoroughly apprehend His meaning. They thought of His being removed from them in some way, but exactly what He meant they knew not. (See on verse 33.) Doubtless there are many who wish that they could obtain such a promise as Peter received, *thou shalt follow me afterwards.* But though it is the privilege of only a few Christians to hear such an assurance from the lips of their Master, it is the privilege of *all* to have the inward witness of the Spirit, for it is written: "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." Let all believers listen to His gentle voice in their souls.

37. Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.
†Matt. xxvi. 34, 34, 35; Mark xiv. 29, 30, 31; Luke xxii. 33, 34.

There are very few, says one, who know the measure of their own strength. We must not rely upon that which we perceive in ourselves, or which we imagine we have, but we must pray much, and promise nothing from ourselves. Peter asks why he cannot follow Christ now, and the reason is, because he believes he can. Presumption gives imaginary strength and hinders men from asking and receiving that which is real. When God assures us of anything, let us not pretend to argue about it, but let us be so far from contradicting Him as to believe without the least hesitation. Peter was not yet strong enough to renounce his own opinion and judgment, and to submit entirely to the Word of God—and yet he thought he could renounce the love of life, and die for the sake of his Master! Thus a deceitful zeal makes us believe we could do great things for God, while, at the same time we do not even easy things which He actually requires of us. Strange delusion this! (See notes on Matt. xxvi. 30-35.)

38. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

This was a humiliating assurance indeed!

Peter is given to understand that, so far from "laying down his life" for Christ's sake, he will even deny that he knows Christ at all; not *once* will he disclaim all knowledge of the Saviour, but *three times* in succession: not *hereafter*, when his faith has begun to wax cool, will he do this, but now, even before the cock crow. Mark mentions in *his* account a second cock-crowing (xiv. 27-31), yet the discrepancy, if such it can be called, it is not difficult to account for. There was a particular hour of the night, one of the watches into which the day was divided, called by this special term, the cock-crowing. (See Mark xiii. 35.) This was what the Lord here intended. Though the cock might crow, as Mark has

noted, even once and again, yet that particular hour called the *cock-crowing*, as the other Evangelists recorded, should not be reached till this too confident disciple had thrice denied his Lord.

Jesus now hears His people's vows of fidelity. He will try them all and prove their sincerity. In what *way* he will try us, at what *time*, we cannot tell. When the trials come, may we be found faithful. Then shall we know the truth of the promise, "Blessed is the man who endureth temptation, for when (as *often* as) he is tried he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." (James i. 12.)

1. Explain "before the feast of the Passover." 2. Who put into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus? 3. How did Jesus wash the disciples' feet? 4. What did Peter say? 5. State our Lord's reply to Him. 6. What does verse 17 mean? 7. Are those who receive Christ's ministers regarded as receiving Him? 8. What was the effect of Christ's declaring that one of His disciples should betray Him? 9. What did Jesus say when Judas had gone out? 10. What did Peter say to our Lord? 11. Repeat Christ's answer.

CHAPTER XIV.

1 *Christ comforteth his disciples with the hope of heaven: 6 professeth himself the way, the truth, and the life, and one with the Father: 13 assurcth their prayers in his name to be effectual: 15 requesteth love and obedience, 16 promiseth the Holy Ghost the Comforter, 21 and leaveth his peace with them.*

We now come to that portion of the evangelical history which we may with propriety call its *Holy of Holies*. Our Evangelist, like a consecrated priest, alone opens up to us the view into this sanctuary. It is the record of the last moments spent by the Lord in the midst of His disciples before His passion, when words full of heavenly thought flowed from His sacred lips. All that His heart, glowing with love, had still to say to His friends, was compressed into this short season.

LET not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.—Verse 27, xvi. 22, 23.

Our Lord having informed His disciples that He was about to leave them, well knew that their minds must be distressed by this intelligence. (xvi. 6.) It may be that He observed signs of sorrow, uncer-

tainty and dismay gathering upon their countenances, and that, therefore, filled with grief, as His own heart was, He hastened to speak comfort to theirs.

Let not your heart be troubled, agitated, like water, when subject to any disturbing force. They ought not to be dismayed, as if their stay were gone—as if they had lost their confidence in their Lord. *Ye believe in God, believe also in me.* These words may be read in no less than three ways—either, first, indicatively, or second, imperatively, or third, partly in the one way, partly in the other. If we read them indicatively, we shall say ye believe in God, ye believe also in me; if we read them imperatively, we shall say believe in God, believe also in me; and if we read them partly both ways, we shall say, as our translators have done, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." It is a matter of no moment which of these readings we prefer. The question is merely one of grammatical propriety, and in whatever

way we use the words, the sense is substantially the same. In either case their trust in God is the essential antecedent of their trust in Christ. "Trust in God, or continue to trust in God as you now do, the God of your fathers, the God of all grace, the God whom I have declared, God reconciled in His own Son, and reconciling sinners to Himself, and trust in me also, His Son, by whom He is declared, and in whom He is reconciled—in me the Mediator between God and man—in me the Apostle and High Priest of your profession, in me whom you see before you in the flesh, in me who am clothed with your nature, who can take a fellow-feeling in all your distresses, and who, being exalted to the throne, and crowned with glory, shall want no means of ministering to your comfort."

2. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."
John. xiii. 33, 34. Verses 13, 25; Acts i. ii. xii. 26 and xvii. 24; 1 Thes. iv. 17.

Christ calls heaven His *Father's house*—as much as to say, I am only going home. Now He is not ashamed to call His people brethren. Heaven, therefore, is their home also. They are only strangers and pilgrims on earth. They take many a weary step, and often meet with rough usage and trying weather, but better entertainment awaits them at their journey's end—heaven will make amends for all. *Are many mansions.* No inconsiderable number will be required. For, to the question, Are there few that shall be saved? the answer, taking them all, eventually and collectively, must be, No. The Captain of our salvation is leading "many sons" unto glory. And John saw before the throne "a great multitude which no man could number," from all the diversities of the human race. The expression, however, implies not only multiplicity, but variety. Though the house is one, the apartments are many. There is something in the heavenly state suited to the circumstances, and character, and taste of every inhabitant. The angels have their orders and degrees. We see endless diversity in all God's works and ways. Heaven will not be an exception. All the saints will there be perfectly blessed, but

all, we may well believe, will not be similarly employed, or equally endowed. Communications there, as well as here, must be supposed to be dispensed according to the capacity bestowed. And yet the difference of degrees of glory does not hinder, but the least saint in glory is as really happy as the highest there. (Ps. lxxxix. 11; Dan. xii. 2, 3; Luke xxii. 28-30; Col. i. 16.)

If it were not so, &c. He would not deceive them, He would not permit them to forsake all and to follow Him, if He did not know that by doing so, whatever they lost and whatever they suffered in this world, they secured their happiness in the world to come. How does Jesus *prepare a place* for His people? 1. The presence of a beloved object is the grand preparative of any place, and that which gives it its principal charm. Such is the preparation of a place in the future world for us. As the happiness of heaven is not such as Adam would have obtained after a proper trial of his obedience in Paradise, but the happiness of a lost creature, in whose restoration difficulties were found which the Saviour alone could remove, so He must go first, to remove every impediment, to perform every condition, to secure every advantage. 2. Christ will also gather together the whole family of heaven and earth. God has so ordained, that both in this world and that which is to come our blessedness should be bound up with that of each other. Hence, it follows that every accession to the heavenly world affords an influx to the enjoyment of its inhabitants. Every one that goes before may be said to contribute to the preparing of the place for them which follow after. 3. Christ prepares a place for us, in superintending the concerns of the universe, and causing all events to work together and produce the highest ultimate good. Glory awaits the righteous immediately upon their departure from the body, but a much greater glory is in reserve. Innumerable events in the system of Providence must remain inexplicable, till the mystery of God be finished. It is impossible for spectators to comprehend the use of all the parts of a complicated machine till it is constructed and put into motion. And as our

Forerunner is now preparing the scenery of this grand exhibition, and hastening it to its desired issue, it is thus that He is preparing a place for us. He who prepares the place for us, must also prepare us for the place, by forming in us that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." "Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people." (Prov. xvi. 1.)

I will come again, &c. This is fulfilled in two cases. Jesus comes again at death to receive us to Himself. And this is infinitely desirable. His passage through the territories of death was attended with the most dreadful of all conflicts, but, having overcome, it renders ours an easy one. He comes again at the last day. And this coming differs very much from the former. The one is spiritual, but the other will be personal. The one is private and invisible, the other will be public and obvious, for every eye shall see Him. The one is to receive His people individually, the other will be to receive them collectively. The one is to receive their souls, but the other is also to receive their bodies. (1 Thes. iv. 16-18.) *That where I am, &c.* See notes above. We should not prize heaven itself further than as we have there a more full and perfect enjoyment of God. (xii. 26, xvii. 24.)

4. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.
5. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way? 6. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me. 7. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also; and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.
8. Heb. ix. 8. 9. 17 and xviii. 32. 10. 4 and xi. 25. 11. x. 9. 12. xviii. 19.

Whither I go, &c. By saying this Jesus meant rather to draw out their inquiries and reply to them. *Lord, we know not, &c.* The interpellation of Thomas is one of three we meet with in this chapter. Thomas first, Philip next, Judas afterward, each have their question. In our Lord's reply to the first of these it will be observed that He inverts the order of the question. He does not speak of the "whither" till He has told them of the "way." He tells them of the Father when He has first told them of Himself. Jesus Christ is our *way* to the Father and to heaven, in His *person*, as God manifest in the flesh, in His *office*, as our Mediator with

God, introducing us to the Holiest by "a new and living way;" in His *sacrifice*, as our Great High Priest forever, who, by His perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice has made propitiation for the sins of the whole world, in His *intercession* as our Advocate with the Father, who hath given us access with confidence to the throne of grace; lastly, He is our way, as being our great Moral Teacher and perfect Exemplar, being the great *Shepherd of the sheep*, "leaving us an example that we should follow His steps," and preceding us in a way open to all, plain and even secure, pleasant, and terminating in everlasting bliss. He is "*the truth*," both in His essence and attributes, as being one with the Father (who "is truth"); He is the *fountain* of all truth, the *complement* of all truth (being the substance of all the types and figures of the Old Testament), having all the characters of truth. As such, He is our great *Prophet*, pointing out by His word, which "is truth," the way which leadeth unto everlasting life. He is "*the life*," as being (what He elsewhere testifies of Himself) "*the resurrection and the life*," through whom alone any one cometh unto the Father in acceptance and salvation, and through whose life-giving Spirit the dead in trespasses and sins are so quickened as to believe in Him as *the truth*, and come unto Him as *the way*, and thus to finally experience Him as *the life*.

No man cometh unto the Father but by me—He is *the living way of access* to the Father. He is the bridge from man to God. And, what is the same thing, He is the bridge from earth to heaven. "We talk of repentance, of prayer and of amendment, though we have not them. But, if we had them, there is yet one thing necessary, above all these, which we forget—there is absolute need of a Mediator to make our peace, and restore us into favor with God, One who must for that end do and suffer for us what we can neither do nor suffer. Though we could shed rivers of tears, they cannot wash out the stain of any one sin; yea, there is some pollution in our very tears, so that they themselves have need to be washed in the blood of Jesus Christ. (Eph. ii. 13-18; 1 Tim. ii. 5.)

If ye had known me, &c. The first part of this verse is almost a repetition of the latter part of John (viii. 19, on which see notes). (Heb. i. 3.) Thus Jesus explains how it happens that Thomas, in the name of the rest, was able to declare with truth that he knew not whither our Lord was going. It arose out of *their imperfect knowledge of Himself*. For, as the Godhead of the Father and the Son is *one and indivisible*, so does the knowledge which has the second for its object, involve the knowledge of the former also. This is made clear in verse 9. Have *seen him*—are acquainted with Him, have a knowledge of God Himself, by having an acquaintance with me.

⁸ Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

It is more probable that he wished for some glorious display of God's presence and perfections, as Moses had done, and which he called God's face. If so, he knew not what He asked. The exhibition might have been fatal. But some, and among these is *Doddridge*, are disposed to commend rather than censure Philip. They take his meaning to be, "Oh! bring us to the knowledge of the blessed God, and we resign every other wish as nothing compared with this!" God cannot be completely known, but He can be really known, savingly known, known as the strength of *our* heart, and *our* portion forever. And this knowledge can yield satisfaction to the possessor. It will suffice for our happiness hereafter. But this knowledge is to be derived from the Lord Jesus.

⁹ Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?
*Chap. xii. 45; Col. i. 15; Heb. i. 3.

Christ had been with Philip and his fellow-disciples corporeally, for the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among them, and they beheld His glory. And He is with His people now. What was His promise to His ministers? to His Church? to individuals? "Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." *Hast thou not known me?* Philip was not entirely ignorant of Him. But he knew Him not sufficiently, he knew Him not comparatively, he knew Him not, considering how he might have known Him.

The defectiveness of the knowledge of Christ's followers is very censurable, especially after *long* intimacy with Him.

He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. For the reasons just above mentioned, that the Father dwells in the fullness of His attributes of power, wisdom and goodness concentrated into the human person, and made as fully visible to man as man's sense can grasp.

¹⁰ Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you = I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

(Verse 20; chap. x. 38 and xvii. 21, 23. *Chap. v. 19, vii. 16, viii. 28 and xii. 49.)

All that Christ said or did in the Father's name was a proof of such a mutual indwelling as that he who had seen the one had seen the other, but not a proof (as some have maintained from this passage) of our Lord's Deity consisting in the Father's dwelling in Him. It might as well be alleged that the Deity of the Father consisted in that of the Son, who is said to be "in Him." This and all other such passages, which ascribe the works of Christ to the power of the Father, are expressive of the economy of things, and not of the insufficiency of the Saviour. (See on verse 20.)

¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.—Chap. v. 35 and x. 38.

Believe me. Take my word for it, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me. We have here a repetition of what is stated in the preceding verse—the Deity, the eternal Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Or else believe me, &c.* Take my word for it, that I am God, and cannot lie; if you cannot trust my word for it, believe me for my very works' sake. Christ's referring to His *works* here, as often elsewhere, respects not merely His miracles themselves, but His sovereign, God-like way of performing them by His own Divine power, which was the same in Him as in the Father.

¹² Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do: because I go unto my Father.—Matt. xxi. 21; Mark xvi. 17; Luke x. 17.

He that believeth on me. It seems clear that this expression, like the similar one, "Them that believe" (Mark xvi. 17), refers to the Apostles and the miracle workers of the primitive age—we say of the primitive age, for we have no

satisfactory proof of miracle-working subsequent to that age. It is plain from the New Testament that there was a *faith* which was connected with miraculous powers. "Miracles," says an ancient writer, "do not still continue, because there are no persons employed to teach any new doctrines, and no promise of Scripture doth imply any more, for "the signs which were to follow them that believe" (Mark xvi. 17), were such as tended to the first confirmation of the Christian faith, which, being effected, their use ceased; and so to ask why God doth not continue a gift of miracles to convince men that the former were true, is to the same purpose as to ask why God doth not make a new sun, to satisfy atheists that He made the old. (Acts viii. 5, 6; 1 Cor. xiv. 12.)

And greater works, &c. The word "works," it will be observed, is printed in the italic character, which intimates that there is no word in the original text answering to the English one. We apprehend that there is no reference to miracles, properly so called in this case, but to some things which our Lord means to contrast, as to magnitude and importance, with the miracles both of Himself and of the Apostles, such as preaching of a clear, full revelation of the economy of mercy to a lost world—the making manifest "the mystery which has been hid in God" since the unbeginning ages of eternity—the turning even a single soul, far more an innumerable multitude of souls, "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to the service of the living God"—"the pulling down strongholds," and making lofty imaginations bow before the authority and the grace of the Redeemer. (Eph. iii. 3–11; Acts xxvi. 18; 2 Cor. x. 4; Eph. ii. 20; 1 Chron. xxii. 5.)

Because I go unto my Father. Our Lord thus plainly intimates that their doing these things was to be the result of His going to the Father by an expiatory death, and a glorious resurrection and ascension. There could have been no good news to man had not the curse been borne away. There could have been no quickening, spiritual influence, had He not died to open a channel for it, and ascended to pour it forth abundantly through that

channel into the human heart. "All power in heaven and earth" is given Him, because He became "obedient to death, even the death of the cross." It is, *therefore*, that He was highly exalted, and that, having "ascended on high, he received gifts for men."

13. ¶ And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. [¶] Matt. vii. 7 and xxi. 22; Mark xi. 24; Luke xi. 9; chap. xv. 7, 16 and xvi. 23, 24; James i. 5; 1 John iii. 22 and v. 14.

(See notes on verse 14.) It is the sacrifice of Jesus that secures our prayers an audience and answer. The very presenting His sacrifice is a symbolical prayer for those very blessings which we pray for, and not only so, but a prayer that is enforced with a just claim, and both plead the right, or purchase, to all the blessings it sues for, and so cannot be justly denied or rejected. (Luke i. 10; Heb. x. 19, 20; Rev. v. 8, viii. 3. Ps. cxvi. 2.) *In my name.* (See on verse 14.) *That the Father may be glorified in the Son*, that is, that the mighty power and the great grace of Jehovah, the eternal God, may appear to the creature, who comes in Christ's name, for the sake of the Son, that the glory may redound to God and to us through the Son.

14. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

In my name. Christ here repeats what was said in the preceding verse, that it might be more carefully observed. He knew how apt mankind were, and still would be, to make use of other names, besides His, in their prayers to God. There is not one word in the Scriptures that can be wrested to mean that Jesus will do what we ask in any other name than His. But that what we ask in the name of Christ, trusting in His merits, inspired by His Spirit, and aiming at His glory. He will do, we have His own word, and that, too, not only once, but again, that we might have strong consolation, and be the more fully assured of it. (Acts iii. 6, 8; Col. iii. 17; Phil. ii. 9, 10.) All right prayer is heard and granted.

15. ¶ If ye love me, keep my commandments. [¶] Verses 21, 23; chap. xv. 10, 14; 1 John v. 3.

Hence we may learn that the only safe proof that we love His person is, that we obey His law. "My mother and my brethren are these," says He, "which hear the Word of God, and do it." The expressions.

of our love to God ought to be regulated, not by our blind and wild fancies, but by His revealed will. (1 John iii. 14, iv. 11, 20, 21; see notes on verse 23.)

16. And I will pray the Father, and the shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.

*Chap. xv. 26 and xvi. 7: Rom. viii. 15, 26.

Another Comforter—a word used only by John, in his *Gospel* with reference to the Holy Spirit, in his *First Epistle* (ii. 1), with reference to Christ Himself. Its proper sense is an "advocate," "patron," "helper." In this sense it is plainly meant of Christ (1 John ii. 1), and in this sense it comprehends all the *comfort* as well as *aid* of the Spirit's work. The Spirit is here promised as One who would *supply Christ's own place* in His absence.

The personality of the Holy Spirit is here distinctly affirmed. The gift of the Spirit is a fruit of Christ's mediation, purchased by His merit, and taken out by His intercession. This wondrous gift is the Divine Paraclete, the *Comforter*, as Christ delights to call Him: for such is one of the meanings of that comprehensive word. It may also mean Advocate, Counselor, Intercessor, one who stands by us, and stands up for us, and helps us. (See notes on xv. 26.) These heavenly offices are applied in common both to the Son and to the Spirit. (See 1 John ii. 1.) And indeed what Christ was to His disciples while He was upon the earth, all this should the Spirit be to them after He ascended into heaven. Christ calls Him "*another Comforter*," and promises that He shall abide with them *forever*, in allusion to His own approaching departure, and the shortness of His stay. In spiritual distresses and anxieties, the Holy Spirit directs the penitent to Christ, and through Christ to the Father of mercies, as it is written, "Through Him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father." He so comforts and enlarges the believing soul, and so animates it with holy hope, that it runs cheerfully in the way of God's commandments. And the mourner can even say, "In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul." (Ps. xciv. 19.)

17. *Even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

*Chap. xv. 26 and xvi. 13: 1 John iv. 6. †Cor. ii. 14. ‡John ii. 27.

Even the Spirit of truth. As the evil Spirit is a liar from the beginning, and "the father of lies" (John viii. 44), so God is "the God of truth." (Ps. xxxi. 5.) Unchangeable in His perfections, unerring in His wisdom, unailing in His promises, He is Himself eternal truth, and the Author of truth in man's soul. He makes His people love truth, and guides them into all truth. By nature we are such, that, "as soon as we are born we go astray, and speak lies" (Ps. lviii. 3-7), but the Holy Ghost so changes our deceitful hearts that at length we "utterly abhor all false ways." (Ps. exix. 128.) How precious is the promise of such a Guide and Comforter as this! how should we value His presence, and submit ourselves to His teaching! *The world*, it is said, *cannot receive Him*. Why not? *because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him*. The love of sin and worldly cares and pleasures blind its sight, deafen its ear, stupefy its understanding. If we would have this abiding guest in our souls, we must learn to view with abhorrence whatever evil tempers and wicked practices bring a film upon the soul, which prevents its "seeing," and much more, therefore, "receiving" this Divine inhabitant. *Dwelleth with you, and shall be in you*, though the proper fullness of both these was yet future, our Lord by using both the present and the future, seems plainly to say that they already had the germ of this great blessing. (See notes on verse 26.)

18. †I will not leave you comfortless: †I will come to you.—†Matt. xxviii. 20. ‡Verses 3, 28.

Comfortless, like orphans, friendless and destitute of proper guidance. (See on verses 16-17.) *Come to you*. The Saviour would grant them His Spiritual presence, though in body He would be absent from them. (Comp. Matt. xviii. 20.) Jesus has not "left us" without a rule (xiii. 34), nor without an example (xiii. 15), nor without a motive (xiv. 15), nor without a strength (xv. 5), nor without a warning (xv. 2, 6), nor without a Comforter, nor without a reward (xiv. 2.)

19. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more, but ye see me: †because I live, ye shall live also. †Chap. xvi. 16. ‡1 Cor. xv. 20.

His bodily presence being all the sight

of Him which "the world" ever had, or was capable of, it "beheld Him no more" after His departure to the Father; but by the coming of the Spirit, the presence of Christ was not only *continued* to His spiritually enlightened disciples, but rendered far more efficacious and blissful than His bodily presence had been before the Spirit's coming. *Because I live, &c.* By His life here, though spoken of as present, because of its nearness and certainty, our Lord means His life after His resurrection. To this the Apostle refers, Rom. v. 10. It would be easy to show how the life of Christ's people in their justification, sanctification and glorification, depends on the living Saviour, but we see also that their life is insured and secured by His—"Because I live, ye shall live also." The certainty of the result is founded in three principles. 1. The union subsisting between Him and them. 2. The claim He has to urge on their behalf, having suffered and died for them. And, 3, the all-sufficiency He possesses to meet all their exigencies. (See chap. xvii. 2¹, 24; Heb. ii. 9; 1 Peter v. 1; Rev. iii. 21.) "Knowest thou not," said *Luther* to the King of Terrors, "that thou didst devour the Lord Christ, but wert obliged to give Him back, and wert devoured of Him? So thou must leave me undevoured because I abide in Him, and live and suffer for His name's sake. Men may hunt me out of the world—that I care not for—but I shall not on that account abide in death, I shall live with my Lord Christ, since I know and believe that *He liveth*."

²⁰ At that day ye shall know that *I am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.
²¹ Verse 10; chap. x. 34 and xvii. 21, 23, 26.

At that day. This phrase is often as here used in the Old Testament Scriptures to signify the whole period of the kingdom of God. (See Isa. xii. 1; Zech. xiii. 1, xiv. 9.) *Ye shall know*—it shall be by experience. There shall be no guess, or mere expectation, or *hope* so about it. The religion of the Spirit is not a *hope*, but an *enjoyment*. "For what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" (Rom. viii. 24.)

That I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. Observe, 1. Although Christ is oftentimes little known, it is most necessary

to know Him, and what His interest in the Father is. 2. Although true believers may be clouded with much ignorance, yet Christ has His time and way to make them understand the mysteries of God, to their comfort and salvation. 3. Christ, rightly known, will be seen to be one in essence with the Father, and consequently approved of Him, and He in whom the Father is to be found, and to know this is the great encouragement of believers. 4. It exceedingly adds to the comfort of believers to know that Christ, who is one with the Father, has also a mystical union and communion with them. 5. The communion between Christ and believers is mutual, they being in Him by faith and needy dependence, and He in them by His Spirit, as the root of their spiritual being, and to make all His fullness forthcoming for them. 6. The communion between Christ and believers is very near and intimate, so that there can be no separation, and the fruits and comfort of it must be very real. 7. Believers may have an intimate communion with Christ, who yet stand in need to be made to know that it is so, for this communion is true for the present, yet the knowledge of it is but to come.

²¹ *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*

^c Verses 15, 23; 1 John ii. 5 and v. 3.

Our Lord winds up with the same note which He had struck at the beginning of this passage (verse 15.) This turn in the conversation began with love and obedience; with love and obedience it concludes. *He that hath, &c.* He that hath my commandments in his memory, and keepeth them in his life. *He it is that loveth me, &c.* The Saviour shows in what true love to Him consists, and then He throws in a gracious parenthesis, as it were, hinting how much more there was in this than they might think: it should ensure them the love of that Father whom Philip, at the outset (verse 8), had besought Him to show them. Jesus loves them that love Him; and as they prove *their* love by obeying Him, so He proves *His* love by manifesting Himself to *them*. To those who love and obey Him, He will *manifest*

Himself, in whom and by whom alone can they see and know the Father. (Comp. chap. xv. 10.) What an encouragement is this to us in our Christian course! (See 1 John iii. 18.)

22. ⁴Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?—⁴Luke vi. 16.

Our Evangelist indicates anxiety to preclude the supposition that it was the traitor (the only "Judas" whom He has hitherto named), who asked this question. The speaker was "Judas, the brother of James," called by Matthew, "Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddens." He was one of our Lord's cousins ("brethren," as they are called in the Gospels), and author of the Epistle which bears his name. His surprise seems to have arisen out of the deep-rooted belief (which Jude had entertained with the rest of his nation), that the manifestation of Messiah was to be something of a wholly different nature from that which He here for the second time intimates.

23. Jesus answered and said unto him, *If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and I will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

⁶Verse 15. ¹1 John ii. 24; Rev. iii. 20.

(See notes on verses 15, 20, 21.) "If our souls be elevated to contemplate and adore the perfections of God," says an ancient writer, "by a necessary and inevitable consequence we shall love Him, and loving Him we must always desire to please Him, and delight in so doing, and besides this our natures will be transformed into a likeness to Him, by that participation of His Divine nature, that we shall by a vital congruity delight in all those things, that He commands, and feel a propension to them, even when we do not reflect on the revealed will of God. (Ps. cxxxix. 21, 22.)" *Make our abode with him.* The idea is the same as is suggested in verse 21, with the additional thought of a *continued* enjoyment of God's presence and love. (Comp. Ps. lxxiii. 23-28.) *My Father . . . we . . . him*—the Father, Son, and Spirit, will in spirit come into union with the believer's spirit.

24. *He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.*

⁷verse 10; chap. v. 19, 33, vii. 16, viii. 28 and xii. 49.

He that loveth me not, &c. We may take this saying either for our comfort and en-

couragement, or for our warning, according as we may need either. It is comfort for the fearful and the loving, the timid yet faithful, those who are much afraid, yet who love much; they keep their Lord's sayings, therefore they need not fear, doubtless they love their Lord. On the other hand, it is warning for the careless and presumptuous. "And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say."

25. *These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.*

These things have I spoken. Glancing the mind's eye over His own discourse, Jesus presents it as a whole as uttered by Himself *being yet present*. His personal presence and His living voice were yet with them, and He now places this personal teaching in preparatory contrast with that of the spiritual Paraclete whom the Father will send.

26. *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

¹⁶16. ¹vi. 45, xvi. 13, 14; Ps. xxv. 9, 12-14.

The Comforter. (See notes on verse 16.) *Whom the Father will send, &c.* The Holy Ghost, who, proceeding from Christ as the Head, diffuses Himself into His members, is sent from the Father by the Son—"in His name," through His merits. (See on xv. 26.) Christ, also, as the Father, had the power of sending the Holy Spirit. (Chap. xv. 26, xvi. 7; comp. also Acts ii. 17, 18, with verse 33, and Matt. x. 20 with Gal. iv. 6; see also 1 Peter i. 11; Rom. viii. 9; Phil. i. 19.) *He shall teach you all things*—all things requisite to be known by you, and taught by you to others. (See chap. xvi. 13.) *And bring all things to your remembrance, &c.* Here Christ promises that inspiration, which enabled them not only to give a true history of His life and death, but also gave them the most perfect recollection of all the words He had spoken to them, so that they have been able to transmit to posterity the identical words which Jesus uttered in His discourses. On this rests the credibility and ultimate divine authority of the Gospel history. The whole of what is here said of the *Spirit* is decisive of His divine *personality*, "he who can regard all the *personal* expressions, applied to the Spirit in these three chapters ('teaching,' 'reminding,' 'testifying,' 'com-

ing,' 'convincing,' 'guiding,' 'speaking,' 'hearing,' 'prophesying,' 'taking'), as being no other than a long drawn out figure, deserves not to be recognized even as an interpreter of intelligible words, much less an expositor of Holy Scripture."

27. ¹Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. ²Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. ³Phil. iv. 7; Col. iii. 15. ⁴Verse 1.

Peace. Jesus said to His disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." Yet at the same time they were to have peace in Him. This peace, therefore, must have been something which trouble could not hinder or injure. It must have been a spiritual privilege—composure of mind. Who can adequately conceive the value of this peace? It passeth all understanding. It is a cluster of the grapes of Eshcol. It weans from the world. It enlivens duty. It smooths the rugged path of adversity. It turns a dying chamber into the house of God and the gate of heaven.

I leave. Christ is both the testator, to "leave," and the executor, to give, out of His own hands, what His love has left to believers, so that there is no fear that His will shall be performed to the full, seeing He Himself lives to see it done. "My peace." It is Christ's, for He came and preached it. It was His in an infinitely more expensive way. He procured it for us. He came not to tell us the way to heaven, but to be the way; not to show us how to make our peace with God, but to make it. He made peace by the blood of His cross. And He applies it by the agency of His Holy Spirit.

Not as the world giveth, &c. Not by empty or ineffectual wishes, but by a sincere and efficacious blessing. (Rom. v. 1; John xvi. 22; Phil. iv. 7.) "The peace I leave with you, is not in your houses, but in your hearts, the comfort I give you lies not in gold and silver, but in pardon of sin, hopes of glory, and inward consolations, and these shall outlive all the world's joy. . . . Many a dying father has in his farewell speech to his children wished them all peace and comfort, when he should be dead and gone, but who, besides Jesus Christ, could send a Comforter into their hearts, and lodge peace and comfort in their bosoms? (Job xxxiv. 29; Isa. xxxii. 17.)

Let not your heart be troubled, &c. (See notes on verses 2 and 3; also 12, 18 and 23.) "Your heart," not your hearts, in the plural. They were "of one heart, and of one soul," according to that lovely description of the infant Church. (Acts iii.) They were, even now, about to reap the fruit of their Lord's accepted intercession, "Holy Father, keep, through Thine own name, those whom Thou hast given me, *that they may be one, as we are!*" Where, alas, are the fruits of that intercession now? (Isa. xxvi. 3; Ps. cxx. 6, 7; Acts vii. 26, 27.) *Neither let it be afraid.* "Fear not," is the first word, in the first annunciation of Christ's conception, the first word in the first annunciation of His birth, and the first word in the first annunciation of His resurrection, and almost the last word in His last exhortation, a little before His death. (Luke i. 74; Heb. ii. 14, 15.)

28. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come *again* unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice because I said, ¹I go unto the Father: for ²my Father is greater than I. ³Verses 3, 18. ⁴Verse 12; chap. xvi. 16 and xx. 17. ⁵See chap. v. 18 and x. 30; Phil. ii. 6.

If ye loved me, &c. The glory and happiness which my Father possesses, and which I go to possess with Him, is greater than anything I can here enjoy; your love to me, therefore, if it were properly regulated, instead of prompting you to wish to detain me here, would rather incline you to rejoice in my departure. It has been already seen, that the Word, as God and with God, is declared to be One with and equal to the Father. (i. 1-3, v. 17-29, x. 26-31; verse 30; see also Phil. ii. 6.) In this respect Jesus could not say, "My Father is greater than I;" indeed, there can be no greater or less in the infinite perfection of Deity. But, as God the Son was manifested in human nature, and as in this sense He was about to finish His work and go to receive His merited recompense, in being exalted to the Mediatorial throne, the language is evidently proper, not only as to His human nature, but likewise in respect of His Mediatorial character and kingdom, in which He acted as the Servant and Apostle of His Father; even as an ambassador, though equal in nature, is inferior in office, to the prince who commissions him. In this sense it is in perfect accordance with the rest of

Scripture, and it behooves all who love Him greatly to rejoice in His exaltation to glory, after His voluntary humiliation. "These words" ("*my Father is greater than I*"), says an able commentator, "which A. ians and Socinians perpetually quote as triumphant evidence against the proper divinity of Christ, really yield no intelligible sense on their principles. Were a holy man, on his death-bed, beholding his friends in tears at the prospect of losing him, to say, 'ye ought rather to joy than weep for me, and would if ye really loved me,' the speech would be quite natural. But if they should ask him, *why* joy at his departure was more suitable than sorrow, would they not start back with astonishment, if not horror, were he to reply, '*Because my Father is greater than I*?' Does not this strange speech from Christ's lips, then, *presuppose such teaching* on His part as would make it extremely difficult for them to think He could gain anything by departing to the Father, and make it necessary for Him to say expressly that there was a sense in which He *could* do so? Thus this startling explanation seems plainly intended to correct such misapprehensions as might arise from the emphatic and reiterated teaching of *His proper equality with the Father*—as if so exalted a Person were incapable of any accession by transition from this dismal scene to a cloudless heaven and the very bosom of the Father—and by assuring them that this was *not* the case, to make them forget their own sorrow in His approaching joy."

²⁹. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe.
³⁰ Chap. xiii. 19 and xvi. 4.

Now I have told you, &c. Christ here refers to what He had said concerning His death and resurrection, His sufferings and glory. *That ye might believe*. Observe, 1. The importance of faith. By faith we are justified, sanctified; by faith we stand, walk, live, are saved. 2. There may be an improvement in faith, where the principle is already found. These disciples believed at this very time, but their faith was too obscure in its views, too feeble in its hold, too powerless in its operation, and Christ's purpose was that it might be lightened and strengthened. 3. One of the best means of increasing and estab-

lishing our faith is to compare the word and the works of the Lord together. 4. The benefit to be derived from prophecy is subsequent to its accomplishment. How can it be otherwise? Where is the evidence of the truth of prophecy before it come to pass? It may be said, A God who cannot lie has spoken it. But God Himself does not demand our faith on the announcement, but on the event.

³⁰. Hereafter I will not talk much with you, for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.
³¹ Chap. xii. 31 and xvi. 11.

I will not talk, &c. It is here intimated that Christ *had* talked "much" with them. But "*hereafter*" He *would* not talk much with them—not from disinclination, but from want of intercourse.

For the prince of this world, &c. Here our Lord marks the character of His adversary. He is not the prince of this world by right, but usurpation, and by God's allowing him power over those who provoke him. *Cometh*. The Saviour sees Satan's approach. He comes—not personally, as He had come to Him in the wilderness, but in his instruments—in Judas that betrayed Him, in Peter that denied Him, in His disciples that forsook Him and fled, in Herod that threatened Him, in Pilate that condemned Him, in the Jews that clamored for His blood, and in the Romans that shed it. *And hath nothing in me*. There is in me no principle or feeling that accords with His, and nothing therefore by which he can prevail. If the "prince of this world" had the hardihood to attack the "Prince of life," in whom He could find nothing, can we hope to escape his assaults, when in us there is so much of the world whereby he may work our destruction? May we be prepared for the conflict, by being found in Christ, setting our affections on things above, not on things on the earth. Taking to us "the whole armor of God," may we "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." (Eph. vi. 10, 11.)

³¹. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.
³² Chap. x. 18; Phil. ii. 8; Heb. v. 8.

But that the world may know, &c. The sense must be completed thus: "But to the prince of the world, though he has nothing in me, I shall yield myself up

even unto death, that the world may know that I love and obey the Father, whose commandment it is that I give my life a ransom for many." (See on chap. x. 17, 18.) The greatest glory that we can give to God is to fulfill His blessed will in all things.

Arise, let us go hence. The discourse and converse at the table now having been finished, Jesus rises from the table and

bids His Apostles rise, that they may listen to His solemn valedictory, closed with His High Priestly prayer, preparatory to their going forth in separation and His going forth to His Passion. *Arise!* is a solemn call, which should forever reconcile us to break off our luxurious sleep. (Eph. v. 14.) *Let us go hence.* A Christian man's life is nothing else but a going out of it. (1 Cor. xv. 31.)

1. With what words of comfort does this chapter begin? 2. What does the Saviour say about His Father's house? 3. What did Thomas say? 4. State our Lord's reply. 5. How is He the "way," "truth," "life?" 6. Does Christ assert that He is in the Father, and the Father in Him? 7. How is verse 12 to be understood? 8. What is said of "another Comforter?" 9. State the question of Judas. 10. Also our Lord's answer. 11. What did Jesus say about peace? 12. Explain the words "My Father is greater than I."

CHAPTER XV.

¹ *The consolation and mutual love between Christ and his members, under the parable of the vine.* ¹⁸ *A comfort in the hatred and persecution of the world.* ²⁶ *The office of the Holy Ghost, and of the apostles.*

I AM the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

The true vine, &c. (See notes on chap. xiv. 31.) Our Lord selects the image here from fruit-bearing trees, and from among these the noblest, the most beautiful and graceful, and which has ever been esteemed most highly among men—the vine. He implies that the vine to which He refers is planted in a vineyard, and that it is carefully tended by a husbandman. It is probable that a vine, with its branches, and leaves, and fruit, was in view by the moonlight—perhaps one was trailing by the side of the window. In selecting this image, Jesus made choice of one very well fitted for conveying, with clearness and impression, the truth of which He meant it to be the embodiment. *The true vine.* The vine which we see rising from the ground at our feet, and hanging its beauteous branches, laden with luscious fruit, is the mere type of this "*True Vine*," made, prepared, set in this world, and all its construction and habits arranged by the God of nature, to be a fitting emblem of His more precious plant in the kingdom of

grace. Just as the vine had been often used in the Old Testament Scriptures to denote Abraham, or the house of Israel, (Ps. lxxx. 8-16; Isa. v. 1; Ezek. xix. 10-14; Jer. ii. 21), so now the Saviour adopts the same image to denote His manhood—His Divine humanity. *True*, not typical—real, not ideal, not illustration but embodiment. "*The verri vine*," so *Wickliffe* in his old version of the Bible renders it. So elsewhere the Lord calls Himself "*The True Bread*." (Chap. vi. 32, 33, 35.) We are here taught that, though there may be other pretended sources of spiritual life and growth, Christ is the only true source. It is not even doctrines, however right, that will give us life, doctrines, forms, ceremonies, ordinances, all have their proper use, but they cannot give life; Christ is the true vine, and we must be joined to Him as branches, or there is no life in us. (See notes on verse 5.)

And my Father is the husbandman. As the husbandman prepares room for his plant, and sets it in the place thus made ready, so the Father sent His Son into the world, having "*prepared a body*" for Him, and thus as it were planted the Vine, of which those who believe in Him are the branches. So *Tholuck*: "*The Father who*

sent the Son into the world, is the possessor and fosterer of the vine together with its branches." (See notes on verse 3 and 5.)

2. *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away : and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

*Matt. xv. 13.

The cultivator of vines, when he sees branches continuing barren when they should be fruitful, concludes that these branches are, from some cause or other, not partakers of the fruit-bearing influence of the vine, and, perceiving that they are doing no good, but rather evil, cuts them off, and removes them. In like manner, the great Proprietor—cultivator of the spiritual vine, when He perceives that branches are not fruitful, is said to "take them away." God, in His own time, takes away the mere nominal Christian, and will not suffer him any longer even to seem to belong to Christ. If nothing else does so, *death* puts an end to this seeming union, and takes away the fruitless branch. (See Job xxvii. 8; Ps. i. 4; Matt. vii. 23.) But often before death, God in His providence takes such a one away from the means of grace. He did not profit by them while he had them, he shall now have them no more. The false professor is frequently placed in circumstances in which his real character becomes manifest. (See on verse 6.)

And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, &c. Even the fruit-bearing branches are not left to themselves. The knife is used to them also. But only the pruning-knife. They are not cut off, but "purged," or, pruned. What need have the people of God of afflictions? "The same," says *Philip Henry*, "that our bodies have of physic, that our trees have of pruning, that gold and silver have of the furnace, that liquors have of being emptied from vessels, that the iron has of a file, that the fields have of a hedge, that the child has of the rod. (Eccl. vii. 14; 1 Peter i. 6.) *More fruit.* Every Christian is pruned, for there is not one but may become more fruitful still.

3. *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

*Chap. xiii. 10 and xvii. 17, Eph. v. 26; 1 Peter i. 22.

The word is "as a refiner's fire." (Mal. iii. 2, 3.) It is one of those arteries by

which the Spirit is conveyed to us. (Isa. lix. 21; Jer. xxxi. 33.) It will be observed that Christ here challenges for Himself, a share in the work of the "husbandman" (verse 1), an office, which, only as He is one with the husbandman of this allegory, He could have any right to challenge for His own. He too has power to purge or cleanse through His word. "The faithful in Christ Jesus are *clean*, being by faith justified from all things, and having thus a standing-ground before God, which yet is in some sort an ideal one—their actual state, although ever approximating to this yet still failing to correspond to it—they therefore needing by the same faith to appropriate ever more and more of that sanctifying grace, those purifying influences, which continually stream forth from Him on all them that are His, and by aid of which He is bringing them to *be* all that, which for His sake His Father has been already willing to regard them."

4. *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

*Col. i. 23; 1 John ii. 6.

It is assumed that they were already connected with Him by a vital union, and this connection they are commanded to carefully preserve. *As the branch cannot, &c.* This second clause in the sentence is not promise, any more than the first, they are precept both. "*Take heed that ye abide in me, and that I abide in you.*" The mystical use of this word "to abide," representing as it does the innermost fellowship and communion of believers with their Lord, and of their Lord with them, and occasionally representing a higher mystery still (John xiv. 10, xv. 10), is peculiar to John, but is very frequent both in his Gospel and in his Epistles, in the language of his Lord, and in his own which he has earned from that Lord. In these two invitations of Divine love and directions of Infinite Wisdom, namely, "Come unto me" and "*Abide in me*" are hidden all the riches of our salvation. Happy are they who come, most happy they who abide: the first, a blessing in time—the latter, in all eternity. (1 John ii. 28, 29; 2 John viii. 9.) As all spiritual fruitfulness had been ascribed to the mutual *inhabitation*, and living, active, *interpenetration*, so to speak, of Christ and

His disciples, so here the keeping up of this vital connection is made essential to continued fruitfulness.

5. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.
^aHos. xiv. 8; Phil. i. 11 and iv. 13.

I am the vine. Ministers are not to preach themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord. But He was His own subject—He preached Himself. How could He have done otherwise, concerned as He was to be useful, and knowing as He did that His Person and work were essential to our salvation?

Our Saviour never takes His comparisons from the sciences, and seldom from the arts, but from natural scenery, which is obvious and intelligible to all. *Ye are the branches.* Our union with Christ, and so in Him with one another, is a mysterious truth which calls for the exercise of a simple and child-like faith. This figure teaches, 1. How close is the union between Christ and His members. The vine and the branches are connected. They are not merely bound or joined together, as is the case with the stones in a building, but actually grow into and out of one another. One stream of life circulates through all. God views believers as "one body in Christ," and members in particular. 2. That Christ and His members have a character of likeness. The branches are the very same kind of wood as the vine, and the very same sap pervades them both. And they that are joined to the Lord are of one spirit. The same mind is in them which was also in Christ Jesus. 3. That all the members of Christ absolutely depend on Him for the supply of what they need. All spiritual blessings flow to us from Him. 4. The usefulness of Christians. The branches are the beauty and excellency of the vine, and *by* these, its vigor and fertility are displayed. Jesus is glorified in His people. We should accustom ourselves to derive spiritual reflections from all the material objects around us. A taste for natural scenery is pleasing and good in itself. But let us not approach it, as a creature only to enjoy, or a philosopher only to admire, but as a Christian also, to improve.

He that abideth in me, and I in him, &c.

(See on verse 4.) While Christ had already declared the abiding in Him to be the one condition of all fruit-bearing, He adds a promise now, that He who abides in Him shall not only bear fruit, but shall bear it abundantly. *For without me ye can do nothing.* The meaning is, "separated from me, or apart from me, ye can do nothing"—still carrying on the figure of the vine and the branches. Not only will there not be much fruit, unless the union with Christ be maintained, there will not be any at all. The words seem to throw light too upon the kind of fruit that is meant. "Without me ye can do nothing." The fruit is what we do—our conduct, our actions, our service our life. These words therefore do not mean merely, as they are often supposed to mean, that without Christ's *help* we can do nothing. This is quite true, but these words mean much more. They teach us that *apart* from Christ, that is, if not joined to Him by faith, we can bear no fruit, and do God no acceptable service. (2 Cor. iii. 5, 6, hence Acts i. 8, xv. 9; Gal. v. 6; 1 John iii. 24, iv. 13; Rom. viii. 9.)

6. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.
^aMatt. iii. 10 and vii. 19.

If a man abide not in me, that is, if a man does not so dwell in me, as to partake of all I have to give, and am willing to bestow—if he is satisfied with a mere outward connection, and has no living trust in me, so as to make me all in all to him—so as to lead him to apply to me continually for all things pertaining to life and godliness, then his unfruitfulness will be made manifest, and that man will be driven away in his wickedness. *Is cast forth as a branch, &c.* That which is here spoken of an individual, is true of a Church; when it ceases to look to Christ alone for life, it is withered, and goes into the furnace, not for purification, but for consumption.

And men gather them, or, better, "and they gather them," bring them together into one bundle of death. The gatherers are the angels, the ministers of the divine anger, to whom the final execution of the Divine judgment is everywhere committed. (Matt. xiii. 41, 49, xxiv. 31; Luke xix. 24; Rev. xix. 24.) *And cast them into the fire,*

and they are burned, or, in its simplicity, more terrible still, *and they burn*. (See Ezek. xv. 4.) But all which is here expressed or implied, of "the fire" (Matt. iii. 10), "the flame" (Luke xvi. 24), "the flaming fire" (2 Thes. i. 8), "the furnace of fire" (Matt. xiii. 42, 50), "the gehenna of fire" (Matt. v. 24; Mark ix. 43), "the lake of fire" (Rev. xx. 15, xxi. 8), "the everlasting fire" (Matt. xxv. 41; Jude 7), with all the secrets of anguish which words like these, if there be any truth in words, *must* invoke, demands rather to be trembled at than needs to be expounded. It is by just such warnings as that contained in this verse, that saints "are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." (See chap. x. 27-29; Rom. viii. 28-39; Phil. i. 16.)

7. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.
† Verse 16; chap. xiv. 13, 14 and xvi. 23.

If ye abide in me, &c. (See on verses 4 and 5.) The words, "*If my words abide in you*," imply, that the words with which God has furnished us, are to be our guide and directory in prayer. It is *His* promises we are to plead, the truths of *His* word we are to found our hopes upon, *His* declared purposes that are to guide our desires, *His* representation of our condition that is to regulate and give form to our confessions. It is not meant strictly that all our prayers should be moulded to the very language of Scripture, but rather that the Bible should show us what it is we are to ask for, should limit and define our desires, and keep them within the compass of God's purposes and promises. *It shall be done unto you*. This declaration does not mean that Christians may have anything—it matters not what it may be—for the asking, if they can but persuade themselves that they shall have it. It has been justly and finely said: "The will which is the ruling power of the universe, is expressed in Christ's word. For a man to have this word abiding in him, therefore, is to have, for the regulation of his desires, the same principle which is the regulator of all beings and of all events, and surely there can be no more infallible security against the possibility of disappointment, than to have one's will in accordance with that of the Supreme Proprietor and Governor of all beings, and disposer of all events."

His will shall be done, and, if His word is abiding in us, so shall ours.

8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; ^{also shall ye be my disciples.}
† Matt. v. 16; Phil. i. 11. ‡ Chap. viii. 31 and xiii. 35

Our Lord here gives the final cause, the glory of the Father; "that God in all things may be glorified, to whom be glory and dominion forever, Amen." How continually the Divine Son, when He became man, set this object, and nothing short of this, before Him! If we would be His disciples indeed, we must do likewise. It is by "bearing much fruit," that we appear to the world as Christ's true disciples. (See chap. viii. 31; James i. 12.) All the glory which God is pleased to have out of Himself is chiefly reduced to that which He procures Himself, by the operation of His grace in the hearts of men on earth, and by the manifestation of His glory in heaven. And indeed the production of the fruits of His Spirit in a soul, and the forming of one single Christian, are more to His glory than the creation of the material world, and the production of that wonderful variety of flowers and fruits, because it is by the former that the mystical body, the spiritual world, is formed, in and by which He designs to be eternally glorified, of which His Son is the Head, and His Spirit the soul.

9. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

How encouraging, but how wonderful, is this declaration of Jesus! How precious to His true disciples! Who can tell the measure of that love wherewith the Father loveth His only begotten Son, in whom He is well pleased. Can it be that we are loved by Christ with a love no less than that infinite and inexhaustible love, wherewith He is loved of the Father? Dear must we be indeed in His sight, precious indeed must our souls then be to Him, notwithstanding all their guilt and infirmities. *Continue ye in my love*. Keep your place in my affection. Let us ever remember, that as the way to abide in the love of Christ is "to keep His commandments," so to disregard them is perilous. There is not any sin by which His love will be more nearly lost, than by the breach of that unity which He would have among all His members. All being joined to Him as their

Head, all should be united with one another in faith and peace, in hope and charity.

10. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.
¹Chap. xiv. 15, 21, 23.

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love—the obedient spirit of true discipleship cherishing and attracting the continuance and increase of Christ's love, and this, He adds, was the secret even of His own "abiding in His Father's love." The great idea of the whole passage is, that there exists between Christ and the believer the same basis of love, as that upon which rests the ineffable union of the Father and Son. The analogy between His obedience to the Father and theirs to Him, is the more perfect and striking, because it refers to the days of His humiliation on earth, when He stooped to the condition of a man of sorrows and one acquainted with grief. (Isa. liii. 3.)

11. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and ¹that your joy might be full.
¹Chap. xvi. 24 and xvii. 13; 1 John i. 4.

My joy might remain in you, the joy which I feel in respect to you might be abiding. Your joy, &c., the happiness which you experience from my favor. "This Divine joy," remarks Cecil, "is planted in the soul by the Holy Spirit. It is therefore an inward and spiritual joy, it is deep rooted in the heart, it is solid and well founded, it is abiding and lasting, it is a satisfying joy, and purifying in its effects. It is a joy that flourishes most in adversity. It is a communicative joy: a man has not tasted what religion is, if he does not seek to impart this joy to others. It is the joy of communion with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a humble joy, but it causes a man 'to triumph in Christ.' Though this joy may be interrupted, yet the source and matter of it remain unchanged, just as in nature, clouds may sometimes, for many days, interrupt the rays of the sun, but the order of creation continues the same." (John iv. 14; Rom. xv. 29, 32; 1 John i. 1-4.)

12. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

¹Chap. xiii. 34; 1 Thes. iv. 9. 1 Peter iv. 8; 1 John iii. 11 and iv. 21.

Among the "commandments" mentioned in verse 10, that all-embracing "com-

mandment," which was delivered, chap. xiii. 34, is made prominent, and by the words, "as I have loved you," is developed to its highest capacity. We know we cannot reach this highest pattern, that is not meant, but the more we look on it, the higher we shall reach in this love, and shall learn some measure of such love on earth, as is in heaven, and that which so begins here, shall there be perfected. We are being trained up here to join the multitude which no man can number. We are to love *all* those happy spirits. Not one is to be treated with contempt or dislike, or even with shyness and reserve. All are to be loved by us, as far as Divine grace may enable us to do so, with the love with which the Father loves the Son, with which the Son loves us. Let us begin this happy life now. Let us love one another. Though there are a multitude of sins in our brethren as well as in ourselves, yet love is a mantle wide enough to cover them all.

13. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

¹Chap. x. 11, 15; Rom. v. 7, 8; Eph. v. 2; 1 John iii. 16.

It is here implied that by His own free will Christ would submit to death. When the Saviour expresses the greatness of His love, He uses this phrase, *lay down his life*, (as John x. 15, 17; 1 John iii. 16), when the merit of His passion, he uses the phrase "to die for us," or "for our sins" (as Rom. v. 6, 8; 2 Cor. v. 15; Heb. ii. 9; 1 Peter iii. 18.) "One can show no greater regard for those dear to him than to give his life for them, and this is the love ye shall find in me." "The cross of Christ," says Maclaurin, "was the noontide of everlasting love, the meridian splendor of eternal mercy. There were many bright manifestations of the same love before, but they were like the light of the morning, that 'shines more and more unto the perfect day,' and that perfect day was when Christ was on the cross, when darkness covered all the land." Comparisons can give but a very imperfect view of this love, which "passeth knowledge." Though we should suppose all the love of all the men that ever were, or shall be, on the earth, and all the love of the angels in heaven united in one heart, it would be but a cold heart to that, which

was pierced by the soldier's spear. The Jews saw but blood and water, but faith can discern a bright ocean of eternal love flowing out of these wounds. We may have some impression of the glory of it, by considering its effects. We should consider all the spiritual and eternal blessings received by God's people for four thousand years before Christ was crucified, or that have been received since, or that will be received till the consummation of all things; all the deliverances from eternal misery, all the oceans of joy in heaven, the rivers of water of life, to be enjoyed to all eternity by multitudes, as the sand of the sea-shore—we should consider all these blessings, as flowing from that love, that was displayed in the cross of Christ. (Zech. ix. 17; Eph. iii. 13–21.)”

14. “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.—” Chap. xiv. 15, 23; see Matt. xii. 50.

It is here assumed by Jesus Christ, that His disciples are His friends, and on this assumption of their friendship is founded, as a natural inference, their duty to do whatsoever He has commanded them. It is a great elevation to be a friend of Jesus Christ. To be a friend of God is noted as the highest honor of Abraham; to be a friend of Jesus Christ is not less an honor, since He and His Father are one. Mutual effects are implied in this friendship between the Saviour and His disciples; mutual affection and delight in each other's society; their love to Him is the effect of His to themselves, not only as from this it derives the grand motive, but also as it indicates that everlasting love which is mentioned as the highest source of spiritual blessings.

15. Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.

See Gen. xviii. 17; chap. xvii. 26; Acts xx. 27.

The love which Christ bears toward His people suits the relation of friends better than that which subsists between a master and his servants. Reverence is the appropriate sentiment of a servant toward his master, there is not, in the order of things, so much of affection in that relation. But Jesus Christ loves His people with an intense affection, even like that with which He is Himself regarded by His Father, as the beloved Son. *The servant knoweth not*

what his lord (or master) doeth, &c. It is implied that there is perfect freedom of communication between Christ and His disciples. A servant knows little of his master's mind, as it is communicated to a friend, but here the Master reveals His secrets to His servants, whom He treats as His friends; they know the way of the Lord, they become “of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord,” and “they go and tell Jesus,” they commit their cares to Him, confess all their infirmities, all their sins to Him, to Him who can correct their errors, sympathize with their infirmities, forgive their sins, relieve their sorrows.

16. “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”

1 Chap. vi. 70 and xiii. 18; 1 John iv. 10, 19. 2 Matt. xxviii. 49; Mark xvi. 15; Col. i. 6.

Lest they should be puffed up with pride, and “exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations,” so as to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think, our Lord reminds them that He had chosen them, or selected them out, to a life of holiness and the enjoyment of His favor, and that their position, privileges and prospects were not owing to themselves, but to Him. They were *ordained*, or (which is the sense of the word here) *appointed*, that they might go and bring forth fruit, which might “abide the day of His coming.” (1 Cor. iii. 14.) Connected with this is that privilege of prayer, to which in connection with abiding in Him He had already adverted. (Verse 7.) He had selected them to the laborious office of converting a world. He had selected them to the blessed privilege of asking boundless blessings from above. Let us tread in their steps. We also are the friends of Jesus, if we do what He commands us. We may bring forth fruit that shall never wither. It is far better to convert one soul, than, like Columbus, to discover a continent, or, like Herschell, a planet. The fruits of science will pass away, but the fruits of grace will abide unto eternal life.

17. “These things I command you, that ye love one another.—” Verse 12.

I command you. Inasmuch as I have conferred upon you grace so stupendous, and a love so perfect, full rightly have I

authority to *command* you. And my *command* is, that one command most fully authorized by my example—the *commandment of mutual love*. In revealing His Gospel to the world, Christ not only performed the part of a Prophet, but also a Legislator, and that by His own inherent authority. As He was a King, He stamped those doctrines into laws, which He taught and delivered, as a Prophet. And such as His kingly power is, such are His laws and commandments. He is a spiritual King, a King of souls, of will, and of affections, and accordingly His laws are spiritual, and extend their obligation to the souls, and wills, and affections of His subjects. (Matt. v. 21, 22, vii. 29; Heb. viii. 10.)

18. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. 19. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. 20. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you, if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. 21. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

¶ John iii. 1. 13. ¶ John iv. 5. *Chap. xvii. 14. *Matt. x. 24; Luke vi. 40; chap. xiii. 16. *Ezek. iii. 7. *Matt. x. 22 and xxiv. 9; chap. xvi. 3.

His own, that which belongs to the world, that which is like the world. *I have chosen you out of the world*. (See on verse 16.) This clause is antithetic to *ye are not of the world*, and serves to fix more definitely and emphatically its meaning. *Out of the world*, is that form in Greek which denotes internal separation. They had been under the full influence of worldly aims, purposes and principles, but through the sovereign grace of God, had been chosen from a life of sin to one of holiness and usefulness. *The word that I said unto you*. (See chap. xiii. 16; comp. Matt. x. 24.) *If they have kept my saying*—you see how ill they have kept it—they *will keep yours, i. e.*, in the same manner. Keeping Christ's saying denotes holding fast His doctrines, and obeying His precepts. *For my name's sake*. (Matt. x. 22.) Your support and reward will be therefore the greater. (Matt. v. 11, 12; Acts v. 41; 1 Peter iv. 16.)

Christians are chosen out of the world by God's grace to follow Christ's steps, and by a holy life and conversation, to bear witness for Him in a world that hates Him, and all who do this with zeal and faithfulness may expect to meet some measure of dislike, ridicule and opposition.

(Gal. iv. 29; 2 Tim. iii. 12; 1 Peter iv. 12-14.) Surely, while we mourn over such symptoms of enmity to God, we may well be content to bear some little part of that burden which was laid on our blessed Master (Heb. xii. 1-4); if, indeed, the world speak too well of us, we should suspect whether we be faithful to Christ; for the world loves its own, but has ever hated Christ, and those who are most like Christ. We should never, it is true, needlessly provoke the world's enmity, it is a false zeal, a zeal without knowledge, that would do this, but if we meet with it in the way of duty, we may well rejoice in being counted worthy to bear what is a badge of honor, when borne for Christ's sake, an indication, so far as it goes, that the world sees in us something that is contrary to its own doings.

22. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin.—*Chap. ix. 41. *Rom. i. 20; James iv. 17.

Our Lord never refers to Himself as one born into the world in the ordinary way of human generation, but as having "*come*" forth from the Father. His pre-existent state is thus kept ever before the mind, in all His discourses. The Saviour's coming and speaking to these people (which was a great instance of His mercy) led to their contracting a guilt, which they would not otherwise have had, and we should bear in mind that this is the very condition of being more favored and privileged than others, that our condemnation will be the greater, if we do not rightfully improve our mercies. *No cloak*—no color of plea, nothing to pretend by way of excuse. "We think that it follows from verse 23," says *Tholuck*, "that by 'sin,' in verse 22, is intended the guilt of hatred against divine things in general, so that the connection of the thought is this: The hatred toward you rests upon aversion to me, and this rests upon ignorance of the Father. Had I not appeared, this ignorance, and the aversion to what is divine connected with it, would have been comparatively guiltless, but after I have revealed the Father by my appearing and by my instructions, they are the more culpable." Miserable is that person whom the divine benefits only render inexcusable! This is often the effect of outward blessings, which

the sinner abuses by his own infidelity. (See notes on verse 24.)

23. ^aHe that hateth me hateth my Father also.
^b1 John ii. 23.

The second aggravation of their sin is that their hatred of Christ is joined with hatred of the Father. Here we learn, 1. That the great hatred against God in the world appears chiefly in opposition to Christ. 2. That whatever holiness or respect to God men may pretend, yet if they hate Christ or His Gospel, they are but haters of God, who is one in essence with His Son, who sent Him into the world, and who is in Him reconciling the world, by His obediential life and sacrificial death, and by the word of the Gospel. To reject the Son is to reject the Father. To affront an ambassador is an indignity offered to the government which he represents. To despise a preacher is to despise Him from whom he receives his mission.

24. If I had not done among them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin, but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.—Chap. iii. 2, vii. 21 and ix. 32.

The third aggravation of their sin is taken from our Lord's miracles. *If I had not spoken.* (Verse 22.) *If I had not done.* The two combined, doctrine and miracle, attested His unity with the Father and Divine mission. (Chap. vii. 46; Matt. ix. 33; Acts i. 1.) *Among them.* How strangely irrational were the Jews in rejecting our Saviour, when His miracles not only exceeded those of Moses both in number and quality, but, which was much more, when they themselves saw the miracles which Christ did, yet received those of Moses, only upon the credit of their fathers. (Chap. ii. 23, v. 36, x. 25; Acts ii. 22.) *They had not had sin.* It is evident from the word of God (Rom. i. 20, 21), as well as from the reason of things, that sin may be imputed to those who have no revelation. This expression, therefore, must be a Hebraism, which calls a thing nothing compared with something inconceivably greater. (Chap. ix. 41.) *But now have they both seen and hated, &c.* Ignorance, though it does not deserve pardon, yet it often finds it, because it is not joined with open contempt of Him that is able to pardon. But he that sins against knowledge, not only provokes the justice of God by his sin (as every other sinner does), but

he also dams up the mercy of God by his contempt, and does his part to shut himself out from all possibility of pardon. (1 Tim. i. 13; James iv. 17.) It should not pass unnoticed, that at this verse our Lord says *Me and my Father*, and, a few verses further on, *My Father and me.* (x. 30, xvi. 3.)

25. But *this cometh to pass*, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, ^aThey hated me without a cause.—[Ps. xxxv. 19 and lxix. 4.]

The meaning is, as in so many other places of the Gospel, not that the Jews hated Christ in order that the words of David might be fulfilled, but that from their hatred resulted the fulfilment of certain words, spoken prophetically by the inspired Psalmist (Ps. lxix. 4), and which the Evangelist here adduces as having reference to the sacred person of our Lord. The "*law*" here stands for the whole volume of the ancient Scriptures (as in x. 34), and it is emphatically called "*theirs*" (as in other places; see chap. viii. 17, x. 34), to convey a tacit reproof of that wickedness, which, "one of themselves, *even a prophet of their own*" (Titus i. 12), had foreseen and denounced.

They hated me without a cause. For what "*cause*" was all this hatred? What plea for this malignity? And still we might ask, Why does the world hate religion, and the Bible, and God? "To hate God" raises horror, and more still, "to hate *him* without a cause." And yet we certainly hate Him, when we do not love His law, His government, the dispensations of His Providence, &c. We have no such direct thought or formal purpose, but actions include all this. Be it our care, that if man dislike or persecute us, there may be no other cause but our faithfulness to real religion, and, as in Daniel's case, men may find no occasion against us, except they find it against us concerning the law of our God. (Dan. vi. 5.)

26. ^aBut when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, ^bhe shall testify of me.

^cLuke xxiv. 49; chap. xiv. 17, 26 and xvi. 7, 13; Acts ii. 33. ^d1 John v. 6.

The Comforter—the Spirit of truth. The two appellations here given to Him who was to be the witness of Christ, and who was soon to come, were given to Him when first spoken of by our Lord, chapter

xiv. 16, 17, and at the 26th verse of that chapter He is termed "the Holy Ghost." That it is of a person, and not merely of an attribute or influence that our Lord speaks, is very evident. His proper name is the Holy Ghost—His character is the Spirit of truth—His office, in reference to Christians, the Comforter. The original word "paraclete" rendered "Comforter," cannot be translated by any one English word. It includes all that is most important in meaning, expressed by the terms instructor, monitor, helper, guide, comforter.

The Spirit of truth, not the Spirit of falsehood, but of truth—not the Spirit of error, but of truth—who knows the truth—who loves the truth—who reveals the truth—who cannot be deceived—who cannot deceive—equally incapable of ignorance and deception.

Whom I will send unto you from the Father. In chap. xiv. 16, this glorious Person is said to be "given" by the Father, and, in the 26th verse of that chapter, to be "sent" by the Father in answer to the prayer of the Son, and here He is said to be "sent" by the Son from the Father. In the economy of salvation, the Father sustains the majesty of the Divinity. The Son and the Holy Spirit act subordinate parts. All things are of the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit. The Spirit is said to be sent by the Son from the Father, the idea is, that of a foundation being laid for the gracious mission of the Spirit, in the finished work of the Son, as the great expiator. HE—the glorified God-man—has committed to Him, as the reward of His mediatorial labors, the communication of the influences of the Divine Spirit, so that He has but to intercede, pray, express His will to the Father, and the Spirit's effecting miraculous or saving changes among men is the immediate result.

Which proceedeth from the Father. Here is an evident difference between the Mission and Procession of the Holy Spirit; the former is spoken of, as then to come, *whom I will send.* The latter is spoken of in the present tense, *which proceedeth.* The same Greek term, which we translate "to proceed," is employed by John, when he describes the Spirit as *proceeding* out

of the mouth of Christ in the likeness of "A sharp two-edged sword," and again as "A pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, *proceeding* out of the throne of God and of the Lamb," (Rev. i. 16, xxii. 1.) *He shall testify of me.* Here, again, the personality of the Holy Spirit appears. "He shall bear witness to my integrity. Though I am rejected by my adversaries, yet the Holy Spirit will vindicate me, and bring clearly to light the truth respecting me." There is also reference to the illumination of their minds in regard to the Old Testament types, ordinances and prophecies.

In relation to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity (which is so plainly taught in this verse), an old writer says: "As in waters, there is the fountain, or well-head, then there is the spring, that boils up out of that fountain, and then there is the stream that flows forth from the fountain and the spring, and yet all these are but one and the same water; so, here (chap. vii. 37-39), God the Father is the Fountain of Deity, the Son as the spring, that boils up out of the fountain, and the Holy Ghost, that flows from both; (see Gal. iv. 4) and yet all three is but one and the same God. The same may be also explained by another familiar instance. The sun, you know, begets beams, and from the sun and beams together proceed the light and heat. So God the Father begets the Son, and from the Father and Son together proceeds the Spirit of knowledge and grace. But as the sun is not before the beams, nor the beams before the light and heat, but all are together, so neither is Father before the Son, nor Father or Son before the Holy Ghost, but only in order and relation to one another, in which only respect the Father is the first Person in the Trinity."

27. And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.
1 Luke xxiv. 48; Acts i. 8, 21, 22; ii. 32, iii. 15, iv. 20, 33, v. 32, x. 39 and xiii. 31; 1 Peter v. 1; 2 Peter i. 16. 2 Luke i. 2, 1 John i. 1, 2.

Although the "testimony" of the Spirit is mediated through the human "testimony" of the disciples, yet the latter is here made co-ordinate with the former. "When ye shall have been comforted by the Holy Ghost, and your mind has been supported by fixed truth, He will impel you to testify of me. For, first, He will

give testimony internally in your hearts, and then outwardly by miracles and through your confession and preaching."

The main things to be regarded as the truth of human testimony are these: 1. If men testify nothing but what they saw or heard. 2. If they testify at no long distance of time from the things done. 3. If they testify them plainly, and without doubtful expressions. 4. If a great number agree in the same testimony. 5. If any part with all that is valuable to mankind rather than deny the truth of what they have testified. All these particulars united in the Apostles and disciples of Jesus as witnesses for Him. Their testimony was to be a personal one. (See Luke i. 2; Acts i. 21.) The desirableness and even necessity of this in proclaiming the Gospel to an unbelieving world, must be obvious to all. Their words would

have found small credence in Jerusalem, Judea, Asia Minor, Greece, Rome, Egypt, Ethiopia and other regions whither they carried the Gospel, had they not been able to testify to its truth from their own personal knowledge. With straightforward plainness and simplicity they narrated the wonderful history of Jesus of Nazareth, and in proof of their veracity appealed to the miraculous gifts with which they had been endowed by the Holy Spirit. How united and resistless their testimony! How could they be deceived, or why should they deceive others, and do this, too, at the expense of all that was dear to them in this world, even of life itself?

"Whence but from Heaven, could men unskilled in arts,
In several ages born, in several parts,
Weave such agreeing truths? or how, or why,
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie:
Unasked their pains, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gain, and martyrdom their price."

1. Who is the true vine? 2. Who is the husbandman? 3. What is said of fruitless branches? 4. What of fruitful branches? 5. How is God the Father glorified? 6. What is said of those who keep Christ's commandments? 7. Who are Christ's "friends?" 8. What does verse 16 mean? 9. Why is it that the world hates Christians? 10. Explain the expression "they had not had sin." 11. What did Jesus say the Comforter would do? 12. What is said of the testimony borne by the Apostles?

CHAPTER XVI.

¹ Christ comforteth his disciples against tribulation by the promise of the Holy Ghost, and by his resurrection and ascension: ²³ assureth their prayers made in his name to be acceptable to his Father. ³³ Peace in Christ, and in the world affliction.

THESE things have I spoken unto you, that ye ²³should not be offended.
^aMatt. xi. 6, xiii. 57, xxiv. 10 and xxvi. 31, 33.

These things—including His description both of the hostility of the world and the co-operation of the Paraclete or Comforter. *That ye should not be offended*—"that ye should not be stumbled." There is a strong temptation in times of great affliction to distrust God. It is very hard, when He smites us, to believe that He loves us. When we are prosperous and happy, then it is easy to say, "As many as He loves He rebukes and chastens." It is easy then to believe, or to *think* we believe

that He does not willingly grieve or afflict the children of men. But when suffering from disease, passing under the cloud of bereavement, pining in a dungeon, or threatened with the stake, then it is hard not to imagine that God has forgotten to be gracious. Those who have experienced sore afflictions can remember the struggle in their hearts at such times. Jesus knew the weakness of His disciples, and hence He thus prepared them for their approaching trials, that when they came they might not be accounted "strange things."

2. ^bThey shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.
^cChap. ix. 22, 34 and xii. 42. ^dActs viii. 1, ix. 1 and xxvi. 9, 10, 11.

Put you out of the synagogues. (See on ix. 22, xii. 42; Luke vi. 22.) The meaning of this clause is, "excommunicate you."

This was the highest punishment which the Sanhedrim had at this time power to inflict, as all civil power was in the hands of the Romans. The Jews had already agreed to excommunicate those who confessed Jesus to be the Christ (John ix. 22), and they had acted accordingly. (Verse 34, xii. 42.) Those who were thus cast out they despoiled of their goods. (Ex. x. 8.) *Yea, the time cometh that, or when whosoever killeth you, &c.* This was soon fulfilled in the case of Stephen and others. (Acts vii. 58; comp. viii. 1, ix. 1, 2.) The *Zealots*, not waiting for the judgment of the Sanhedrim, executed summary vengeance on many of the followers of Jesus. They were esteemed by the Jews as good men and filled with zeal in the cause of God. And at last, at the Jewish war, after immense slaughter of their brethren, they held themselves to be men without offense.

Will think that he doeth God service, or will think that he offereth sacrifice to God. Our Saviour's foretelling to His disciples here, is, that His and their enemies should think it not only lawful, but acceptable to God, and of the nature of a sacrifice, which propitiates for other offenses, to put them to death! "See here," says an old writer, "a conscience bravely glossed, where the error looked like religion and atonement, and yet these Jews that did so, were given up to the direst punishments that ever any nation did groan under. (Rom. x. 2, xi. 8-10; Acts xxiii. 1; 2 Tim. i. 3; 1 Tim. i. 13, 15.) That is certainly a very deplorable time, when men think they honor God by persecuting the truth and the disciples thereof. It may be said, until the end of the world, this 'time cometh,' and therefore our patience must not end until the term of our lives expire."

3. And ^dthese things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

^dChap. xv. 21; Rom. x. 2; 1 Cor. ii. 8; 1 Tim. i. 13.

Because they have not known, &c. (See notes on chap. xv. 21.) Their blindness and self-deception as exhibited in their wicked course were by no means guiltless, since they thus acted through ignorance which was willful. One sin leads on to and begets another. Early ignorance is developed into later crime. Sins of omission are succeeded by sins of commission. Op-

portunities neglected pass into wickedness with a high hand. See how our Lord, who had before spoken of their sins as a consequence and proof of their ignorance of the *Father* (chap. xv. 21), here justly conjoins *Himself* "the Father, nor me." Had they known the Father, as they vainly boasted, they would have recognized and acknowledged *Him*. Had they acknowledged *Him*, as indeed they ought, they should have known the Father.

4. But ^dthese things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And ^dthese things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

^dChap. xiii. 19 and xiv. 29. ^fMatt. ix. 15.

It is here implied that the thought that "these things" had been fully foreseen by the Saviour, would prove their comfort and their stay. (Comp. verse 1 and see Matt. xxiv. 25.) *Because I was with you.* At an early period of the disciples' connection with Jesus, there was no need that He should *fully* disclose the scenes of trials through which they were to pass. It was more appropriate to that period that they should rejoice in their privileges, and should be receiving religious instruction. Besides, if troubles should arise while He was with them, He could personally advise and protect.

5. But now ^eI go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me. Whither goest thou? 6. But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

^eVerse 10, 16; chap. vii. 33, xiii. 3 and xiv. 28. ^bVerse 22; chap. xiv. 1.

After Jesus had said what was sufficient to satisfy them that He was to die and go to His Father, and stated to them how much this would prove for their advantage, they make no further inquiry. For this neglect He gently reproves them, as it indicated too little value for the peculiar blessings of His kingdom, the hope of which would have been sufficient to preserve their minds from too much depression. He, however, sympathizes with them, as sorrow, produced by fearful apprehensions of the consequences of His departure, had filled their hearts. Were our eyes open to see clearly the reasons of God's Providence toward us, or would we humbly *ask* Him to instruct our souls, we should often find reason to rejoice where we now suffer our hearts to be overwhelmed with sorrow.

7. Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

[Chap. vii. 33, xiv. 16, 26 and xv. 26. *Acts ii. 23; Eph. iv. 8.

Though you are too full of grief to look beyond the present trouble, though you are dumb with grief, tongue tied and cannot ask anything further, *nevertheless* I will tell you what is the real state of the case, "that it is expedient for you that I go away," that this is really for your good, how much soever it may appear to the contrary, for—and so He proceeds to add the reason of this—"If I go not away, &c.

The Comforter. (See on xiv. 16, 17, 26, xv. 26.) Observe that even in the hour of His sorrow and trial, Jesus considers, not what is expedient for *Himself*, but for His *disciples*. What rendered it "expedient" that Christ should go away, was, that the Holy Ghost was not to be given until the Son of man had returned to the Father. It is here evident that the Holy Spirit, the great gift of the New Covenant, is bestowed on man only through the atonement and mediation of Him, who is expressly said to have been "delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification." (Rom. iv. 25.) It could not be "expedient" to part with a greater good for a less, nor could it be said to be an expediency to part with an equal good for an equal. If, therefore, it was expedient that Christ should go, that the Spirit might come, *that* must have been, in His esteem, a good superior to the continuance of His own mere bodily presence.

8. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9. Of sin, because they believe not on me, 10. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more, 11. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

*Acts ii. 22-37. *Acts ii. 32. *Chap. iii. 14 and v. 32. *Acts xxix. 18. *Luke x. 15; chap. xii. 31; Eph. ii. 2; Col. ii. 15; Heb. ii. 14.

When he is come. This gift (it has well been said) is not a mere fluid or emanation shed off from the Divine essence or person, it is a *He*, the essence or Person Himself. The qualities, actions, efficiencies of a living agent are, through the whole passage ascribed to this Comforter. There is no alternative left but either to pervert the passage, or to acknowledge herein the presence of the Third Person of the adorable Trinity.

Our Lord had told His disciples at the

close of the preceding chapter, that they should be witnesses for Him, because they had been with Him from the beginning. This led them to think that the whole weight and stress of the Christian cause in this world pressed upon their own shoulders. What are we for this? Never trouble yourselves, says Christ, when I go, the Paraclete shall come—the advocate or pleader—and He shall make strange work in the world when once He comes, He shall take up my cause, whereas I have been traduced and charged as a deceiver. He shall convince the world of *sin*, because they believe not in me, and of my *righteousness* and the equity of my righteous cause, and, therefore, of the very completing and perfection of that righteousness which is to be had by me, which depends, thereupon, and of *judgment*, when I shall be known to be enthroned, and to have all government, and principality and power put under me, or into my hands—and so the Christian cause shall live, and spread, and triumph, when I am gone, and so much the more for my being so. It is not of gross unbelief only, or of an open rejection of Jesus as the Messiah, that the Holy Spirit has to convince the world, nor is it to a bare conviction of this truth, like what prevails in all Christian countries, that men are brought by His teaching. When He, the Spirit of truth cometh, His operations are *deeper* than this amounts to: it is of an *opposition of heart* to the way of salvation that He convinces the sinner, and to a cordial acquiescence with it that He brings him. Those who are born in a Christian land, and who never were the subjects of gross infidelity, stand in no less need of being thus convinced than others. Nay, in some respects they need it more. Their unbelieving opposition to Christ is more subtilé, refined and out of sight than that of open infidels, they are less apt, therefore, to suspect themselves of it, and consequently stand in greater need of the Holy Spirit to search them out and show them to themselves.

12. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

*Mark iv. 33; 1 Cor. iii. 2; Heb. v. 12.

Ye cannot bear them now. Because of their prejudices in favor of their own nation, the law of Moses, &c. (Comp. Luke xxiv.

25.) Though Christ had many things to say, He found that His disciples could only bear general truths, yet in saying what He did, He sowed the *seeds* of the whole system of theological knowledge and heavenly wisdom, which the Holy Spirit afterward *watered* and *ripened* into a glorious *harvest* of light and salvation, by the ministry of the Apostles. "When God doth conceal any truths from His people for the present," says *Gurnall*, "see His candor and sincerity, opening the reason of His veiling them to be, not that He grudged them the communication of them, but because they could not then *bear them*."

13. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.
*Chap. xiv. 17 and xv. 26. *Chap. xiv. 26; 1 John ii. 20, 27.

The Spirit of truth. (See on xiv. 17 and xv. 26.) *He will guide you into all truth*, literally, *all the truth*, which I would now say unto you, if you could bear it, and if the proper time for its communication had come. (See on xiv. 26.) *Not speak of himself*, literally, *from himself*. The messenger Spirit should not have a message of His own separate and apart from His Divine sender. Like the Son, He is not alone and independent, absolutely originating His own doctrine. *Whatsoever he shall hear*, that is, from the Father, what He shall receive in order to communicate to you. (Comp. xv. 15.) Thus there would be a perfect harmony between the instructions which Jesus had given and the more full disclosures to be made by the Spirit. The Spirit was to complete, in the work of instruction, what Jesus had commenced. *Things to come*, as Acts xi. 28, xiii. 1, xx. 25, xxi. 11; 1 Tim. iv. 1; 2 Tim. iii. 1; Eph. iv. 11; 2 Peter i. 14 and Rev. everywhere.

14. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.

The testimony of the Spirit, in whatever form it was given, would fit the Apostles for testifying of Christ. In the Epistles we see the accomplishment of the promise, *He shall glorify me*. Three of the Apostles had seen the glory of Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration. But there is a glory which cannot be seen by human eyes. The Spirit reveals *this* glory to the *souls* of all true believers. Unbelief is the veil that

hides the glory from the heart; but when the Holy Spirit, by His might, takes away this veil, then the glory of Christ shines into the inmost soul, true believers look with open and unveiled face into the Gospel glass (or mirror), and behold the glory of the Son of God. *For he shall receive of mine*, &c. He shall bring you in remembrance of all things that I have told you. The proper office of the Holy Spirit is, not to institute and bring in new ordinances, contrary to Christ's doctrine previously taught, but to expound and declare those things which He had before taught, so that they might be well and truly understood.

15. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.

*Matt. xi. 27; chap. iii. 35, xiii. 3 and xvii. 10.

The words, *All things that the Father hath are mine*, are true in the fullest extent of meaning in which they can be understood. "All the perfections of His nature—all His prerogatives—all His possessions are mine. I and my Father are one." (Chap. x. 30, v. 19.) While this is true, there can be but little doubt that the reference here is to the doctrines and revelations made by the Spirit to the Apostles. "Every part of the mystery which was kept secret from former ages and generations," "hid in God since the foundation of the world," has been unfolded to me, and I am, as Mediator, authorized through the Spirit to make it known to you, that ye may make it known to your fellow-men.

16. "A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me," because I go to the Father. 17. Then said *some* of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? 18. They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith. 19. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me. 20. Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice, and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. 21. "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. 22. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

*Verse 10; chap. vii. 33, xiii. 33 and xiv. 19. *Verse 28; chap. xiii. 3. *Isa. xvi. 17. *Verse 6. *Luke xxiv. 41, 52, 53; chap. xiv. 1, 27 and x. 20; Acts ii. 46 and xiii. 52; 1 Peter i. 8.

From themes so sublimely mysterious as those descanted on in the verses immediately preceding, our Lord now condescends to resume those topics of consolation which were suited to His disciples' present

condition. *A little while, &c.* The "joy of the world" at their "not seeing Him" seems to show that His removal from them by *death* was what He meant, and in that case, their "joy at again seeing Him" points to their transport at His reappearance amongst them on His *resurrection*, when they could no longer doubt His identity. At the same time the sorrow of the widowed Church in the absence of her Lord in the heavens, and her transport at His personal return, are certainly here expressed. Though if we "see not" our blessed Saviour as they did, it is not that He is not present with His Church, but that we make a veil by sin and worldliness to hide Him from our eyes; yet even to His truest servants this world is not a place of perfect joy and peace. On the contrary, Christ's servants, more or less, here weep and lament, while the world rejoices. Christ's servants have their share of common earthly trials, and, besides these, they are exposed to opposition and ridicule on account of their religion, and mourn also over past and present sins.

"Again, a little while," says Jesus to His servants, "and I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." Just as a woman remembers no more her pain, when her new-born child smiles upon her, so shall the faithful Christian think nothing of the cross which on earth He bore so meekly, when in the morning of the resurrection he shall see his Master in the clouds of heaven, and with humble faith look up to Him as the Saviour whom he trusted and followed along the rugged path of duty. The "world" may "rejoice," but while they laugh, all things are serious round about them. God is serious, who exercises patience toward them; Christ is serious, who shed His blood for us; the Holy Ghost is serious, who strives against the obstinacy of their hearts; the Holy Scriptures bring to their ears the most serious things in the world, the whole creation is serious in serving God; all that are in heaven or hell are serious; how then can *they* be gay? (Rom. viii. 22; 2 Sam. xi. 11.)

In that day. No specific day or period of time is here referred to by our Lord, but the whole future, beginning at the time of His resurrection. It is as though He had said: "Your minds are now in darkness and perplexity in view of the circumstances of trial by which you and I are surrounded. But soon the darkness and sorrow which possess you, will pass away. You will then see clearly the relation of my suffering and death to human redemption, and in my resurrection and reappearance, you will find the pledge of my presence and faithfulness to the very end. Then you will enter upon that dispensation of spiritual light and blessedness, which in the end will leave nothing for you to desire, nothing which you will not understand. In that day of consummated bliss, you will have occasion to ask me nothing, all these points of present mystery and obscurity being fully cleared up to your mind." (See 1 Cor. xiii. 12.)

Verily. Our Lord, as this word shows, here begins an altogether new subject, connected indeed with what has gone before, and even arising out of it, but yet distinct, and complete in itself, and this is to ask blessings. "There is not in this verse," says *Trench*, "a contrast between asking the *Son*, which shall cease, and asking the *Father*, which shall begin, but the first half of the verse closes the declaration of one blessing, namely, that hereafter they shall be so taught by the Spirit as to have nothing further to *inquire*; the second half of the verse begins the declaration of altogether a new blessing, that whatever they shall *seek* from the Father in the Son's name, He will give it them." He who before had said (chap. xiv. 13, 14,) "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do," here says, "Whatsoever He will give it you." So complete is the Divine unity.

In my name, that is, prayer offered by them as His disciples, devoted to His interests, and acting under His authority. Here is the warrant by which Christians from the earliest times have concluded all their petitions with the sacred name of Jesus. In His name, through His mediation, uttering that, trusting in this, ye may ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. (Chap. xv. 7.)

23. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. ^aVerily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

^aMatt. vii. 7 and xxi. 22; chap. xiv. 13 and xv. 7, 16.

21. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

¹Chap. xv. 11.

In my name. While Christ was with them, not having been exalted to His Mediatorial station at the right hand of God, prayer had not been offered through Him. The basis on which they were to be heard and accepted of God, was the obedience and death of Jesus Christ, as an atonement for sin. Hence the command now given was an advance on that in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. vii. 7), the appended clause *in my name*, revealing the ground of the efficacy of prayer. "Prayer *in the name of Christ*, and prayer *to Christ*, presuppose His *glorification*." The disciples had not as yet had, at least comparatively, just views of His character as the Mediator. He calls them to come henceforward with boldness to the throne of grace, and to "*ask*," when He is gone, in His name, with the most confident hopes and largest expectations, that their joy might be full. Christ is our Advocate, to hand our petitions to the Father. "All our prayers are but cyphers, till Christ's intercession be added. Cyphers in arithmetic stand for nothing, till a figure be added. (xiv. 6, xv. 7; Gen. xliii. 3.)

Why is there so little of the Life of God in our soul, or the Love of God in our hearts, or the Peace of God in our bosoms, or the Image of God in our lives? Chiefly because we are so little in prayer, cordial, fervent, humble, persevering prayer, because we talk so much *about* God in public, but so little *with* God in private.

25. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father.

Proverbs, that is, figurative language, not intended to be understood by everybody, and perhaps, for a time, not understood by the Apostles themselves. *I shall show you plainly of the Father.* The proof which these words afforded of His acquaintance with their secret souls, enabled them to depend more confidently on the promises and assurances which He proceeded to add. And this conviction that Christ is acquainted with our most secret sorrows, and is ever ready and willing to relieve them, is indeed the groundwork of all such comfort as religion affords amidst the troubles of life.

The promises here made to the disciples are the treasury to which we should resort for consolation whenever we are downcast and perplexed; for these promises are the heritage of God's Church in all ages.

26. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: 27. For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

²Verse 23. ³Chap. xiv. 21, 23. ⁴Verse 30; chap. iii. 13 and xvii. 8.

That day, &c. (See notes on verse 23.) This is reconciled with what is there said, by referring it to the commencement of that great time-period, when there still existed the necessity of prayer for more perfect light and knowledge. *And I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you.* Our Lord's words, in connection with what follows, "*for the Father Himself loveth you*," seem plainly intended to convey this meaning: "Not to mention or dwell on my intercession with the Father—which will assuredly be put forth, and will as assuredly be successful, for the Father always hears the Son—the love of the Father, both to you and me, secures that He will give you whatsoever ye ask in my name, for He does love you, and loves you because you love me. We are not to think of the intercession, any more than of the atonement, as that which makes God love His people. Both are the mediums through which benignity, guided by wisdom, manifests itself to men in consistency with—the glorious illustration of—the claims of righteousness. The Father does not love them because Christ intercedes for them. Christ intercedes for them because they are the Father's, the object of His peculiar love; a love which is eternal, sovereign and of which He can find no cause out of Himself.

Because ye have loved me, and have believed, &c. In a certain sense, love precedes as well as follows faith. Each of these reacts upon the other. (Chap. i. 16.) Yet principally love is here put first, as Christ was first speaking of love; and then He proceeds to speak of faith, in order to prepare the way for that profession of faith which afterward the disciples utter, and which thus He put even into their mouth. *That I came out from God.* (See notes on next verse.)

28. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." 29. His disciples said unto him, *Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.* 30. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

^cChap. xiii. 3. ^sChap. xxi. 17. ^bVerse 27; chap. xvii. 8.

As Christ had before contracted the precepts of His Father (the Law, Matt. xxii. 37-40), so here, being ready to depart, He contracts the history of His own life (the Gospel) for the remembrance of His disciples, saying, *I came forth from the Father, &c.* He "went out from the Father," when He was incarnate, He "came into the world," at His nativity: again, He left the world, when He was crucified, and He went to the Father, when He ascended. The disciples immediately on these words tell Jesus, *Lo, now speakest thou plainly, &c.* Let us beseech Him, that it may be no parable to us, but that we may so understand and remember His "coming out from the Father," for love of us, that in love to Him, we may seek to leave the world, and follow Him to the Father. (xiii. 3; Heb. xiii. 13, 14.)

Now we are sure. The emphatic *now* they earnestly repeat. So delicately and effectively had the great Master suited His words to their hearts as to convince them anew that He knew their hearts. *That any man should ask thee*, that is, "that any should put questions to thee." The purport of these words is—Thou knowest us so perfectly, and what all our doubts and difficulties are, as to render it unnecessary to apply to Thee by questions.

31. Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?

There was a too confident expression of their faith, to which our Lord plaintively alludes, showing them how little they knew their own hearts. There was no irony, but the tone of deep solicitude and tender affection. Would that your faith were so confirmed that it would be proof against all trial and temptation. But, alas, there will soon occur that which will discover your undue confidence in your own strength. The question was evidently asked to put them on a full examination of their hearts.

32. Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

^aMatt. xxvi. 31; Mark xiv. 27. ^bChap. xx. 10. ^cChap. viii. 29 and xiv. 10, 11.

The Saviour declares, though yet in a proverb, that already they had entered upon that final hour, whose close should witness the fulfillment of the ancient prophecy, "I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad," to their own homes, to their former occupations, to seek their own safety by a timid and almost selfish flight. What a picture is this of desertion! They who had all confidently declared, while the danger was yet distant, that they would follow Him to prison and to death, when the danger draws nigh, "all forsook Him and fled."

I am not alone, &c. Christians, between whom and Christ there is a relation, and a conformity founded upon it, *may* be alone, by the bereaving dispensations of Providence. But it is a blessed truth, that whoever dies, the Lord lives, whoever fails He is firm. They *ought* often to be alone with God. There they can hold the freest and fullest communion with Him, there they become acquainted with themselves, there they shake off the influences of the world, and there the Lord will show them His covenant. They *must* die alone. But, with David they can say, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for *Thou* art with me: Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

33. These things I have spoken unto you, that ^ain me ye might have peace. ^bIn the world ye shall have tribulation: ^cbut be of good cheer, ^dfor I have overcome the world.

^eIsa. ix. 6; chap. xiv. 27; Rom. v. 1; Eph. ii. 14; Col. i. 20. ^fChap. xv. 19, 20, 21; 2 Tim. iii. 12. ^gChap. xiv. 1. ^hRom. viii. 37; 1 John iv. 4 and v. 4.

The Saviour would not end this discourse with sorrowful words. The beginning of it was, "Let not your heart be troubled." The end was, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." He does not promise His people a *prosperous* life, but He does promise them a *peaceful* one. *In the world ye shall have tribulation*, but in me ye shall have peace." This is a mystery to the world, because they imagine that happiness arises from prosperous circumstances. It is true *their* happiness proceeds from nothing else, but the happiness of the people of God flows from a sense of forgiving love and a hope of eternal glory.

1. What is meant by "offended?" 2. What did Jesus predict concerning His disciples? 3. How was it expedient for Christ to go away? 4. Of what was the promised Comforter to reprove the world? 5. How was He to glorify Jesus? 6. What did our Lord say to His disciples, when they did not understand His saying, "a little while, &c.,?" 7. What encouragement have we to "ask" in Christ's name? 8. How is verse 28 to be understood? 9. What did Jesus ask His disciples? 10. How have His disciples peace in Him? 11. Why should they be of good cheer in the tribulation through which they pass?

CHAPTER XVII.

1 *Christ prayeth to His Father to glorify him, 6 to preserve his apostles, 11 in unity, 17 and truth, 20 to glorify them, and all other believers with him in heaven.*

THESE words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come. glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: *Chap. xii. 23 and xiii. 32.

Having closed His conference with His disciples, our blessed Lord proceeds to His prayer of intercession with the Father. "Christ, the eternal High Priest," says *Beza*, "being about to offer Himself, by solemn prayers consecrates Himself as the sacrifice, and us with Him, to God the Father. This prayer, therefore, has been the foundation of the Church of God from the creation of the world, is now, and will be, to the consummation of all things."

"Plain and artless as this address sounds, says *Luther*, "it is so deep, rich and wide, that no one can find its bottom or extent."

These words spake Jesus, that is, what is related in the preceding chapters. *Lifted up his eyes to heaven.* Hitherto His glance had been horizontally directed upon His listening Apostles, but now our Evangelist beholds Him turn His eye upward. This is the natural direction of the eye in prayer, the habitation of God being regarded as high above the firmament.

Father—the first appealing word of the eternal intercession, simply Father, a name of God unknown to the world before the Son revealed it. It is worthy of notice that He does not say *Our Father*, for God was His Father in a sense which could not be shared by His disciples, nor *my Father*, for this would represent Him as praying for Himself apart from His disciples, as in Matthew xxvi. 39, 42, "but simply *Father*, that great name in which all the mystery of Redemption is summed up."

The hour is come. Our Lord here speaks of the hour in which He was about to finish by His death the work which His Father had given Him to do "on the earth." (Comp. verse 4; chap. vii. 30, viii. 20.) This hour, the most signal in the annals both of time and eternity, was marked by the union of wide extremes, by strange contrasts and wondrous results. 1. It was an hour of the deepest humiliation, and yet of transcendent glory. 2. It was marked with the greatest of human crimes, and the most affecting displays of the Divine mercy. 3. It was an hour in which wicked men and the ever-blessed God accomplished opposite and contrary purposes. 4. It was the hour of the triumph and overthrow of hell. 5. It stands distinguished from every other hour, as a point of time standing between the eternity of the past and the future, and related to each in a manner which marks no other from the beginning to the end of the world.

Glorify thy Son, receive thy Son to the glorious condition in heaven which has been appointed for Him. (Comp. Mark xvi. 19; Phil. ii. 9-11.) *That thy Son also may glorify thee.* The Father would be greatly honored by the extension of the Gospel, and the success which was to attend it, when, after the ascension of Jesus, the Spirit should be sent into the world.

2. ^aAs thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

^bDan. vii. 14; Matt. xi. 27 and xxviii. 18; chap. iii. 35 and v. 27; 1 Cor. xv. 25, 27; Phil. ii. 10; Heb. ii. 8. ^cVerses 6, 9, 24 ^dchap. vi. 37.

Christ is to be regarded here as a constituted Ruler. This He is as Mediator. Considered as the eternal Son of God, He has a sovereign, governing power, which, as it was original and natural to Him, can never be lost, more than the Godhead.

(Col. i. 15, 16; Heb. i. 2.) But as He is Mediator, God-man, He is a Governor, too, by constitution. All power is given Him both in heaven and earth. The Father hath given all things into His hand. (Chap. xiii. 3, on which see notes.)

That he should give eternal life. Life eternal is that which Christ intends for His people, and He will never rest satisfied till He crown His other mercies to them with putting them in possession of this inestimable gift. *To as many, &c.* (See verse 6, also chap. vi. 37, 38, &c.) In the original it is in the neuter gender, the better to express the universality of the proposition *All*, and everything that the Father gave Him in the covenant of redemption, whatever kind of people they are, Jews or Gentiles, bond or free; and not only all of them, but *all*, that is in every one, the whole man, soul and body, as the Saviour intimates also in saying (chap. vi. 40), that "He will raise them up at the last day," which must be understood of the body; and so "*all* that the Father gave to Him, shall come to Him," wholly, entirely, without any exception or reserve. (1 Thes. v. 23.)

3. And ^athis is life eternal, that they might know thee ^bthe only true God, and Jesus Christ, ^cwhom thou hast sent.

^aIsa. liii. 11; Jer. ix. 24. ^c1 Cor. viii. 4; 1 Thes. i. 9.

^bChap. iii. 34, v. 36, 37, vi. 29, 57, vii. 29, x. 36 and xi. 42.

This is life eternal, &c. That is, not only the way to eternal life, but also the beginning and first rudiments of it, seeing the same knowledge, when completed, or the full beatific vision of God, is eternal life in its fullness and perfection. *That they might know thee, &c.* To "*know* the only true God," is to acknowledge that the true God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," and has committed the whole work of salvation into His hands, and withal so to acknowledge Him *with effect*, as not only, in return for this love, to worship God with our whole heart and mind, but also to seek our salvation from this love of God by His Son.

To *know Christ* is to know Him as a Saviour, the sole Giver of salvation, and cordially to worship and receive Him as such.

Some have used this verse, but utterly

in vain, to impugn the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ. (See verses 2, 5.) That Jesus here speaks of *the only true God*, in distinction from idols, and not to the exclusion of Himself appears from His speaking of Himself, as the object of the same fiducial knowledge with the Father, and from His distinguishing Himself from the Father, not by any essential title, but merely by His office—character, viz.: *Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.* (See Deut. xxii. 12; Judg. x. 16; 1 Sam. vii. 3; Ps. lxxxi. 9; Isa. lxiii. 11.) And the same Apostle who recorded this prayer expressly says of Christ, *This is the true God, and eternal life*, in opposition to idols. (1 John v. 20, 21.)

4. ^aI have glorified thee on the earth: ^bI have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

^aChap. xiii. 31 and xiv. 13. ^bChap. iv. 34, v. 36, ix. 3 and xix. 30.

Jesus glorified His Father by the doctrine which He preached, by the miracles which He wrought, by the unspotted purity and innocence of His life, and by His unparalleled sufferings at His death. *I have finished the work, &c.* That is, I am now about to finish it. He speaks of what He had resolved to do as already done.

Observe, 1. That this work of redemption is work that glorifies God. 2. That every man has his work, his proper work, assigned him by God. 3. This work must be finished here upon earth. 4. That, when we have done our proportion of work, we may expect our proportion of reward. 5. That it is a blessed thing at the hour of death to be able to say in sincerity and uprightness, that we have glorified God in the world, and have finished the work which He appointed us to do. 6. As the one offering of Himself by Jesus was sufficient, a great indignity is put upon Him by any attempt to add to His work. We want no penance, no purgatory—His blood cleanseth from all sin. We want no mediator, no patron—but our "Advocate with the Father." 7. Christ's finished work should relieve and encourage us under all our imperfections. We ought to be humbled for our deficiencies, and we shall deeply bewail them before God if our hearts are right with Him. But the foundation of our hope lies not here. We glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus

Christ. We live through Him. We are accepted in the Beloved. We are complete in Him.

5. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory ^{which I had with thee before the world was.}

^{Chap. i. 1, 2, x. 30 and xiv. 9; Phil. ii. 6; Col. i. 15, 17; Heb. i. 3, 10.}

In this passage our Lord speaks of glory in reference to the future and the past. He refers to the future when He prays that His Father would now glorify Him, that is, after His sufferings, He refers to the past, when He says that He had glory with the Father before the world began. The import of the prayer is, that His original glory might be manifested in a particular manner, or after a temporary obscuration. We have here an answer to an objection, that Christ cannot be conceived to pray for the same state of glory which, on the supposition of His pre-existence (which is here undeniably taught) He enjoyed before His humiliation, because it had never been lost. But it had been concealed from the eyes of men by His voluntary abasement, and it would be displayed in a new light, by His exaltation in our nature to the throne of the universe, and by the result of His administration in the perfection and eternal happiness of His people.

6. I have manifested thy name unto the men ^{which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.}

^{Verse 26; Ps. xxii. 22. Verses 2, 9, 11; chap. vi. 37, 39, x. 29 and xv. 19.}

From praying for Himself the Saviour now comes to pray for His disciples. How did the disciples feel when they heard their beloved Master speak of *them* to His Father; for they must have known it was of *them* He spake, when He said, "*The men whom thou gavest me*, &c. Are the Apostles the *only* men that the Father has given to the Son? Blessed be His name, they are *not*. They were representative men, the whole body of believers are also included in the words. An innumerable multitude have, as provided for in the economical counsels of the Divine Three, been given to the Son, as the fruit of His infinite sufferings.

Thy name—thy whole character toward mankind. *I have manifested*. "I have brought it into light, and caused it to shine in itself and to illumine others." Nature showed a little in creation—the Mosaic dispensation more in revelation, but the

full manifestation of God, His nature, and attributes, came only by Christ. *Thou gavest me*. None are given to Christ but those that were first the Father's. The character of the Father is not merely externally, but internally, savingly manifested in the souls of Christ's followers. The practice which they pursue, is thus stated, "*They have kept thy word*." By the Word of God, we are to understand the Divine law, and all the ordinances of His appointment. This implies, 1. *The reception of it*. We cannot be said to keep that which we have not previously received. 2. *Obedience to it*. They keep it so as to reduce it to practice. 3. *Continuance in it*. The disciples had kept God's Word pure from the doctrines and commandments of men, and persevered in it, and so must we.

7. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

That all things, &c. That is (appears from the next verse), that all "words" (the doctrines), whatsoever Thou hast commissioned me to speak, are indeed from Thee. There is nothing in the original answering to the word *things*. The Apostles had learned and recognized that these doctrines were not fabricated by Jesus, but given from God.

8. For I have given unto them the words ^{which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.}

^{Chap. viii. 28, xii. 49 and xiv. 10. Verse 25; chap. xvi. 27, 30.}

"If any man will do His will," said our Lord once before, "he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." (vii. 17.) This was realized in the case of these disciples. They walked according to the light they had, and they received more light. They walked faithfully, and to them was given the assurance of faith. (xv. 15.) They were obedient, and therefore they were blessed; for, "Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it." So that they could say, each one, "I know in whom I have believed;" for, "He that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance."

9. I pray for them: ^{I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.}

^{I John v. 19.}

The word in the original is not so much, "I pray," as "I ask," or "make request," and so, in verse 20. *For them*—not as individuals merely, but as representatives of all

such in every succeeding age. (See verse 20, and notes.) *Not for the world*—for they had been given Him “out of the world.” (Verse 6.) “In that prayer for eternal life,” says *Hooker*, “which our Saviour knew could not be made without effect, He excepteth them for whom He knew His sufferings would be frustrate, and commendeth unto God His own. (See Matt. xxv. 34; Rom. viii. 33.)” The simple sentiment which is here after the manner of John expressed positively and negatively, is that the world in its state of unbelief and rebellion against God, is not included in the intercessory prayer which Christ is now offering. This does not however imply any decree of exclusion, by which they who are of the world are debarred from salvation by Him. The idea is simply that the intercessory prayer of Jesus embraces those only who are the actual subjects of His redeeming love. It cannot be denied, however, that His omniscient eye ran down the ages of time, and took in at one comprehensive glance, not only His disciples who then surrounded Him, but also all those “who should believe on Him through their word.” (Verse 20.) *For they are thine*, this is stated, as the reason or ground, why the Father could give them to the Son in the compact of redemption. They were His, not simply as His creatures, but in the embrace of His everlasting love.

10. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.—*Chap. xvi. 15.*

These are very high and strong expressions, too grand for any mere creature to use, as implying that all things whatsoever, inclusive of the Divine nature, perfections and operations, are the common property of the Father and the Son. And this is the original ground of that peculiar property, which both the Father and the Son have in the persons given to Christ as Mediator. The words, *and I am glorified in them*, cohere closely with the last words of verse 9. We are reminded thereby that Christ is glorified in His saints, by their life (1 Cor. x. 31), and by their death. (John xxi. 19.)

11. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.
Chap. xiii. 1 and xvi. 28. 1 Peter i. 5; Jude 1. Verse 21, &c. Chap. x. 30.

No more in the world. “I am just going to

leave the world, and therefore they shall stand in need of peculiar assistance and support. Though my struggles are at an end, theirs are not; though I have gotten beyond the scenes of strife, I cannot sever myself in spirit from them, left behind and only just entering on their great conflict.” *Holy Father*, an expression He nowhere else uses. “*Father*,” is His wonted appellation, but “*Holy*” is here prefixed, because His appeal was to that perfection of the Father’s nature, to “keep” or preserve them from being tainted by the unholy atmosphere of “the world” they were still on. *Through thine own name*—rather, “in Thy name,” in the exercise of that gracious and holy character for which He was known.

Those whom thou hast given me. (See notes on verses 2, 8, 9.) *That they may be one, &c.* “Sin,” says *Leighton*, “broke all to pieces, man from God, and men from one another. Christ’s work in the world was *union*. To make up these breaches He came down, and began the union which was His work, in the wonderful union made in His person that was to work it, making God and man one. And as the nature of man was reconciled, so, by what He performed, the persons of men are united to God. Faith makes them one with Christ, and He makes them one with the Father, and hence results this oneness among themselves, centering and meeting in Jesus Christ, and in the Father through Him, they are made one together.”

12. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition: that the Scripture might be fulfilled.
Chap. vi. 39 and x. 28; Heb. ii. 13. Chap. xviii. 9; 1 John ii. 19. Chap. vi. 70 and xiii. 18. Ps. cix. 8; Acts i. 20.

While I was. The word is proleptically used, as Christ had not yet actually left them. It will be seen that the great standpoint of this prayer is, by way of anticipation, after His glorification had commenced. *I kept them in thy name*, I preserved them in the knowledge and love of Thyself, through my teaching and care. *Those that thou gavest me, &c.* (See notes on verses 2, 6, 11, 12.) In the preceding verses those who were given to Christ are stated to have “kept His word,” and believed in *Him*,” but Judas had always been a hypocrite, and was now a traitor and apostate, and therefore Christ could not mean to in-

clude him in that number. (vi. 66-71; verses 70, 71, xiii. 18, 30, verses 18, 21, 27-30.) And if in this verse we understand by those "given to Christ," such as were given Him to be His Apostles, without reference to faith, or "the election of grace," we cannot explain the preceding verses in that sense, because they are verified in none but true believers, of which number Judas never had been.

The son of perdition. (2 Thes. ii. 3, 4.) "The son of perdition" signifies one, who deservedly perishes. *That the Scripture might be fulfilled.* The Scripture was fulfilled, the sin of Judas was foreseen in God's counsel, and foretold in His Word, and the event would certainly follow after the prediction as a consequence, though it cannot be said to *follow from it* as an effect. (See Ps. xli. 9, lxix. 25, cix. 8.) Most modern commentators are of opinion that our Lord has no particular passage in view (as Ps. iv. 10, which He at another time applies to this purpose, in John xiii. 18), but rather alludes to the *prophecies in general* concerning His Passion.

13. And now I come to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

In the world. For as yet He *was* in it, but was just going to leave it and go unto the Father. His last words, considering their conduct, might have been reproachful, or at least reproving: but the things He now spoke were adapted to encourage, and *designed* to comfort them. "*My joy.*" Observe its *nature*. This joy is not the joy which Christ has, when He sees the travail of His soul, and is "satisfied," but the joy of which He is the medium, author, source, and only source. *These things I speak . . . that, &c.* The joy of the believer is not a visionary thing. It is not the produce of delusion or ignorance. It flows from conviction, it appeals to the word of the Saviour. Observe the *measure of this joy*—"fulfilled in themselves." They possessed it already, but defectively. In conversion a good work is begun, but it is carried on until the day of Christ. Christian experience is progressive. Some from various preventions have little of the pleasures of religion, others walk in the comforts of the Holy Ghost. Observe, also, the *importance* of this joy, as attested

by the concern our Saviour here expresses. He knew the importance of this possession—to the honor of our religion and the commendation of the ways of godliness to others—to our zeal and activity in the Divine life—to our weanedness from the world—to our support in trouble, and our comfort in the valley of the shadow of death.

14. ^aI have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them: because they are not of the world, ^beven as I am not of the world.
^cVerse 8. ^dChap. xv. 18-19; 1 John iii. 13. ^eChap. viii. 23; verse 16.

And. The things connected are, to receive God's Word, and to be hated by the world. Fidelity in following and preaching the Word of God in its purity is inconsistent with the friendship of the world. There is no danger of being hated by the world, when, through fear of displeasing it, we abstain either from following the way of truth or from teaching it, for from the time that we act thus, we ourselves are of the world. (See on verse 16; also on chap. xv. 18-25.)

15. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.

^aMatt. vi. 13; Gal. i. 4; 2 Thes. iii. 3; 1 John v. 18.

I pray not, &c. The world being continually vexatious and troublesome to the followers of Christ, they may, perhaps, frequently desire to be taken out of it, and placed "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." But though the difficulties, trials and sufferings, to which His disciples would be exposed, would be many and great, yet Jesus did not thus pray for them. He knew it would neither be for His glory, nor for the good of mankind, nor for their own advantage, that they should be taken out of the world. (See 1 Peter ii. 9; Matt. v. 14, xiii. 33; 1 Cor. iii. 8; Rev. xxii. 12, xx. 12; Heb. vi. 10; Gal. vi. 7-10.) Observe, 1. It is the province of God to take us out of the world. "In His hand thy breath is, and His are all thy ways." 2. This world is a proper situation for the righteous to live in for a season. By their remaining here the wicked have instances of religion before them, which encourage as well as condemn. It is in the very nature of religion to render Christians active in doing good. The state of society, bad as it is, would be far worse, not to say intolerable,

were the righteous to be withdrawn, and the licentiousness of sinners to be no longer repressed, or counteracted by their rebuke, their example, and their influence. 3. There is evil in the world to which Christians are exposed, and by which they may be injured. There is the evil of destructive error. There is Satan who desires to "sift them as wheat." (Luke xxii. 31.) There is evil from the snares of the world, whether of prosperity or adversity, or those laid by the people of it, and from the tribulation of it. 4. The Divine protection is essential to their security. Nothing equals the dependence of the Christian: but herein lie all his spiritual resources, for when he "is weak, then he is strong." When in himself he can do nothing, he forms an alliance with Omnipotence, and can do all things. 5. It is encouraging to remember that our Lord and Saviour prays for our preservation. "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

16. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."—Verse 14.

Of. This sentiment is expressed also in verse 14, but in a different order of words, which simply shows the cause of the world's hatred, and accords with the next verse, 15. Here, however, *not of the world* stands as the reason why Jesus invoked for them His Father's protecting care. Their virtual separation from the world, even while yet living in it, which was there implied, is rendered in this reiteration of the words, more prominent and impressive. Their separation from the world was in one sense as real, as though they had been removed out of it. (Phil. iii. 20.) The non-conformity of believers with the world, and their conformity with Christ is a sure pledge that the Father will keep them from the evil of the world, and that they will not lose the good things which grace has begun in them, for this is an argument why He should "keep them from the evil."

17. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

"Chap. xv. 3; Acts xv. 9; Eph. v. 26; 1 Peter i. 22. 12 Sam. vii. 23; Ps. cxix. 142, 151; chap. viii. 40.

Sanctification, or being renewed, and made like to God, is a necessity. (2 Thes. ii. 3.) It is so, 1. As being correspondence

to the Divine character. 2. As arising from the command of God which is found in every part of the Divine record. 3. In order to evince our faith and union to Christ. Faith without purity is vain. 4. For the advancement of God's glory. It is not to be expected that anything but a holy Christian can be instrumental and beneficial in advancing the cause of religion in the world. 5. For the peace of our minds. Without purity there can be no peace. 6. In order to qualify us for the heavenly kingdom. We must be like God if we would be happy in eternity, there must be a *meetness* for heaven, as well as a *title* to heaven. (Lev. xix. 2, xx. 7, xxi. 8, &c.) *Sanctify them, &c.*, not initially, for so they were sanctified already, but progressively: let them increase more and more in grace and holiness. Learn hence, 1. That such as are already sanctified, ought to pray and strive for higher degrees of sanctification. 2. The Word of God is the great instrument in His hand for His people's sanctification. "*Thy truth.*" There is an emphasis in the appropriation—*thy truth*: for it is not every kind of truth that sanctifies, but the truth of God: "*the truth as it is in Jesus.*" It is by the Word of truth, either communicated in writing, or addressed orally to men, that the church has been extended, and that the salvation of individuals in that church is promoted, and their relation to Christ, their turning to God, their growth in grace, their establishment in peace, purity and meetness for heaven, secured. Divine truth conduces to our sanctification, by the holy objects of contemplation it reveals, by the powerful motives it presents, by the excellent examples it exhibits, and by the Spirit of holiness that attends it, for His influence is necessary to the success even of His own Word. 3. That the Word of God is a Divine truth, an eternal truth, an infallible truth, an holy truth. (See notes on verse 19.)

18. "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world."—Chap. xx. 21.

Here the Saviour draws a gracious analogy between His mission from the Father and their mission from Him, that this latter may likewise be an object of interest to Him. The Apostles had the same

commission which Christ had, considered as *man*—they were endued with the same Spirit, and His Word through them was accompanied with even the same success.

19. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

1 Cor. i. 2, 30; 1 Thes. iv. 7; Heb. x. 10.

I sanctify myself. The word to sanctify does not here mean to renovate or purify, but to consecrate or devote. Jesus could not be sanctified in the former sense, because His nature was not depraved or defiled by sin. Under the law, when persons or things were dedicated to God, they were considered as hallowed or holy, and to use them for any common purpose was to profane them. Thus Jesus consecrated Himself to be an atonement to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. He here gives us a glimpse of the nobleness and the blessedness of doing, and denying one's self, anything for others' sake: "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." What if one suffer and almost sacrifice himself for others' good? This is Christ-like. *That they also might be sanctified.* This sanctification differs much from the former. It does indeed take in the notion of dedication, but it also denotes renovation and purification. At present, indeed, the work is not complete, but it is begun, and is advancing. "*That they also might be sanctified.*" This shows us what a connection our sanctification has with the sacrifice of Christ. Observe, 1. How precious and invaluable must Christ have deemed this sanctification, since He considered nothing too great or expensive to procure it for us. 2. They do not improve His death aright who seek from it hope but not holiness. 3. Those are badly instructed in the mystery of sanctification who think to gain it from some slavish, legal, superstitious, self-righteous methods of their own, instead of repairing to the sufferings of Christ, the only fountain opened for sin and uncleanness.

20. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

"I pray for these," says our Lord—that is, for the Apostles, but He adds, "I pray not only for them, *but for them also,*" &c.

He extended His view through all coming time, and embraced in His intercession all who should become His followers. "We may justly write this comfortable text in letters of gold," says *Luther*, "as it relates to all. For it is our glory and consolation, our treasure and pearl, so that for us Gentiles the whole Scriptures do not afford a more comfortable saying than this. (Isa. liv. 6-14)."

21. That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

1 Verses 11, 22, 23; chap. x. 16; Rom. xii. 5; Gal. iii. 23. Chap. x. 38 and xiv. 11.

"This prayer," says *Dr. Chalmers*, "was made for the establishment, not only of such a real, but of such an ostensible unity among Christians as could be seen by the world, and as might lead the world to believe in the mission of our Saviour." "The special mercy and particular blessing which Christ prays for on behalf of believers," remarks *Burkitt*, "is a close and intimate union betwixt the Father, Himself and them, and also betwixt one another, such an union as doth in some sort resemble that union which is betwixt God and Christ—not an unity of essence and nature, but of wills and affections. Here Christ intimates one special advantage that would redound to the world by this desirable union betwixt the ministers and members of Christ, it will, if not convert, yet at least convince the world that I and my doctrine came from God." The following testimonies of eminent theologians on the union of Christians will be read with interest: "He has not the love of God, who does not seek the union of the Church."—*Augustine*.

"I confess I would rather, much rather, spend all my time and days in making up and healing the breaches and schisms that are amongst Christians, than one hour in justifying our divisions even therein, wherein on the one side they are capable of a just defense."—*Owen*. "Thousands have been drawn to Popery, and confirmed in it by the divisions of Protestants. We take the position and believe it tenable, that the Gospel cannot accomplish its great triumph and collect the redeemed from every land, until the law of Christ be fulfilled by these Protestant sects I can as willingly be a martyr for *Love*, as

for any article of the Creed.”—*Baxter*. “O, how do I long to see bigotry and party zeal taken away, and all the Lord’s servants more knit together! Would that all the names among the saints of God were swallowed up in that one of Christian.”—*Whitfield*. “Believers are often tied with pack-threads by their little fingers, into small unions, but the great unity which binds their hearts together, and will last, when the pack-threads shall be destroyed by a touch of the fire, is their unity in the Son of God. Comparatively speaking, I see no other sectarianism worth fighting for, and they who fight well for that, enduring hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, have but little leisure or inclination for the small and unpurposed business of subaltern skirmishes and squabbles.”—*Rev. J. M. Mason, D.D.* “That which gives life to Churches is not their diversities of government, or worship, or of discipline, but that “most holy faith” which is common to them all The union of all true Christians! That is the Reformation of the nineteenth century.”—*Rev. J. H. Merle D’Aubigne, D.D.* (See on next verse.)

22. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, “that they may be one, even as we are one: 23. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.”—*Chap. xiv. 20; 1 John i. 3 and iii. 24. 2 Col. iii. 14.*

The glory which thou gavest (“hast given”) *me, &c.* The last clause of verse 22 shows the meaning of the first. It is not the *future* glory of the heavenly state, but the secret of that *present* unity just before spoken of, *the glory*, therefore, *of the indwelling Spirit of Christ*, the glory of an accepted state, of a holy character, of every grace. *May be one*—for that “glory” has its source in a spark of Divine love in the heart, and that love melts into one its various possessors, so that there is one love, one glory, one Church. *Even as we are one.* Evincing, as the Father and the Son had always done, the same great aim and plan, not pursuing different interests, or counteracting each other’s purposes, or forming parties, but seeking the same ends by the same means. This is the union between the Father and the Son. Always in the creation, preservation and redemption of the world, they have sought the same object. And this is to be the model

on which Christians should act. Consider 1 Cor. x. 16, 17, where the participation of Christ in the Lord’s Supper is noticed as the very condition of that oneness of believers, of which our Saviour here, for the third time, speaks.

I in them, and thou in me, &c. Observe, 1. Christ takes up His abode in His people by His Spirit, so that they become one with Him. 2. The Father dwells in Christ, not only as He is one God with Him, but also as He is man, in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily, so highly is our nature dignified in His Person. (See notes on verse 26.) 3. Although there can be no union between God and fallen man immediately, yet through Christ this union is made up, and Christ being in us as believers, and we united to Him, the Father also, in Him, is in us, and we in Him. 4. It is by our union with Christ, and with God through Him, that our union among ourselves is perfected. 5. Whatever excellence the Lord confers upon every particular believer, yet their perfection consists in their union among themselves, and with Christ their Head and Fountain, and with the Father in His fullness through Him, for no one member has the perfection of the whole body, but of a part only, nor has it that perfection separate from the body, but in it, and being united with it, to supply its own proper function; and the whole body, thus united, has its perfection in and from Christ and the Father.

That the world may know, &c. When they shall see the concord and agreement of Christians in doctrine, worship and affection. Too little is it considered how necessary the union of believers is to convince the world of the excellency of Christ and His doctrine, hence it is again here referred to as a forcible argument pressing this union. *And hast loved them, &c.* Every page almost in the Bible breathes forth this mystery of Divine Love. As it is frequently inculcated, so is it no less strongly represented.

24. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: *a* or thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.
1 Chap. xii. 26 and xiv. 3; 1 Thes. iv. 17. 2 Verse 5.

Here is our Lord’s petition for the glorification of His people. *Father, I will, is a*

remarkable expression. Who but God could with propriety have spoken thus to God? Yet there is nothing authoritative, nothing imperious here. It is rather the language of a dying testator, willing away possessions which were His own to give. I will this to my people. I will that they spend an eternity in my presence and glory; such is my love to them, that heaven will not content me unless they "be with me where I am." *That they also, whom thou hast given me*, &c. Six times in this chapter does Christ describe His people as "they whom Thou hast given me." (See on verses 2, 6, 9.) *Be with me where I am*, that is, in His Father's house with Him. The Saviour thus prays as if His happiness would be incomplete, the travail of His soul unsatisfied, if every member of His beloved family were not with Him, if even the youngest, weakest, feeblest were not there. *That they may behold my glory*, is to be constructed with *be with me where I am*, and not with *I will*, as is done by some expositors. The verb *see* in this connection has the idea also of *partake*. "No mere spectator could see his glory." —*Alford*. (Comp. Rom. viii. 17-39; 1 Cor. xiii. 12; 2 Cor. iiii. 18; 1 John iii. 2.) *Which thou hast given me*, refers to His Mediatorial glory, His essential glory being that which can neither be given nor taken away.

For thou lovedst me, &c. Christ reminds the Father of His love to Him before the world was. When there was no earth, no sun, no man, no angel—when He was by Him—then Thou lovedst me. Who can understand this love, the love of the uncreated God to His uncreated Son? There is everything in Christ to draw the love of His Father. The Saviour's argument is this: If Thou love me do this for my people, for they are part of me. See how Christ's prayer will be answered for you, Christians! He does not plead that you are good and holy, He does not plead that you are worthy, He only pleads His own loveliness in the eyes of the Father. Look not on them, He says, but look on me. Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. Learn to use the same argument with God. This is asking in Christ's name—for the Lord's sake—this is the prayer that is never refused.

25. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.
 *Chap. xv. 21 and xvi. 3. *Chap. vii. 29, viii. 55 and x. 15. *Verse 8; Chap. xvi. 27.

O righteous Father. This is the sixth time that Christ in this prayer has called God, Father. In verse 11, when praying for His people's sanctification, He said, *Holy Father*, making use of that attribute which is the cause of all holiness in the creature, but now, praying for their glorification, He says, *O righteous Father*, righteous in making good Thy promises both to me and them. *The world hath not known thee*, that is, hath not known Thee aright, the unbelieving and unsanctified part of the world having no saving knowledge of God, not living answerably to what they knew to be their duty. Did they but know Thee, they could not but love Thee. This is the Saviour's brief word of appeal to the just God against a rejecting world.

But I have known thee. Christ knew the Father so as no one else ever did, knew on what grounds He went in His undertaking, knew His Father's mind in everything, and therefore, in His prayer, came to Him with confidence, as we do to one we know.

And these have known, &c. Hereby they are distinguished from the unbelieving world. Note, 1. To know and believe in Christ, in the midst of a world that persists in ignorance and infidelity, is highly pleasing to God, and shall certainly be crowned with distinguishing glory. Singular faith qualifies for singular favors. 2. It is the great sin of the unbelieving world that they do not know God. Whatever knowledge they pretend to have, they have no solid impression of it. They do not know God in Christ practically and savingly, and therefore all they know beside is nothing. They do not love God, and true knowledge, in Scripture language, imports also love. They do not practice what they know.

26. *And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.
 *Verse 6; chap. xv. 15. *Chap. xv. 9.

Here is a reference to past instructions and future tuition yet to be enjoyed. *Thy name*. By the name of God here is particularly meant His will and purpose concerning our salvation, and His grace and

mercy therein displayed. Can we imagine anything more important than the truths our Lord came to reveal? *I have declared.* Christ revealed God's name when He was upon earth in His own person, but now that He is in heaven, He does it by the instrumentality of others. He does it externally by the Word—internally by His Spirit. The Spirit illumines the mind, takes away the veil of ignorance from the heart, and causes the true light to shine.

And will declare it. Here is an intimation of the progressive manner in which the revelation of the character of God is communicated. By the outpouring of the influences of His Spirit, He taught the disciples much more after He left the world. So He carries on the work of instruction now in the minds of His people. "They shall go from strength to strength." "He that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance." "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." Have we learned of Christ? There are three marks belonging to such: they have been taught the evil of sin in the school of the law, the love of Christ in the school of the Gospel, and the lesson of patience in the school of affliction.

That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them, may be cherished toward them, that they may share in the love which Thou hast bestowed on me. This would be a consequence of their receiving increased knowledge of the Father, and of being influenced by that knowledge to a stronger affection and confidence toward the Saviour.

And I in them. There are two kinds of union between Christ and His people—a legal union and a spiritual, or, as it is sometimes called, a mystical union, so called because the union is obscure or mysterious. The legal union is that which was formed between Christ and His people, when He was appointed their federal head—an union in law, in consequence of which He represented them and was responsible for them. The spiritual union is that which is formed in regeneration, and is the foundation of communion with Christ in the blessings of His purchase. (See Eph. i. 4, 6, 11, 13; Col. i. 24; Rom. vi. 3, 4; Col. ii. 12; Rom. vi. 5, 6, 8; Gal. ii. 20; Phil. iii. 9; John xv. 5; 1 Peter ii. 4, 6.) "The relation of discipleship in the primitive Church," says *Prof. Lewis*, "was a reality affecting other aspects of Christian truth. Christ was in the Christian, as He was in the Church His earthly body. It was no figure employed to represent a mere following or discipleship. His life was in their life. Hence His sufferings were their sufferings, His resurrection not only the pledge but the ground of the new life then working in their souls, and destined eventually to quicken their immortal bodies, and so His satisfaction to law was their satisfaction, His obedience their obedience, His righteousness their righteousness imputed to them rightly, because it was really theirs as it was really His. They were *Christophori*, Christ-bearers." The Spirit of Christ actually dwells in the souls of believers, and by faith they receive not only the benefits of Christ but Himself. Hence He is said to live in them, and they are said to abide in Him.

1. What did Jesus, as He lifted up His eyes to heaven, say? 2. What is "life eternal?" 3. Did Christ finish the work that had been given Him to do? 4. Had He glory with the Father before the world was? 5. Explain verses 9-11. 6. What is meant by the words "that they may be one, as we are?" 7. What is said about the son of perdition? 8. Why did Jesus pray not that His disciples might be taken out of the world? 9. How are Christians sanctified? 10. How is verse 21 to be understood? 11. What does Christ ask for those whom the Father has given Him? 12. Explain verses 25 and 26.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1 *Judas betrayeth Jesus.* 6 *The officers fall to the ground.* 10 *Peter smiteth off Malchus' ear.* 12 *Jesus is taken, and led unto Annas and Caiaphas.* 15 *Peter's denial.* 19 *Jesus examined before Caiaphas.* 25 *His arraignment before Pilate.* 36 *His kingdom.* 40 *The Jews ask Barabbas to be let loose.*

WHEN Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

*Matt. xxvi. 36; Mark xiv. 32; Luke xxii. 39. †2Sam. xv. 23.

The brook Cedron flowed through a deep vale to the east of Jerusalem. "The first breach," says an eminent theologian, "that the enemy made into the city, was at the brook Cedron, where they took Christ, and on the same day that Christ was taken, was the city taken, on the same feast day, at the same feast of the year. The Emperor commanded the Jews to be whipped there, where they had whipped Christ. Thirty Jews were sold for a penny, as they sold Christ for thirty pence."

2. And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples. 3. Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

*Luke xxi. 37 and xxii. 39. †Matt. xxvi. 47, on which see notes; Mark xiv. 43; Luke xxii. 47; Acts i. 16.

Knew the place, &c. What an aggravation of the guilt of Judas! The place, which, of all others, should have been hallowed in his mind by the most sacred associations, the very spot in which his Divine Master had by His example "taught him how to pray," was the scene of his black and monstrous deed of ingratitude and hypocrisy. Let us not, however, be ready to condemn Judas in this. The House of Prayer may be the place where we also betray Jesus, though we "oftentimes resort thither," as His disciples. (ii. 16; Isa. i. 11-15; Luke xiii. 1.) *A band of men, &c.*—that part of the cohort then stationed in the temple, or it might possibly be only the Jewish guard. *Lanterns* seem to refer here to lamps filled with oil. (See Matt. xxv. 1, 3, 4.) *Torches* (literally *lights*), may denote any blazing substance carried in the hand, in the manner of links and torches made of pitch and tow. *Weapons, i. e.,* swords and staves. (See Matt. xxvi. 47; Mark xiv. 43.) The lights with which this band of murderers were provided, prove the preparations made to explore

any cave or corner where the object of their search might possibly, they conceived, be hidden.

4. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? 5. They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. 6. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. 7. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. 8. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: 9. That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

*Ps. iii. 6 and xxvii. 3; Prov. xxviii. 1. †Jer. viii. 12. ‡Chap. xvii. 12.

See notes on Matt. xxvi. 49.

The whole life of Jesus was a martyrdom; and what rendered that martyrdom still more terrible, was the perfect foreknowledge He possessed of the torments He should endure in His passion. *Jesus of Nazareth.* Twice Jesus answers to the name by which they sought Him, though it was a name of reproach (see chap. i. 46; vii. 52), and twice in answering He proclaims His own eternal name, the two Greek words rendered *I am*, by the very idiom of the language corresponding to the Hebrew translated "I AM THAT I AM," in Ex. iii. 14. The first solemn mention of this name, and the superhuman bearing of Him who justly claimed it, struck them to the ground. (See Isa. xi. 4.) They were all unnerved, and, like the soldiers afterward at His sepulchre, "did shake, and become as dead men." So though they knew that He who questioned them, He whom they were addressing, was even the One they sought, they cannot speak but in this indirect manner, as fearing directly to say, "Thee." When the people, it has been well observed, would have forced Him to a crown, He withdrew, and hid Himself (chap. vi. 15); but when they came to force Him to a cross, He offered Himself: for He came to this world to suffer, and went to the other world to reign.

If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way. Even in the most trying moment of our Lord's own peril, what care, what thoughtfulness, what affectionate consideration for His disciples! What encouragement is here for us if we are Christians! *Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none,* most mercifully manifested in part, every day, and at every period of the Christian's



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life, but to be still more triumphantly, O, how triumphantly declared on that great day, when He shall stand before His Father, and say, "Behold, I and the children"—yea, all the children—"which Thou hast given me."

10. ¹⁰Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.
¹¹Matt. xxvi. 51, on which see notes; Mark xiv. 47; Luke xxii. 49, 50.

The very action of Peter, in striking at the head, seems to show the vehemency of his character. The Evangelist gives the name (*Malchus*), that those, who then read it, might have opportunity of inquiring into the truth of the account. (Mark xv. 21.) And he mentions that he was the *high priest's servant*, because, in addition to the miracle of the cure itself (Luke xxii. 50-53), this shows that it was performed upon one of those who came to take Jesus, and who shortly after struck Him on the face.

11. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?
¹²Matt. xx. 22 and xxvi. 32, 42.

See notes on Matt. xxvi. 52.

Any zeal is proper for religion, but the zeal of the sword and the zeal of anger, this is the bitterness of zeal, and it is a certain temptation to every man against his duty. The Saviour's reproof of Peter for drawing his sword, even in His own cause, for His sacred and yet injured person, teaches us not to use the sword, though in the cause of God, and for God Himself, because He will secure His own interest, only let Him be served as Himself is pleased to command. (2 Tim. ii. 24; James i. 20.)

The cup which my Father, &c. This clause is peculiar to John, and is in sympathy with the language employed in our Lord's hour of agony in the garden. Scarcely had an hour elapsed since he had most earnestly prayed that this cup of suffering might pass from Him, but it was His Father's will that He should drink it. This is here denoted by *hath given me, i. e., hath put into my hands to drink. Shall I not drink it?* This question is rhetorically put for an emphatic affirmation, that it was His duty to render cheerful and submissive obedience to the will of His Father.

12. Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, 13. And led him away to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.
¹⁴Matt. xxvi. 57. ¹⁵Luke iii. 2, on which see notes.

The captain—the præfect of a cohort. At the Passover, and the other great feasts, the Romans sent a whole band of a thousand men to guard the porticos of the temple. *And bound him.* The greater love any one has for Christ, the more attentive will He be in considering the particular circumstances of His sufferings. John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and who loved Jesus with a most ardent affection, is the only Evangelist who takes notice of the *binding* of our Saviour. *The high priest that same year.* This is added because of the frequent change in the office under the Romans.

14. ¹⁴Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.—Chap. xi. 50.

Now Caiaphas, &c. (See on xi. 50.) *Gave counsel, &c.* John here doubtless refers to the counsel of Caiaphas, to show that he was fully prepared to carry out whatever orders Annas might give for the destruction of Christ. It is a matter of great joy to the wicked to see their advice followed, but this joy, which is an effect of the wrath of God, will last but a short time, and will be punished with an endless sorrow.

15. ¶ ¹⁵And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. 16. ¹⁶But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. 17. Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. 18. And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals, for it was cold; and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

¹⁹Matt. xxvi. 58; Mark xiv. 54; Luke xxii. 54. ²⁰Matt. xxvi. 69, on which see notes; Mark xiv. 66; Luke xxii. 54. ²¹Ps. xxvi. 4, 10; 1 Cor. xv. 33; Eph. v. 11, 12.

Another disciple—"rather the other disciple"—our Evangelist himself, no doubt. *Known unto the high priest.* (See on verse 10.) *Went in with Jesus.* His intimacy with the high priest was such, that he was admitted at the same time with Jesus and His accusers. Peter, who could claim no such privilege on the ground of acquaintanceship with any of the officials, was obliged for the time to remain without at the entrance. *Then went out, &c.* All this is very natural. John having

secured his own admission, passed in with the crowd, and afterward came out and brought in his friend, as here narrated. *Her that kept the door.* It is customary, even at the present day, in the East, for the doors of the wealthy to be superintended by a portress, who receives a fee for her services from the visitors. "*He saith, I am not.*" Who can doubt that this denial of Peter was attributable in no small degree to his not only going amongst the servants of the high priest, but even sitting down among them? (Luke xxii. 56.) No man conceives the length to which he afterward sins, when he first enters into an evil way. . . . If you desire safety, you must resist temptation in the bud: if you suffer it to blow and blossom, depend upon it, you will not resist it then: it will grow till it bear fruit, more bitter than the fruit of Sodom. (Gen. xxxix. 12; 2 Kings viii. 13; Ps. i. 1.) *A fire of coals.* It was the coldest hour of night, the hour that precedes the dawn, and the servants and officers had kindled a fire in that end of the hall where they were gathered. Peter did not wish to be recognized, and the best way he thought to preserve his incognito was to put at once the boldest face he could upon it, act as if he had been one of the capturing band, and had as good a right to be there as others of that mixed company, as little known in this palace as himself.

19. ¶ The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. 20. Jesus answered him, *I spake openly to the world, I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing.* 21. *Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them, behold, they know what I said.* 22. And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by *struck* Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, *Answerest thou the high priest so?* 23. Jesus answered him, *If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?* 24. (Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.) 25. And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. *They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples?* He denied it, and said, *I am not.* 26. One of the servants of the high priest, being *his* kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, *Did I not see thee in the garden with him?* 27. Peter then denied again, and immediately the cock crew.

¶ Matt. xxvi. 55; Luke iv. 15; chap. vii. 14, 26, 28 and viii. 2. ¶ Jer. xx. 2; Acts xxiii. 2. ¶ Matt. xxvi. 57. ¶ Matt. xxvi. 69, 71; Mark xiv. 69; Luke xxii. 58. ¶ Matt. xxvi. 74; Mark xiv. 72; Luke xxii. 60; chap. xiii. 38.

See on Matt. xxvi. 57, 71-74.

The high priest asked Jesus concerning His *disciples*, and His *doctrine*. "By what bond or pledge to one another are the members of this new society united, what secret instructions have they received,

what hidden objects have they in view." *Jesus answered him, I spake openly, &c.* Neither as to my disciples, nor as to my doctrine: neither as to the instructions given to my followers, nor as to the bonds of their union and fellowship with one another, has there been anything of the concealed or the sinister, not one doctrine for the people without, and another for the initiated within, no meetings under cloud of night in hidden places for doubtful or dangerous objects, and *in secret*, that is, in the sense in which I know that you mean and use that term, "have I said nothing."

Why askest thou me? This questioning was superfluous. It was a mockery. If they really wished for information, they had only to ask any of those around, whom He seems to point to, or in some way to indicate. Some of those designated were His utter enemies. Here is a good example for all the ministers of God's Word to follow, teaching them to deliver that Word so purely and sincerely, that, if they be called into question about the same, they may be bold to appeal to the consciences of their hearers, although they be wicked men. (Acts xxiii. 6; 2 Cor. iv. 2; Titus ii. 8.)

Struck Jesus. One of the officers who stood by chose to consider the answer disrespectful to the high priest, and smote Jesus on the mouth. It is not certain whether this was done with the palm of the hand, or with a rod (as the margin renders), the staff of office: the original only says, gave Him a blow. But what a cowardly, brutal, and base act was this! And what a judge this must have been to permit such a thing to be done! *If I have spoken evil, &c.* Gently Jesus expostulates. He who could have presently summoned "more than twelve legions of angels," calmly puts up with the cruel affront, contenting Himself with quietly pointing out the anomaly and injustice of the act; punished first and heard afterward! beaten before the judgment seat! What a travesty of justice is here!

Sent him bound, &c. By noticing this circumstance, the Evangelist means to show that in this respect, also, they proceeded against Jesus, quite contrary to all justice and equity, and even to the cus-

toms and laws of the Jews. For prisoners, when under examination, were loosed from their fetters, that they might make their answers with the greater freedom, but our blessed Lord was obliged to stand before them bound, with the manacles on His hands, as He was sent from Annas to Caiaphas the high priest.

Warmed himself. Here we have an account of Peter's second and third denial. His "warming himself" almost seems to be mentioned in some contrast with Christ's being *bound*, for both are in this chapter mentioned twice. (Rom. xv. 3; 2 Tim. ii. 3.) *Said, I am not.* In reference to Christians, an old writer observes: "Some have denied them to be saints, others deny them to be men. We must go a middle way: reverence their sanctity, pity their infirmities—learn to distinguish between the purity of the fountain and the impurity of the vessel. They have their flaws, and slips, and foils, that Christ only may be the "King of Saints," and "the Holy one of Israel." (1 Sam. ii. 2.) *Did I not see thee in the garden with him?* Many would die with Christ, that would not endure a hard word for Him. Let us accustom ourselves to suffer patiently even the least things, for he will never be able to overcome great ones who has not learned to overcome small difficulties. (Jer. xii. 5.) *Denied again.* As those Christians, who have the strongest faith and resolution may be alarmed at Peter's fall, so his repentance may inspire the most wretched sinner with a hope of acceptance with God. (Gal. vi. 1; 1 Tim. i. 13-16; see on Matt. xxvi. 71-4.)

28. ¶ Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment; and it was early: and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.
13. Matt. xxvii. 2; Mark xv. 1; Luke xxiii. 1; Acts iii. 13. Acts x. 28 and xi. 3.

Then, or so then, marking the progress of the narrative. *From Caiaphas,* literally, *from* (the palace) *of Caiaphas.* (See verse 24.) *The hall of judgment*—the prætorium of Pilate the procurator. Cæsar, the Roman emperor, who had conquered the Jewish nation, had appointed Pontius Pilate to be their governor. He alone had the power of sentencing any man to be put to death. On this account the chief priests and elders led their captives to his

judgment seat, for no punishment less than *death* would satisfy their malice. *It was early.* This shows with what haste they urged on the preliminary steps to the Saviour's execution.

And they themselves went not, &c. Having brought their holy prisoner to Pilate, the Jews refused to enter into the hall of judgment. And why? Because they feared lest they should be defiled by entering into the dwelling of a Gentile, and that they should not be able to keep the Passover, for that feast was celebrated during a *whole week*, and many peace-offerings of the herd and of the flock were eaten, beside the unleavened bread and paschal lamb. What must Pilate have thought of the Jewish religion, when he saw these men at once so much occupied with empty forms, and so much distorted with evil passions! Many think ill of the Christian religion from the same cause. They see persons who would not on any account miss attending Church or the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, filled with envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness. The fault, however, is not in the *religion*, but in the hearts of its professors. (See notes on Matt. xxvii. 11-25.)

29. Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? 30. They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. 31. Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: 32. That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.
Gen. xlix. 10; Hos. iii. 4. Matt. xx. 19; chap. xii. 32, 33.

See notes on Matt. xxvii. 11-25.

Pilate then went out, &c. There was an elevated tessellated pavement in front of the palace, where the governor often set his judgment seat when such cases as that stated in verse 28 occurred. Hither Pilate came out, when he understood that he was wanted, the prisoner being, meanwhile (for better custody, perhaps,) taken into the fore court of the palace itself, among the soldiers. *What accusation, &c.* Pilate assumes the appearance of unbelief and indifference, but he was able to take a more unprejudiced view of the matter than the Jews, and cannot think, after all he has hitherto heard of the Nazarene, and feels at that moment that they would be able to bring any serious charge against him.

Like as with Pilate, so it is still with every one who looks unprejudicedly into the sacred volume. Such an one will not be able to rid himself of the impression of the spotlessness of Jesus, which nothing can shake or neutralize.

If he were not a malefactor, &c. Uttered in a sarcastic tone, this reply would be of a very irritating character. Uttered, however, in a tone of courteous suavity, it apologizes for troubling Pilate, assuring him that nothing but the fact that they had a malefactor could have brought them there. Their real purpose, under either meaning, is to precipitate the governor into the slaying of Jesus. If those Jews won't tell Pilate what kind or degree of criminality it is that they attribute to this man, he, Pilate, won't put himself as a blind tool into their hands. "If it be your judgment, and your judgment alone that is to rule this man's case, 'Take ye him, then,' said Pilate, 'and judge him according to your law'—a refusal on Pilate's part to do the thing which they first hoped that they might get him to do off-hand, a refusal to countersign their sentence, whatever it was, and by whatever evidence supported. It was as much as saying that so far as he had yet heard or known anything of this case, it was one with which their own law, as administered by themselves, was quite competent to deal. Thus they were obliged to explain to the governor, what he had known well enough from the first, but what they had not been candid enough to tell him, that it was a sentence unto death which they wished to get executed, a sentence which they were not at liberty to carry out.

It is not lawful, &c. (See on verse 28.) They were not permitted to do so. If, on one occasion, they tumultuously stoned a supposed heretic to death, the Roman authorities probably leniently overlooked it. But in order to a formal accusation, and death by crucifixion in particular, they could not do without superior consent. Hence they openly, though with stifled rage, confess their dependence on the Roman tribunal. Their thirst for revenge upon the Nazarene, however, this time outweighs their national pride. The man they hate is doomed to be crucified

and to perish ignominiously. Such are their thoughts. But the Lord in heaven also exercises an influence in the affair. The Evangelist remarks, *That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, &c.* John has here reference to the words recorded in chap. xii. 32, of his Gospel. (See notes on Matt. xxvii. 11–25.)

33. "Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?" 34. Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? 35. Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? "Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me; what hast thou done?"—Matt. xxvii. 11. "Acts iii. 13.

The accused is to be compelled to make his own confession. "Art thou the King of the Jews?" asks Pilate, and means, therefore, the well known, expected One, the Messiah. Jesus answered this question by another, the object of which is, whether Pilate himself had seen Christ presenting Himself in any such way as he would expect from that King of the Jews; it is an indirect reference to the fact, that the governor well knew the baselessness of the charge. "The point of Christ's reply is," says *Calvin*, "that this accusation was without any color of truth." With this corresponds also the rejoinder of the governor, that he had never troubled himself about the Messiah. *Bengel* says, "This latter part of the question Jesus wishes to be noticed by Pilate; Pilate, not without anger, catches at the first part."

36. "Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence,'"

^{a1} Tim. vi. 13. ^bDan. ii. 44 and vii. 14; Luke xii. 14 chap. vi. 15 and viii. 13.

My kingdom. Jesus, in these words, evades Pilate's last question, and returns to the topic of His royalty, and yet in so doing He answers Pilate's question, what He has done. He has performed the part of a heaven-sent king. *Not of this world.* "I have a kingdom which I have come to establish. The Jews were right in saying, that I claim to be Christ the King. But *my kingdom is not of this world.* It originates not with men, it has its seat in no regal city of earth. It is supported by no standing armies, such as give strength and security to earthly potentates. Unlike all human governments in its origin, principles and means of supremacy, it is from above, and has 'its seat in the hearts and affections of men.'" *If—of—of this world,*

is emphatically put (in the Greek) at the beginning of the clause. The *world* defends its kingdoms by force of arms. *My servants*—who are not of this world. (Nay, but they are the *legions of angels*, of whom He thinks, recalling what He had said when apprehended.—*Stier*.) *Would fight*. Each agent acts in its own sphere.

Be delivered. Pilate was already contemplating this, verse 31. Other warriors prepare their horses and their chariots, their bows, their spears, and their shields, but Messiah disarms His followers in order that they may overcome. *Not from hence*. Our Lord only says whence His kingdom is *not*—first simply affirming it, next giving proof of it, then reaffirming it. This was all that Pilate had to do with. The *positive* nature of His kingdom He would not obtrude upon one who was as little able to comprehend it, as entitled officially to inform about it. (See on verse 37.)

37. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my words.

^cChap. viii. 47: 1 John iii. 19 and iv. 6.

Pilate's next question seems somewhat too sarcastic. "Art thou then a king?"—thou, a prisoner, and rejected of thine own people. Even so. Pilate in jest here spake the truth. *Thou sayest that I am a king*, that is, "thou truly sayest that I am a king, it is very true: I am a king." The phrase rendered "thou sayest," signifies *it is so*, a phrase of modest assent and affirmation. *To this end*, &c. Two objects are mentioned here, the first has reference to His royalty, by which He asserts that He was no adventurer, but was born a King, such as the wise men of the East correctly honored when they hailed Him as the new-born King of the Jews. The second has reference to His bearing witness. In the words, "was I born," He indicates His incarnation. But, lest Pilate, or any one else, should erroneously suppose that Jesus included His whole origin in these words, He adds, "came I into the world," thereby intimating His heavenly descent, and His existence before He appeared in the flesh yea, before the world was. Thus before Pontius Pilate Jesus witnesses that good confession, of which an Apostle speaks afterward. (See 1 Tim. vi. 13.) He, the

King of Truth, who is Himself the Truth (chap. xiv. 6), bears witness unto the truth, and all who love it, and are sincerely desirous to know, receive and submit to it, hear His voice. (See chap. i. 9, 17; Rev. i. 5, iii. 14, xix. 11.) We ought highly to esteem such testimonies as are here given of the eternal and Divine nature of Jesus from His own lips. Their value is increased in an age like the present which is so full of skepticism, and which so boldly dares to stamp the Lord Christ as a mere man.

38. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, ^aI find in him no fault at all.

^aMatt. xxvii. 24; Luke xxiii. 4; chap. xix. 4, 6.

Many understand Pilate's question, "What is truth?" as if he had said, "Is this now a time to think about truth, when Thy life is in danger? *What is truth*, that Thou shouldest venture so much for it?" "But," says *Gurnall*, "a gracious soul may better ask in a holy scorn, What are riches and honors? What are the fading pleasures of this cheating world? Yea, what is life itself, that any, or all of these should be set in opposition to truth? Oh, sirs, look, what has your love, that will command purse, credit, life and all. Every man goes where his love carries him. If the world has your love, on it you will spend your lives; if truth has your hearts you will catch the blow that is made at it, in your own breasts, rather than let it fall on it." (Zech. iii. 8; Rev. xii. 11.) To the question, "What is truth?" there can be but one reply, be it what it may, for though there are ten thousand shades and degrees of error, there can be none in truth, truth is indivisible, and can be but one. If, then, the Word of God be true, as it is, this is truth eternal, as well as life eternal, "to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent." For this, let us sacrifice, and be content to sacrifice, everything. Nothing will sustain us in a dying hour, nothing will support us upon a dying bed, but truth.

He went out. "If it once comes to this," says *Dr. Owen*, "that you shall say, that you have nothing to do with religion, as rulers of the nation, God will quickly manifest that *He* has nothing to do with you, as rulers of the nation." *I find in him no fault at all*. Thus Pilate witnesses to our

Lord's innocence, and yet proposes (verse 39) to act toward Him as if He were guilty. He has neither the courage to condemn nor to release Him, on the ground of His accusation, but thinks that by promising to the Jews that they should avail themselves of a practice recently established of setting a malefactor free at the paschal season, the ends of either party may be attained. Neither will Pilate do violence to his own conscience, nor will the honor of the High Priest be compromised. In such crooked policy the Roman governor was signally and deservedly defeated. (See notes on Matt. xxvii. 15-25.)

39. "But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?"

^aMatt. xxvii. 15; ^bMark xv. 6; ^cLuke xxiii. 17.

At the passover. Therefore the Passover was on that day. And on that day the assembled people made their request of Pilate. *Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?* using the epithet, in the belief that they, as well as he, will look upon its claimant more as an object of pity than of condemnation.

40. "Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas." "Now Barabbas was a robber."

^aActs iii. 14. ^bLuke xxiii. 19.

Then cried they all again, or, simply, according to another reading, which is well

supported, *Then they all cried.* The preceding part of our Lord's trial, as related by this Evangelist, makes no mention of their crying in this manner before. *A robber.* Tragic addition! Pilate offers Barabbas and Jesus for their choice. (Matt. xxvii. 17.) Whosoever commits any action which Jesus has forbidden, whoever cherishes any feeling or temper which Jesus disapproves, whoever prefers a gainful injustice, an angry passion, an evil lust, to the service of his Lord and Master, every such person by his deeds, if not by his words, declares as plainly as the Jews did, "I will not have *this man* to reign over me, *but Barabbas!*" I will have none of the purity and self-denial of Jesus; I like drunkenness, and rioting, and debauchery far better. I will have none of His humility, give me pride. I will have none of His gentleness, give me anger. I will have none of His tender-heartedness, give me an easy, careless indifference to the sufferings and griefs of others. How many in every place think thus, though they may not say it! Yet, there can be no doubt that every sinful action is an open rejecting of our Lord and Master, and a preferring of some vile Barabbas to Him. (Josh. xxiv. 15; Ps. lxxiii. 24, 25, xlv. 21; see notes on Matt. xxvii. 15-29, and Luke xxiii. 4, &c.)

1. What is said of the brook Cedron? 2. What is said of Judas? 3. What question did Jesus ask of His enemies? 4. What effect had the answer, "I am he," upon them? 5. What did Peter do? 6. What did the Saviour say to Peter? 7. What did our Lord's enemies then do with Him? 8. What is said of Peter? 9. What was Christ's reply to the high priest? 10. What did one of the officers do to Him? 11. How often did Peter deny that he was one of Christ's disciples? 12. Into what hall was Jesus led? 13. State Pilate's interview with Him. 14. What was Christ's reply to the question, "Art thou a king then?" 15. What did Pilate say to the Jews? 16. Whom did the Jews prefer to have released to them rather than the Saviour?

CHAPTER XIX.

¹ Christ is scourged, crowned with thorns, and beaten. ⁴ Pilate is desirous to release him, but being overcome with the outrage of the Jews, he delivered him to be crucified. ²⁵ They cast lots for his garments. ²⁶ He commendeth his mother to John. ²⁸ He dieth. ³¹ His side is pierced. ³⁸ He is buried by Joseph and Nicodemus.

THEN *Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. ² And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe. ³ And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. *Matt. xx. 19 and xxvii. 26; Mark xv. 15; Luke xviii. 33.

See on Matt. xxvii. 26, 29-31, and Mark xv. 15.

Scourged him. Caused Him to be scourged. This was foretold by Jesus. (Matt. xx. 19. See Ps. cxxix. 3; Isa. liii. 5.) The Son of God bound to a marble pillar! whipped! Well might the stone have wept at such indignity, have blushed beneath the purple tide those cruel thongs drew forth. O, wondrous love! which led the Saviour thus to give His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to those who plucked off the hair! In this world the Saviour is still scourged. To the cold marble column of philosophy, so called, oft found in colleges and schools—reason has often tied Him, while the learned rabble and unbelieving herd have put their thoughts together to form a thong with which to whip His life away. So is Jesus scourged by polite and gentle usage, which would have His words kept back, and thoughts attenuated by the rack of carnal policy.

And the soldiers platted a crown, &c. It was meet and right that He who was made a curse for us, who came to absorb all its bitter elements in Himself, should be crowned with thorns. Well did they symbolize our sins, and the piercing wounds they give. “O wondrous crown! each piercing thorn points to Thy inmost love, Thou Saviour of the lost! No other head was ever adorned like Thine. Forever dear to us, then, be this crown of thorns, and amid the pomp and pageantry of life, the passing blaze of human glory, oh may the sacred head of Christ appear to pale its fires, and may we never forget those sacred griefs which bought our freedom from the dreadful curse! *A purple robe.* This may have been the “gorgeous” one in which Herod arrayed and sent Him

back to Pilate. (Luke xxiii. 11.) *Hail, King of the Jews!*—doing Him derisive homage, in the form used on approaching the emperors.

⁴ Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

¹Chap. xviii. 38; verse 6.

Pilate's conscience still struggles against putting an innocent person to death, and he is for trying whether Jesus might be released, even after He had been scourged, without undergoing any further punishment. *Behold, I bring, &c.* Most remarkable and important assurance! For thus was the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world presented by Pilate to the priests of the Jewish people, in its spotless innocence, according to the law, so that, before it is slain, they may themselves take a view of it, and see that it is without blemish. But the Father would not have permitted His beloved Son to be thus barbarously treated, if no trespasses had been imputed to Him. Though the eyes of the Roman judge were incapable of seeing into this mystery, yet the Holy Spirit assures us (2 Cor. v. 21), “That God has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.” Hence Christ is likewise termed, “The Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.” (John i. 29.) It was for our sins, therefore, as our Surety, that Jesus was insulted, reviled, crowned with thorns, buffeted, and cruelly scourged.

⁵ Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!

Behold the man! exclaims the heathen judge, deeply affected, and faintly impressed with an idea of some superior being. Ah, had Pilate clearly known, what he only obscurely felt, he would at least have said, “You have here before you the moral pattern of our race, the flower of humanity, and holiness personified.” “Behold the man!” The hope is once more excited in the Governor, that he would still be able to accomplish the liberation of Jesus. “Now,” he thinks, “the bloodthirstiness of the prisoner's bitterest enemies will certainly be satisfied. In the presence of one so full of dignity and meekness, the fury of the most

cruel must subside, and right feeling return even to the most hardened." Let us see what occurs.

6. "When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him; crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.—Acts iii. 13.

The chief priests and officers are exasperated against the Holy One of Israel, and have nothing left for Him but the implacable cry, "*Crucify him! Crucify him!*" Thus they are judged. In the manifestation of Him who was "fairer than the children of men," our fallen nature has taken occasion to make it evident that its corruption is radical, its disease desperate, and its inmost tendency nothing else than enmity against the Most High God. The many thousand additional proofs of this which history furnishes, we may dispense with, after our race, in the murder of the Lord from heaven, has pronounced sentence upon itself, and filled up the measure of its guilt. The mute sufferer in the purple robe and crown of thorns, sits in judgment upon it, and silently testifies that without mediation and an atonement, the seed of Adam, in its whole extent, is exposed to the curse. The hatred of Jesus which thus manifested itself toward Him, is only the mature fruit of a seed, which in our natural state, grows openly or secretly in us all. *Take ye him.* This is not a legal permission to crucify Him, but a declaration that the crime must rest with them, it must be at their peril. I cannot, says Pilate, condemn a man without a fault.

7. The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."

^aLev. xxiv. 16. ^eMatt. xxvi. 65; chap. v. 18 and x. 33.

As the Jews could not persuade Pilate that Christ was guilty under the Roman law, they endeavored to show that He deserved death under the law of Moses, and to prevail with him to grant them His punishment. Who can bear with the hypocrisy of the sinner, who makes even his crimes a matter of conscience and religion? But who can satisfy himself that he is entirely free from this temptation? Calumny always suppresses whatever may be of advantage to those whom it designs to ruin, and conceals all the proofs of their innocence. Christ "made Himself the

Son of God" indeed, but then He likewise proved Himself to be so, by doing the works of the Son of God, and restoring life to the dead.

8. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid: 9. And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. ^aIsa. liii. 7; ^bMatt. xxvii. 12, 14.

He was the more afraid, that is, he dreaded a sedition among the Jews, from His knowledge of their great obstinacy in anything with which their religion might seem to be concerned. "The principal duty of a judge," says *Lord Bacon*, "is to suppress force and fraud, whereof force is the more pernicious, when it is open, and fraud, when it is close and disguised. A judge ought to prepare his way to a just sentence, as God useth to prepare His way by raising valleys and taking down hills. So, when there appeareth on either side a high hand, violent prosecution, cunning advantages taken, combination, power, great counsel, then is the virtue of a judge seen, to make inequality equal, that he may plant his judgment as upon an even ground. (Deut. i. 13-17; 2 Chron. xix. 6, 7; Job xxxii. 21, 22.)"

Jesus gave him no answer. Christ could not plead guilty, for He had committed no sin, nor not guilty, for He was then guilty of all our sins: neither could this distinction be mentioned to a heathen judge. The true reason of our Lord's present silence, however, seems to have been that Pilate's irresolute conduct rendered him unworthy of any further information. He had already received sufficient information to guide him, were he disposed to follow the dictates of truth, or even of his own conviction.

10. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee; and have power to release thee?

Knowest thou not, &c. Little he knew the reason of this silence: and vain his thought that this victim might be moved either by the hope of life, or by the terror of an ignominious and cruel death. Thus the Lord was fulfilling that prophecy of Isaiah, "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth."

And Pilate here by this very question criminales and condemns himself. For he confesses he has power to release Jesus, and if, as he also confesses, he believes Jesus to be innocent, why does he then deliver him to be crucified?

11. Jesus answered, *Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.*—*Luke xxii. 53; Chap. vii. 30.*

Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above, unless Divine Providence had allowed me to come into thy power. Therefore he that delivered me, &c. It may be said, if the power was *given from above*, he, nor they, were guilty of any crime: but this is objected to no purpose, for the word “given” in this place is permissive, as if He had said, “He has permitted these things to be, but this does not exempt you from being blameworthy.” (Isa. iii. 14; Luke xii. 48; Acts ii. 23.) God is the Author of all good, by His Grace working it, the permitter of all evil by His Patience enduring it, the orderer and disposer of both, by His Mercy rewarding the one, by His Justice punishing the other, and by His Wisdom directing both to the ends of His Eternal Glory. (Isa. xlv. 7; Amos iii. 6; Rom. xi. 36.) “God,” says *Augustine*, “works by means of what is evil, but is not the author of evil itself.” (Rom. ix. 17; James i. 13.)

Hath the greater sin. Then Pilate had some sin. He who was counted as a criminal accused His judge of sin! That judge was compelled to say of His prisoner, “I find no fault in Him.” But the reputed criminal found great fault in His judge. Yet not the greatest. The high priest who had delivered Him up to Pilate, had the greater sin. There are then degrees of sin. Why was the high priest more guilty than Pilate? Because he had *gone out of his way* to destroy Jesus, whereas Pilate had been called to pronounce sentence in the regular execution of the office to which he “was ordained of God.” (Rom. xiii. 1.) There were many other circumstances that increased the sin of Caiaphas—his knowledge of the Scriptures, his malicious motives, and his false accusations. God knows all the aggravating circumstances

of our sins, and all the *palliating* circumstances also.

12. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, *“If thou let this man go, thou art not Cesar’s friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cesar.”*
Luke xliii. 2. Acts xvii. 17.

From thenceforth Pilate sought, &c. Miserable temporizer! Had Pilate been an honest and upright man, He would not have “sought to release” Jesus, but would instantly and at all hazards have set Him free. But Pilate was a timid, time-serving man, with just conscience enough to make himself uncomfortable, and with just integrity enough to ruin the best of causes, and even to increase, as he obviously did, the sufferings of Him whom he seemed to have some desire to save. From Pilate’s character we may learn, 1. How little, how less than little, Christ and His people have ever profited by human policy and carnal friends. 2. That though we may acknowledge a duty, and even make a conscience of it, and take some little pains in its performance, it will avail nothing before God, unless we strive to the very uttermost, and if need be, at the loss of reputation, power, place, and profit, to carry it into effect. 3. That it is not only difficult, but absolutely impossible to follow the convictions of conscience firmly, and the guidings of Divine light faithfully, without being careful to keep only a loose hold of all worldly enjoyments, and worldly interests, and especially upon worldly popularity.

Whosoever maketh himself a king, or, whoever calleth himself king. The sentence of which these words are a part is true, when we read “king,” not “a king.” Judea formed part of the Roman empire. Nothing is more certain than that whoever in Judea called himself king, in the sense in which the word was commonly understood, opposed Cesar. But it did not therefore hold, that whoever called himself “a king” opposed Cesar, for if the kingdom to which he laid claim was without the bounds of the Roman empire, the title in no wise interfered with the rights of the emperors.

13. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.

That saying, rather, these words. These

words were true, but, as applied to *Christ*, false. "But," says *Alford*, "tyrants weigh words, not facts, and Pilate knew it." *In the judgment seat.* The judgment seat was outside the judgment hall, in Gabbatha. *Called—in Greek,* is not added, for John wrote in Greek. (Comp. verse 17.) *Pavement.* The Greek word thus rendered, designates a tessellated stone pavement, laid with various kinds of stones, and so like a painting. *Gabbatha* signifies an elevation. John gives the Hebrew as well as the Greek name of the platform, to indicate that Pilate pronounced judgment solemnly, not from a level, but from the high judicial seat. According to Suetonius, such a pavement was carried about on his expeditions by Julius Caesar.

14. And ^{it} was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour; and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!—¹Matt. xxvii. 62.

The *Preparation*—preparation of all things necessary, the day before the Sabbath, that they might be under no temptation to violate the sabbatical rest, was expressly commanded in the law. (Ex. xvi. 5, 23.)

About the sixth hour. This account seems to differ from that given by Mark, who says (chap. xv. 23), "*It was the third,*" or "*about the third hour.*" The best solution of this appears to be given by those who consider the day as divided into four parts, answering the four watches of the night. These coincided with the hours three, six, nine and twelve, or in our way of reckoning, nine, twelve, three and six, which suited also the solemn times of sacrifice, and prayer in the temple, that in cases wherein they did not think it of consequence to ascertain the time with accuracy, they did not regard the intermediate hours. Mark says, "*about the third hour,*" from which we have reason to conclude that the third hour was past. John says *about the sixth hour*, from which it is probable that the sixth hour was not yet come. This apparent discrepancy does not in the slightest degree impair the credibility of the Evangelists. Who would regard any two modern historians as contradicting each other because, in relating an event which had happened between ten and eleven in the forenoon, one had said it was past nine o'clock, the other, it

was drawing toward noon? LeClerc observes that John wrote after the destruction of Jerusalem, and may have, like the old Romans, calculated the beginning of day from midnight, and Mark, like his nation, have counted from the rising sun, say six o'clock, the third hour would thus answer to the Roman sixth. (See notes on Mark xv. 25; Matt. xxvii. 45.)

15. But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar.—¹Gen. xlix. 10.

Away with him, &c. Our Lord endured a variety of contradictions. As to His Person, He was denied to be the Son of God; as to His office, He was not received as the promised Messiah; as to His doctrine, He was declared to be a deceiver; as to His miracles, He was denounced as though He had been a conjuror, and dealt with the devil; as to His conversation, He was defamed as a glutton and a wine-bibber, a profane fellow and a Sabbath-breaker, a companion of publicans and sinners; and as to His very life and being, Barabbas was preferred to Him. *We have no king but Cæsar.* By saying this they publicly renounced all hopes of their promised Messiah, according to their own views of His character as a temporal king, and at the same time spoke in direct opposition to their general conduct in rebelling against the Romans.

16. ¹Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led him away. ²Matt. xxvii. 26, 31; Mark xv. 15; Luke xxiii. 24.

Then delivered he him, &c. This was not done by Pilate till after he had washed his hands (Matt. xxvii. 24), intending by that symbolical action to show that he was innocent of the death of Christ. (See Matt. xxvii. 26, &c.; Mark xv. 16, &c.)

And they took Jesus and led him away. Judgment was no sooner given, than the prosecutors, having gained their point, resolved to lose no time. 1. Lest Pilate should change his mind and order a reprieve. Those are the worst enemies to our souls, that hurry us to sin, and then leave us no room to undo what we have done amiss. 2. Lest there should be "an uproar among the people," and a greater number against them than they had with so much artifice gotten to be for them. It

were well if we would be thus expeditious in good, and not stay for more difficulties.

17. ¹And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, *Golgotha*;

²Matt. xxvii. 31, 33; Mark xv. 21, 22; Luke xxiii. 26, 33. ³Num. xv. 36; Heb. xlii. 42.

See on Luke xxiii. 26; Matt. xxvii. 32-34.

Our Heavenly Father sometimes sees good in the treatment of His spiritual children, to let great trials and great weakness meet together, to lay on crosses at those very moments when we appear the most unfit to bear them. If such a season ever visit us, let us remember that there is One to whom this case is no new case, and who, although now in heaven, never sees a weak and fainting sufferer, upon whom fresh trials are accumulating, without calling to mind the heavy cross which He bore in His toilsome journey up Mount Calvary, or without stretching forth a hand to help and succor him. By musing on the sorrows of Jesus, we shall forget our own. *Which is called, &c.* It is worthy of remark that John calls the place where Jesus was crucified the *skull-place*, and gives, by way of interpretation, its Hebrew name, *Golgotha*. Matthew and Mark, on the other hand, designate the place by the name, *Golgotha*, and give as the interpretation of it, *the place of a skull*. Luke refers to the place by its Latin name, *Calvaria*, *Calvary*. Such a comparison evinces the truthful independence of the Evangelists.

18. Where they crucified him, and two others with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

Where they crucified him. Christ upon the cross! Be still and know that He is God. He is traveling in the greatness of His strength. Christ crucified is "the power of God." (See on Matt. xxvii. 33, 4, 5.) *And two others, &c.* (See on Matt. xxvii. 38; Luke xxiii. 32, 33.) The purpose of God was accomplished by Christ's being "numbered with transgressors." He suffered *among* sinners, and *with* them, and *for* them. Jesus was within sight of both these wretched men, one of them yielded to the power of Christ's love, melted under His look, and gave in his submission, the other tempted Jesus, instead of trusting Him. The sinner saved and the sinner lost are very near each other, and

both very near the same Jesus. The cross divides them. They have all to do with Christ crucified. He is either the savor of life, or the savor of death to them. (See on next verse.)

19. ¹And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. ²This title then read many of the Jews; for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.

³Matt. xxvii. 37; Mark xv. 26; Luke xxiii. 33.

A title. A white board with an inscription in black letters, prepared by the order of Pilate. *On the cross*, over the Saviour's head. Let it not be forgotten that the name "Jesus" was set upon the cross, over our Saviour's head, to teach us that it is a Name which, set upon the head of all our crosses, will make them easy. The thought of Jesus, the reference to that Holy Name, the suffering under that, will give both a sweet odor and a pleasant relish to whatever it is we suffer. Come what can, the love of God in Jesus sweetens all. (Matt. i. 21; 2 Cor. iv. 11.)

And the writing was, &c. Each of the Evangelists has given us a portion of the title, from which we may construct the perfect whole. May not one reason for this be, that in this remarkable example we might have a rule for directing our own reasonings concerning the parallelisms in the Gospels, that we should look upon each of the four Gospels by itself as perfectly true, and truly perfect, and yet as having a relation to the other three, and lending its aid to consummate the One Four-fold Gospel? May not another reason be, that we should not confine our attention to *one* of the Four Gospels, but examine and compare them all, and that our faith and patience, our humility and diligence, should be tried by this exercise of examination and comparison, that it should be our *moral probation*, that our tempers should be tested thereby, and that it should be seen whether we ourselves have the spirit of the Gospel? If we have that spirit, then we shall not speak of discrepancies in it, but shall see one of the clearest proofs of its Divine Unity and Truth, in the various forms in which the same substance is presented to the inward eye. (See Matt. xxvii. 37; Mark xv. 26; Luke xxiii. 38, and notes on

all.) The superscription was written in three languages, in modern Hebrew for the Jews, in Greek for the whole world, in Latin for the soldiery and any other of the Roman people. There was the language of the people of the country, the language that then prevailed most in the world, and the official language. The language of the accusers, the language of the world which should reverse the unjust sentence, the language of the unworthy judge.

21. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. 22. Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written.

Pilate's answer to the comment and request of the Jews, reads as a kind of remorseful protest against his late shameful weakness. He resolutely declines to alter what he has written. It may be, he felt it to be nothing more than the truth. It is certain it would not be grateful to the Jews. He has suffered enough, so he thinks, from these tormentors. But to be angry with those who have led us into sin, is no expiation of our sins. "At the same time, who sees not," it has been well asked, "that (as in the case of Caiaphas) what was spoken in cruelty, was overruled by a higher power to a lofty issue, that there was Divinest truth in what was meant for mockery and insult." (See on Matt. xxvii. 37.)

23. "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. 24. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did." ^aMatt. xxvii. 35; Mark xv. 24; Luke xxiii. 34. ^bPs. xxii. 18.

Then the soldiers, who were on duty at the crucifixion, four in number. (See on Matt. xxvii. 35.) When they had crucified Jesus, *i. e.*, had nailed Him to the cross, and erected it in its place. Took his garments, &c. These assistant executioners, cowering down together, at the foot of the cross, part the wide upper garment and divide it among them. On more closely examining the underclothing, they see in it a singular piece of art, for the dress is without a seam, woven entirely in one piece. This vesture, they think, ought not to be cut, and hence they agree to cast lots for it. They do so, and he who is so fortunate as to win, be-

comes the possessor of the whole garment. These soldiers, without any idea of it, are fulfilling, by their division of the garments, and their casting the lot for the unseamed vesture, a Scriptural prophecy of almost a thousand years old. (Ps. xxii. 18.) The fact that the whole of the four Evangelists mention the division of the raiment, is a pledge to us of its symbolical importance and divine meaning. As a garment covers the nakedness of the body, preserves it from heat and cold, and both cherishes and adorns it, so the righteousness of Jesus Christ covers the shameful nakedness of the soul. (Ps. xxxii. 1; Isa. lxi. 10, &c.; Gal. iii. 27; Rev. iii. 18.) "Put ye on the Lord Jesus." (Rom. xiii. 14.) Putting on the Lord Jesus includes both our justification and sanctification. Christ is not only made our righteousness, but likewise our sanctification (1 Cor. i. 30), and therefore they, who are for having only His righteousness as a covering for sin, but deny His sanctifying power, and do not seek after holiness, as it were, rend Christ's coat, and are worse than these pagan soldiers.

"Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head."

These things therefore the soldiers did. Who could have less intention of fulfilling the Scripture than these soldiers, who did not so much as know that any such occurrence had been foretold? Hence John, who was an eye-witness of the whole transaction, thus refers with wonder to the Divine wisdom in so directing these circumstances, that men unknowingly fulfill what it has determined, and yet not by compulsion, but still retaining their full freedom.

25. "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene." ^aMatt. xxvii. 55; Mark xv. 40; Luke xxiii. 49. ^bLuke xxiv. 15.

His mother. (See on next verse.) Mary the wife of Cleopas, was the sister of our Lord's mother; James and Josés were children of that Mary. (Matt. xxvii. 56.) Mary Magdalene. (See on Luke viii. 3.) What are those qualities which are represented in those who were nearest to the cross? In John, we have calm courage, exemplary purity, Divine love. In Mary Magdalene, devout watchfulness and earn-

est penitence. In the other Mary, faithful patience and quiet constancy. But, as to the mother of our Lord, she is hid, as if designedly, by a cloud from our view, and of her character we can know but comparatively little. A work of blood is our salvation, and we, as we would be saved, must draw near, and gaze upon it in faith, and accept it, as the way to heaven.

26. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, *Woman, behold thy son!* 27. Then saith he to the disciple, *Behold thy mother!* And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.
*Chap. xiii. 23, xx. 2 and xxi. 7, 20, 24. *Chap. ii. 4. *Chap. i. 11 and xvi. 32.

The disciple whom he loved, the Evangelist himself. He saith unto his mother &c. Hence it is supposed that Joseph her husband was dead, whence Jesus takes care that she should not be destitute. Neither her own danger, nor the sadness of the spectacle, could refrain her from performing the last office of duty and tenderness to her son. This was a noble instance of fortitude and affection. Now a sword struck through her tender heart, and pierced her very soul! probably she became overwhelmed and unfit to attend at the sepulchre, at least, she is not mentioned afterward, except that she continued with the disciples. The compassion and love of her son, to say nothing of His condescension, must remain without a parallel. *Woman.* This shows that nothing disrespectful was intended in chap. ii. 4.

Behold thy son, i. e., behold in him one who will discharge toward you all the duties implied in the relationship of an affectionate son. *Stier* eloquently remarks: "The burden of the world's redemption with all its increasing horror of sin, lies upon His soul, boundless anticipations, now gradually receding and passing away, of the glory to be obtained had filled His spirit, yet He has room for the exercise of the minutest care."

Then saith he to the disciple, &c. In this instance of filial piety we see how truly the man Jesus was touched by the affections of man's nature, and how the mighty interests of His mission did not make Him forget the common charities and relative duties of private life. There must then be something wrong about any one who makes public duties an excuse for neglect-

ing what he owes to those with whom God has joined him in these sacred bonds, as son, or father, or husband, or brother, and of all these bonds none has a more divine obligation than that of which our Lord on this occasion so tenderly and touchingly showed His sense, the duty which we owe to parents. *Unto his own home.* Doubtless to his own immediate residence in Jerusalem, next to his home in Galilee, and finally, perhaps, to Ephesus, his last abode in Asia Minor. That John had a home at Jerusalem is implied by the phrase *from that hour*, as he remained some time in Jerusalem.

28. After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, *I thirst.*—[Ps. lxix. 21.]

That all things were now accomplished—i. e., the moment for the fulfillment of the last of them, for there was no other small particular, and the time was come for that too, in consequence of the burning thirst which the fevered state of His frame occasioned (Ps. xxii. 15.)

That the scripture (Ps. lxix. 21) might be fulfilled, &c. Jesus well knew that the declaration of His thirst would draw on Him a fresh insult, yet He was far from declining any additional suffering, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, and that the truth of it might be confirmed by a new seal. Let us beware of undervaluing the Word of the living God, or contemptuously using it as a dead letter. Rather let us honor it as the voice of the Supreme Majesty of heaven, choose it for the rule of our faith and practice, and be willing to suffer anything that the Scripture may be fulfilled in us. (2 Tim. iii. 12.)

29. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.—[Matt. xxvii. 48.]

Vinegar. (See on Matt. xxvii. 34, 48; Luke xxiii. 36.) *And they—"one of them" (Matt. xxvii. 48), filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon (a stalk of) hyssop, and put it to his mouth.* Though a stalk of this plant does not exceed eighteen inches in length, it would suffice, as the feet of crucified persons were not raised higher. As we gaze upon the soldiers putting the saturated sponge to the dry and parched lips of the languishing Jesus, by way of derision, instead of a cordial to support His drooping spirits, how we are amazed,

on the one hand, at the obduracy and barbarity of the human heart, and that these wicked men should be so utterly void of humanity and compassion, and, on the other hand, at the greatness of our Saviour's love to mankind; who endured all this for our sake! If the world should give us a disagreeable sour potion in our distress, may it be sweetened by the memory of His love and patience!

30. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished;" and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost.—[Chap. xvii. 4.]

Received the vinegar. (Ps. lxi. 21; see on verse 29.) *It is finished.* This was the sixth remarkable word of Christ upon the cross, uttered as a triumphant shout, when He saw the glorious issue of all His sufferings now at hand. (Zech. iv. 7.) That which He said He did. If there be any theme that may challenge and command our ears and hearts it is this; for the sweetest utterance that ever fell from the lips of Jesus, and the most meritorious act that ever He did, are met together in this His last breath. In the one, we see Him triumphing, yielding in the other, yet so, as He overcomes. (See notes on Luke xxiii. 46.) It was not that the Saviour bowed his head, because He expired, but because He bowed His head, He then expired: by the mention of this, the Evangelist shows that He was "Lord of all." (Chap. x. 18.) We could never have atoned for our own sins. Our tears could not have washed them away. We never could have made amends for them by good works. Therefore Jesus offered up *Himself* a sacrifice for us. *Gave up the ghost*—gave His spirit up, namely, into the hands of the Eternal Father (Luke xxiii. 46) whereby a separation was made between His soul and body, but no disunion of them and His Deity. They were disjoined one from another, but not from Him that took them both together. Rather, by virtue of that remaining conjunction, they were again united after their separation. The Word was once indeed without either soul or body; but after it was "made flesh," it was never again parted from the one or from the other. Jesus on the cross! How unspeakably touching is the appeal that is made to us, as we see His head hanging down with languishments of kindness more than

weakness, His arms stretched as if to indicate His readiness to welcome us to His embrace, His side opened, not only to shed blood for us, but to make us a passage to His very heart, and hear Him, as it were, exclaiming, "O my Father, here I charge myself with all the guilt of those whom I love, here I lay down my life, that they may have eternal life, let me be crucified, so they be glorified!"

31. ¶ The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was a high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. 32. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. 33. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: 42. xxi. 23.

The preparation. (See on verse 14; also Mark xv. 42.) *The bodies should not remain,* &c. The law of Moses enjoined those hanged to be buried before night. (Deut. xxi. 23.) Our Lord's enemies, in all they did, pretended a zeal for God, very unlike their general conduct. The result of this zeal, on this occasion, tended to prove that Jesus had already died, and also to fulfill the Scripture. Their fathers did not always observe this law. (2 Sam. xxi. 9, 10.) *A high day.* "A very solemn festival," as being not only an ordinary Sabbath, but the extraordinary one on the 15th of Nisan, from whence they reckoned the weeks to Pentecost, and also the day for presenting and offering the sheaf of new corn: so that it was a treble solemnity. (See Lev. xxiii. 10, 11; Exod. xxiii. 19.) *Their legs might be broken.* It was a common custom to break the legs or other bones of criminals on the cross. The Jews, supposing that none of these crucified persons might be dead so soon, besought Pilate to hasten their death, in the usual, but cruel manner. They knew not that the object of their hatred had forever escaped from their hands, and that they would never have the opportunity of inflicting another pang upon His sacred person. How hateful to God was the worship of those men in His temple, on the approaching Sabbath! The words spoken by Isaiah applied to them: "When ye make many prayers I will not hear: your hands are full of blood." (Isa. i. 15.) Their hands were imbrued in the blood of the Son of man. How could His Father bear

them in His presence? Let us never imagine that we can please God by our services, while we are stained with unpardoned sins—sins not *abhorred*, not *confessed*, not *forsaken*. None can truly please Him but those who are cleansed from guilt by faith in His Son.

They brake not his legs. They break the legs of both the others, they pass Jesus by. There is every sign, indeed, that He is already dead, but why not make His death thus doubly sure? Perhaps even over the spirits of those rough and hardened men, the Saviour's looks and words, the manner of His death, the darkness and the earthquake, which they connected in some way with Him, may have caused a feeling of awe to creep over them, restraining them from subjecting Him to that rough handling which they were ready enough to give to the others. However this may have been, the shield of that prophecy—"A bone of him shall not be broken," guarded His limbs from their rude and crushing strokes.

34. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.
 1 John v. 6. 8.

One of the soldiers, not to be restrained, and to make sure that the seeming death of Jesus was real, lifts his spear as he passes by, and thrusts it into the Redeemer's side, a strong, rude thrust, sufficient of itself to have caused death, inflicting a wide, deep wound, that left behind such a scar, that Jesus could say to Thomas afterward, "Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side." Christ, in all probability, died from rupture or breaking of the heart. *James Begbie*, M. D., F. R. S. E., Fellow, and late President of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, and Physician to the Queen in Scotland, in a letter to Rev. William Hanna, LL.D., dated April 26th, 1862, and in which J. Y. Simpson, M. D., F. R. S. E., and John Struthers, M. D., F. R. C. S., of the same city, concur, says: "I cannot help accepting, as correct, the explanation which Dr. Stroud has offered, and which you have adopted, and so strikingly applied—of the physical cause of the death of Christ, namely, rupture of the heart, and consequent effusion of blood into the pericardium, the investing sheath of that organ. Such a lesion accounts for the phenomena

recorded in the Scriptures regarding Him, namely, the earlier than usual cessation of life during crucifixion, and the issuing of blood and water on the piercing of His side with the spear. It must be borne in mind, however, that rupture of the heart is comparatively a rare affection, and that the cases of it on record are, so far as I know, limited to those advanced in life, or to such as have been laboring under some degeneration of the structure of the organ, a condition which renders it liable to be torn when subjected to the pressure of severe physical exertion, or the weight of mental agony. Now in regard to Christ, we know that at the period of His death He was in the prime of life, and that as morally He was 'holy, harmless, and undefiled,' so physically He was without spot or blemish. How intensely does this consideration magnify the sufferings He endured! We see Him in the agony in the Garden, and under the bloody sweat. We follow Him to Calvary, and see Him under the hiding of His Father's face, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. We cannot estimate the anguish of His holy human soul during these awful hours, when there was drawn from Him that most touching language, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,' but we can, in some measure, understand how His bodily frame, subjected to the full weight both of mental and bodily suffering, should yield and give way at the fountain of life, and how Christ, in His death, should thus literally fulfill the prophetic words of Old Testament writings concerning Him—"Reproach hath broken my heart." I shrink from treading further on this sacred ground."

Came there out blood and water. What a stream that was! There is a spiritual meaning in it. Our Lord's death has a double efficiency—to satisfy and to sanctify. The blood atones for sin. Before it was shed the penitent malefactor trusted in it, and was pardoned. But sinners are not only *guilty*, they are also *impure*. From Jesus flows the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to cleanse and sanctify. (See chap. vii. 39.) By coming to Jesus we receive the *double blessing*. By the precious blood we are acquitted of the guilt of our sin

by the purifying Spirit we are purged from its stain and power. Neither of these blessings is to be found unless in the Cross. We have the same idea in the familiar hymn—

"Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power."

35. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.

He that saw it, &c. It has been thought that John was led to put such stress upon this incident of the crucifixion, and to press into such prominence his own testimony as an eye-witness to its reality, on account of the convincing refutation thus afforded of two strange heresies that sprang up early in the Church: the first, that Jesus had never really died upon the cross, but only passed into a swoon, from which He afterward revived; and the second, that it was not a real human body of flesh and blood, but only the appearance of one that was suspended on the cross. It may have been that the Evangelist had these beliefs in view. But whatever was his immediate object in testifying so particularly and so earnestly to the fact, it only puts that fact so much the more clearly now before our eyes, authorizing us to assume it as placed beyond all doubt, that within an hour or so after Christ's death—for it could not have been much longer, when a deep incision was made in the side of the Redeemer, there visibly flowed forth a copious stream of blood and water. (See notes on verse 34.)

And he knoweth that he saith true, &c. The Evangelists write in that artless, calm and unguarded manner, which is natural to persons confident of the undeniable truth of what they assert; they do not write with that scrupulous caution which would argue any fear that they might be confuted. They simply relate the naked facts, and leave them to stand upon their own evidence. They relate the most amazing, the most moving things with the most cool serenity, without any passionate exclamations and warm reflections. They relate the most tragical circumstances of our Lord's condemnation and death, calmly mentioning matter of fact, without any invectives against the Jews, without any high

eulogies upon Christ's innocence, without any rapturous celebrations of His grace in suffering all these things for sinners, and without any tender lamentations over their deceased Master. It is impossible for a heart, so deeply impressed with these things, as theirs undoubtedly were, to retain this dispassionate serenity, unless laid under supernatural restraints, and there appear very good reasons for this restraint upon them, namely, that the Gospel history might carry intrinsic evidences of its simplicity and artless impartiality, and that it might appear adapted to convince the judgments of men, and not merely to raise their passions. In this respect the Gospel history is distinguished from all histories in the world.

36. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.
37. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.
Ex. xii. 46; Num. ix. 17; Ps. xxiv. 20. Ps. xxii. 16, 17; Zech. xii. 10; Rev. i. 7.

Here again we find the soldiers coming in, unconscious witnesses, agents in the fulfillment of prophecy, carrying out, and testifying to a double Scripture, first concerning Him, and then concerning all the people. In reading the history of our Lord Jesus Christ, we must consider Him, 1. As accomplishing all the Scriptures of the Old Testament. 2. As doing everything in the spirit and power of the world's Redeemer from sin and spiritual death, all outward and visible works, wrought on the bodies of men, being so many pictures of those inward and spiritual works which He is continually working by His Spirit on, and for, our souls. 3. We must ever join ourselves to Him, as being with Him, dying with Him, rising with Him, &c., He being made "one with us" by assuming our nature, we "one with Him," by believing and being baptized. (Mark xvi. 16.) Then have we studied the Scriptures to purpose, when the life of Jesus, foreshowed of old, and accomplished in the body of His flesh, is manifest in ours. (Rom. vi. 3-11; Gal. ii. 20.)

38. ¶ And after this Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. 39. And there came also Nicodemus, (which at the first came to Jesus by night,) and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight. 40. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. 41. Now in the

place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. 42. "There laid they Jesus therefore "because of the Jews' preparation day, for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

^bMatt. xxvii. 57; Mark xv. 42; Luke xxiii. 50. ^cChap. ix. 22 and xii. 42. ^dChap. iii. 1, 2 and vii. 50. ^eActs v. 6. ^fIsa. liii. 9. ^gVerse 31.

See on Matt. xxvii. 57-61; Mark xv. 42; Luke xxiii. 50.

Joseph. We may consider this man, 1. in connection with prophecy. (Isa. liii. 9.) *Bishop Louth's* rendering has been universally deemed an improvement: "And His grave was appointed with the wicked, but with the rich man was His tomb." 2. In reference to his rank in life, he was "a rich man." How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! Yet we here see the camel drawn through the eye of the needle: for what is impossible with man is possible with God. 3. In connection with his infirmity and imperfection. The Jews had decreed that if any man confessed Christ he should be put out of the synagogue. Hence, many who believed on Him feared to confess Him. This was for some time the case with Joseph. "The fear of man bringeth a snare." It is this that leads many to ask, not whether such a thing be right, but what will people think and say of me if I adopt it? 4. In the increase and development of his Christian principle. For he now shows himself openly, and acts a noble and distinguished part. It required no little zeal and courage to own a regard for one that had been judicially executed under the charge of blasphemy and sedition, to come forward and publicly ask for his body, to give it an honorable interment in his own garden and his own tomb, which had never yet been used. Let us not decide upon the character of persons too soon. Let us not give them up because of some present weaknesses, much influenced perhaps by peculiar circumstances. Let us not despise the day of small things.

There came also Nicodemus, &c. The Evangelist (vii. 50) describes Nicodemus by this remarkable act of his life, "He, that came to Jesus by night;" here he adds, *at the first*. Observe the loving spirit of John, as designing to wipe away this stain from the character of Nicodemus, and with a gentle hand to "take this

mote from his brother's eye:" for it is, as if he had written: "Though *at the first* he was timid and time-serving, yet at the last he was bold and decisive. Behold, he now comes to Jesus openly, by day, and before the world, bearing the costly tribute of his faith and love." (Gal. vi. 1.) It is not to be immediately concluded, that no good is done, because people do not seem to be better for our labors. Where God's will is done, there good, sooner or later, must be the result. (ii. 22, vii. 39, xiv. 26; Mark iv. 27; Luke xv. 17, 18.)

A mixture of myrrh, &c. In the gifts of the wise men at the birth of Jesus, the gold is considered to imply His Kingship, and the frankincense His Divinity, and the myrrh His Humanity: now, on this occasion, the *myrrh* alone of them is found. It is our Lord's Humanity, which is embalmed. (Mark vi. 29; Acts ii. 24, 27.) *A hundred pounds*, a quantity becoming the embalming of a king. (2 Chron. xvi. 14.) The weight showed the riches of Nicodemus, and his respect for Christ. We should think nothing too great for our Lord. The Jewish tradition is, that on Jacob a profusion of spices was used. (Gen. i. 2.) At Herod's funeral were five hundred spice-bearers. Eighty pounds of opobalsam were used at the funeral of R. Gamaliel. *Wound it in linen clothes, &c.* "Nothing," observes *Dr. Arnold*, "to my mind affords such comfort to us, when shrinking from the outward accompaniments of death—the grave, the grave-clothes, the loneliness—as the thought that all these had been around the Lord Himself, around Him, who died, and is now alive forever more. (Rev. i. 18)." *Bury, rather, embalm.* It is certain that no nation was more careful than the Jewish to bury their dead, though, very probably, not one of an hundred was embalmed. But it had been predicted that Christ should be joined with the rich in His death (Isa. liii. 9) a circumstance which, before it happened, seemed very improbable.

There was a garden. It was in a garden sin was first committed, expiated (xviii. 1), and finally triumphed over. (i. 48; Ps. cxxxix. 2.) In a garden there is something emblematic and suitable, where nature dies and is again renewed, where the

seed perishes and is quickened, and brings forth an hundred-fold. (xii. 24.) "Bid death to thy board," says *Bishop Hall*, "lodge him in thy bed, talk with him in thy closet, walk with him in thy garden, as Joseph of Arimathea did." The mention of the *new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid*, may remind us that the circumstances of His birth and His burial were in one respect alike. He who was born of a virgin-mother, shall be laid in a virgin-grave. Thus they laid Jesus, as in a temporary resting-place, somewhat hastily, as the preparations for the Passover were going on, intending, doubtless, when they might, to return to the sepulchre and complete their labor of love,

ignorant now their fond care would be prevented, not yet suspecting the glories of the Resurrection morn. Jesus was laid even in the sepulchre, to prove to us the blessed truth that the grave shall retain none of His followers, for that it could not retain, even though it held Himself. There is something in the prospect of the cold, dark, prison-house of the grave, from which all nature shrinks. Happy, then, it is for the believer to know that there his Lord and Master has gone before him, that He has sanctified not only the believer's death, but the believer's grave, and there will watch over his precious remains until He reunites them to their never-dying spirit, and glorifies them with Himself.

1. What did Pilate do to Jesus? 2. What did the soldiers do? 3. What did the chief priests and officers cry out? 4. State Pilate's interview with Christ in the judgment-hall. 5. Was Pilate disposed to release Him? 6. What did he say to the Jews? 7. How did they reply? 8. Where was Jesus led? 9. How was He crucified? 10. What title was put on His cross? 11. What did the soldiers do with His garments? 12. What did Jesus say to His mother? 13. What to the disciple "whom he loved"? 14. What did Christ do when He had received the vinegar? 15. What was done to Jesus on the cross? 16. What is said of Joseph of Arimathea? 17. What of Nicodemus? 18. Where did they lay Jesus?

CHAPTER XX.

¹ *Mary cometh to the sepulchre.* ³ *so do Peter and John, ignorant of the resurrection.* ¹¹ *Jesus appeareth to Mary Magdalene,* ¹⁹ *and to his disciples.* ²⁴ *The incredulity, and confession of Thomas.* ³⁰ *The scripture is sufficient to salvation.*

THE first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

¹ Matt. xxviii. 1; Mark xvi. 1; Luke xxiv. 1.

The first day of the week. (See on Matt. xxviii. 1.) *Mary Magdalene.* (See on Luke viii. 2.) *While it was yet dark.* (See on Luke xxiv. 1.) *The stone taken away, &c.* (See on Luke xxiv. 2.) By setting Mary Magdalene's name in the very forefront of his account of the resurrection, our Evangelist marks, doubtless, the eagerness of her love, as well as prepares us for the amazing privilege which was in reserve for her of beholding, before any one else, her risen Lord. An old writer observes: "Mary did seek Christ in the *first day of the week*, and first hour of the day, but many defer to seek the Lord until the last week

of their life, the last day of the week, the last hour of the day, the last minute of the hour. Let us awake from sin with David, early, rise with Samuel, early, with Abraham send away Hagar, early, with Christ and His audience come to the Church, early, and seek the Lord with this holy woman, early. (viii. 2; Ps. lvii. 9; 1 Sam. xv. 12; Gen. xxi. 14." See note at the end of this chapter.)

² Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

¹ Chap. xiii. 23, xix. 26 and xxi. 7, 20, 24.

They have taken away, &c. The "they" may refer to Joseph and Nicodemus, and any with them, the "we" to the other Mary and Salome. "We know not," *we* women who have been to the sepulchre. A silent confirmation of the narrative of the other Evangelists—that Mary Magdalene had been accompanied by *others*—of whom John says nothing. A faithful soul

which thinks it has lost Christ, is deeply sensible of its loss—it sighs, it weeps and leaves no means untried to find Him again. It sometimes happens that Christ goes in some manner out of a heart which is His living sepulchre, by depriving it of His sensible presence only to try it, and a timorous soul is afraid that its own faults have driven or taken Him away. Solitude and grief are a plain indication of our love for that which we have lost, and when we have a love for it, we entreat everybody to assist us in recovering it. That humility which inspires us with a sense of our own weakness, and causes us to seek for assistance, is a very proper means to qualify us to find Jesus Christ.

3. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. 4. So they ran both together; and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. 5. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. 6. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie;—Luke xxiv. 12. 7. Sam. xviii. 23. 8. Chap. xix. 40.

They ran both. “It is a sad, heavy thing to do anything, as in obedience to God, while the heart is straitened, not enlarged toward Him by His Divine love; but, that once taking possession and enlarging the heart, that inward principle of obedience makes the outward obedience sweet, it is then a natural motion. Indeed the soul runs in the ways of God, as the sun in its course, which finds no difficulty, being naturally fitted and carried to that motion. (Ps. cxix. 32; Cant. viii. 14; Acts viii. 30; 1 Cor. ix. 24–27.)”—*Leighton. Stooping down.* None but humble men and meek men can see these mysteries. He that will not stoop at Christ's grave, shall never be partaker of His death and resurrection. Here, in a literal sense, was a longing, eager, searching, inquiring look into the mysteries of our Redemption. (See Rom. viii. 19; 1 Peter i. 12.) *The linen clothes lie.* It is remarkable that whenever these coverings of our Lord's body are mentioned, they are never called (John xi. 44) “grave-clothes,” as in the case of Lazarus, but they are spoken of as the “linen clothes.”

7. And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. 8. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. 9. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. 10. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. (Chap. xi. 44. 1. Ps. xvi. 10; Isa. xxvi. 19; Hos. xiii. 14; Acts ii. 25–31 and xiii. 34–37.

And the napkin, &c. When Lazarus was raised from the dead, it is said (chap. xi. 44), “He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin,” thus indicating that he was for the present rescued from death by the power of Christ, yet he must still be subject to it, and die again—but here the living Lord, who, by His own Divine power, on this third day rose again from the dead, leaves behind Him these cere-cloths and relics of the grave, showing that, being risen, He “dieth no more, death hath no dominion over Him.” (Acts xiii. 34–37; Rom. vi. 9; Heb. vii. 23–25.) “Tremble not,” says *Toplady*, “at the thought of laying aside your weak, sinful, mortal body. You will receive it again, not such, as it now is, frail, defiled, and perishable, but bright with the glory, and perfect in the image of God. The body is that to the soul, which a garment is to the body. When you betake yourself to repose at night, you lay aside your clothes until morning, and resume them, when you rise. What is the grave but the believer's wardrobe, of which God is the door-keeper? In the Resurrection morning the door will be thrown open, and the glorified soul shall descend from heaven to put on a glorified robe, which was indeed folded up and laid away in dishonor, but shall be taken out from the repository, enriched and beautified with all the ornaments of nature and grace. (Luke xv. 22; 1 Cor. xv. 43.)”

Then went in also that other disciple. Here we see a sort of unconscious influence, the silent force of example. Peter follows John to the sepulchre, and John follows Peter into the sepulchre. *And he saw, and believed.* Saw what? Not yet his Lord, but the relics of his Lord, and the place where his Lord had been. All these persuaded him, and the real truth now first flashed across his hitherto darkened mind: and now the day begins to break, and the shadows flee away, and the clouds are rolling off, and the sun is risen on his soul, the eyes of his understanding now at length are opened, and he believes the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said. (Chap. ii. 22.) “Blessed indeed,” so presently we read, “are they that have not seen, and yet

have believed," but blessed too was he who believed from what he here saw, who was the first to believe. *For as yet, i. e., up to this time. They knew not—they comprehended not.* The word *scripture* refers to the predictions which Jesus had made in regard to His own resurrection. (See Matt. xvi. 21, xx. 19; Mark x. 34; Luke xviii. 31-34.) *That he must rise, &c.* The necessity was founded upon the immutable word and promise of God (Ps. xvi. 10), upon the principle of life inherent in Jesus as the eternal Son of God, and upon the redemptive economy by which Christ was to rise from the dead and become the first fruits of them that are held in the power of the grave. (1 Cor. xv. 20.) This slowness of heart to believe, this ignorance, not of the letter, but of the meaning and spirit of the Scripture, on the part of the disciples, may seem strange to us who have been favored with these eighteen centuries of ever accumulating experience and proof. Nor may we indeed acquit them of spiritual dullness and want of discernment, while we yet see how this clears them of all charge of enthusiasm, and adds to the credibility of their witness. *To their own home, literally, to themselves.* Reference is had to their place of sojourn, for it must not be supposed, that they had a permanent place of abode in Jerusalem. Luke (xxiv. 12) has the same form of expression, which is the more remarkable as being one of quite infrequent occurrence.

11. ¶ ^aBut Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre. 12. And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.—^bMark xvi. 5.

See notes on Matt. xxviii. 2.

Brief was the stay of those two men. But Mary, arriving perhaps by another direction after they left, lingers at the spot, weeping for her missing Lord. As she gazes through her tears on the open tomb, she also ventures to stoop down and look into it, when lo! *two angels in white* as from the world of light (see on Matt. xxviii. 3), appear to her, in a *sitting* posture, as having finished some business, and awaiting some one to impart tidings to. *One at the head, and the other at the feet, where Jesus had lain*—not merely proclaiming silently the *entire* charge they had had of the body of Christ, but rather,

possibly, calling mute attention to the narrow space within which the Lord of glory had contracted Himself, as if they would say, come, see within what limits, marked off by the interval here between us two, *the Lord* lay! Mary *stood* weeping at the sepulchre, and Jesus came to her, the devout woman *ran* to tell the disciples, and He met them in the way. In every state, if we do our duty, our Lord will not fail to reward us. If we delight in retirement and contemplation, His visits will comfort us. If we labor faithfully in an active life, in the midst of our business, His blessings will meet us. (vi. 37, xi. 20; Job xxi. 15; Ps. ix. 10; 1 Tim. iv. 8.)

"I need no picture of Mary Magdalene, or any other saint," says *Cecil*, "I want no aid to my conceptions from anything studied by an artist; the life is before me, I see the principle itself, actually and visibly in exercise. . . . What are all the splendid exhibitions which the world presents to our attention? What are its monuments compared with this? What are all the grand sights, either of ingenuity or beauty, after which people so eagerly run? Show me such a sight, as *Mary standing weeping at the sepulchre!* Such a monument, as this, of humility, patience, love and faith, set up in the Christian Church, infinitely surpasses in real grandeur and worth all the most splendid monuments of worldly greatness and distinction. (Gal. iii. 1.)"

13. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? she saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.—Ps. xlii. 3, 5, 11; Jer. xxxi. 16.

Woman—a perfectly respectable address. *Why weepest thou?* Asked, not because they knew not why she wept, but to open the way to make her know that there was no reason to weep. *They have taken away.* (See on verse 2.) As before to the two disciples, so now to the two angels, she naturally opens her grief. What a remarkable evidence of the intensity of Mary's grief is afforded by the fact, that even a vision of angels does not interrupt it! She is so completely absorbed by this one feeling, that there is no surprise, no symptom of astonishment: she answers the inquiry proposed to her, as if she had conversed with angels all her life. Yet this very

thing may serve to show how exalted already, and even under these circumstances, was her idea of Jesus, for, if she had not felt Him to be more than man, would she not have been more moved by the sight of these, than at the loss of Him?

14. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and ¹⁴knew not that it was Jesus. 15. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.
14 Matt. xxviii. 9; Mark xvi. 9. 15 Luke xxiv. 16, 31; chap. xxi. 4.

She turned herself back, that is, from looking into the sepulchre. *And knew not*, &c. Probably the different dress of our Lord from what He was accustomed to wear, or the tears in her eyes, in that morning gray, might prevent Mary from recognizing Jesus at first. *Woman*, &c. (See on verse 13.) *Why weepest thou?* Our Lord begins, as the angels had begun, and it is to teach us, that the words of angels are spoken by command of God. These were the very first words Christ spake to any after He rose from the dead. For His mission was to bind up the broken in heart, and the end of it, we know, will be to "wipe away tears from off all faces." (Isa. xxv. 8; Rev. vii. 17, xxi. 4.) But He proceeds further and deeper than they. *Whom seekest thou?* He proceeds to ask: for only in finding Him whom her soul seeketh, can the ever-flowing fountain of her grief be stayed: and in His question is implied the encouraging promise, "They that seek shall find." Mary longs to see the dead body of Christ, and complains of the loss of that, and, behold, she sees Him alive, who "is able to do for us exceeding abundantly, even above all that we ask or think." *Have borne him hence*. Observe, no mention is made by Mary of the name of Christ. She is so taken up with the thoughts of her Saviour, that she supposes that everybody thinks of Him as well as she, and that any one must read in her heart the name of Him whom she seeks. "My soul, if thou at any time lose the presence of thy God, seek Him with diligence and perseverance; seek Him with prayers, and sighs, and tears, and, be sure, at last thou shalt find Him with joy. He hides not Himself that we may not find Him, but that we may seek Him, and be thereafter more fearful to lose Him. Despair

not, He again will show Himself: only go on, and seek Him still with hope, and thou shalt be sure to find Him at last with joy. (Cant. ii. 14; Luke ii. 43-46.)"—*Austin. Tell me where*, &c. Grief is unreasonable. Had an enemy taken away the body, would he have told Mary where he had laid it? The mourner was so transported with sorrow that she knew not what she said, or what she did, she could not distinguish faces, nor remember voices, all was confusion and perplexity.

16. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabbouni, which is to say, Master.

Mary, said Jesus. There was something in the accents of that well-known voice when it pronounced her name, which left no possibility to doubt the speaker, her eyes were directed by it to the object of her solicitude, her heart was filled with gladness. *And saith unto him, Rabbouni*, which is to say, *Master*, casting herself (as would appear from the next verse) in her ecstasy, at His feet. How touching and beautiful a comment is this upon our Lord's own words, "My sheep hear my voice," they know the voice of their Shepherd, when they hear it in His word and in His providences, in His blessings and in His chastenings, as distinctly and as immediately as Mary Magdalene knew who was speaking to her at that moment in the garden of the sepulchre. This is a high mystery, but we write as concerning Christ and His Church; for is it not said that He shall manifest Himself to them as He does not unto the world, and does not experience fully justify it, when they hear a voice which the world cannot hear, and see a hand which the world cannot see? Shall we ever hear our own names uttered by our Lord? Are they now written in His book? Can we wonder that when Mary had found her Lord she was unwilling to part from Him?

17. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father: and to my God, and your God.
17 Ps. cxlii. 22; Matt. xxviii. 10; Rom. viii. 29; Heb. ii. 11. 18 Chap. xxvi. 28. 19 Eph. i. 17.

Touch me not, &c. It is manifest from this and other passages (such as verse 27), that the reason why Mary was forbidden to touch her risen Saviour was not because the thing was impossible. Indeed, if it had been so, the prohibition had been unne-

cessary, for we need not be forbidden to do that which cannot be done. Mary had the testimony of two of her senses, sight and hearing, that it was the Lord, and she now seeks the testimony of a *third*, namely, of *feeling*, in order to be sure that it is a body and not a pure spirit which addresses her. The knowledge of Christ by internal consciousness is better far than that by sight or hearing. "Is it impossible," says the *Rev. William Archer Butler*, "that Jesus, in this singular prohibition to weeping and astonished Mary, might have alluded to *this spiritual contact* which was to be the consequence of His ascension—to this inward grasp which the abiding of His Spirit was to allow—so that those who of old had seen and heard the Lord, were thenceforth to know Him as it were by touch and feeling, by direct and palpable apprehension." It might be proper to touch Jesus at His own invitation, and so to answer an important end (see Luke xxiv. 39), and yet improper to do so without it. By comparing the passage with Matt. xxviii. 9, 10 (on which see notes), it appears that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary who was with her *did touch Him*, for they are said to have "held Him by the feet, and worshiped Him." There is reason to think, therefore, that the words, *Touch me not*, were used mainly to induce Mary to *desist* from what she was doing, and that on account of His having more important employment for her—"Go, tell my brethren!" This agrees with the reason given, "*Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended*, &c. This was as much as if He had said, You need not be so unwilling to let go my feet, as though you should see me no more: I am not yet ascended, nor shall I ascend at present. Yet do not imagine that I am raised to a mere mortal life, or am going to set up a temporal kingdom in this world. . . . No. . . . *I ascend*, &c. This teaching He bids her go and communicate unto His brethren: remind the disciples of His former words, and let them know that this is the season of their accomplishment, even that going to His Father of which in His final charge He had so frequently spoken. (See chap. xvi. 16, 17 25-28.) Like Joseph in his glory, "He is not ashamed to call them brethren." (Heb.

ii 11, 12.) *I ascend*, &c. Mary had called Him "Master," implying thus that she was His servant and handmaid; but now He graciously calls her sister, for His saying here implies as much. As by a woman came the first news of death, so by a woman came also the first notice of the resurrection of the dead. And the place fits well, for in a garden they came both. *Leighton* says, "He says not to our Father and our God, but severally, *mine* and *yours*, teaching us the order of the new covenant, that the Sonship of Jesus Christ is not only more eminent in nature, but in order, is the spring and cause of ours, as *Cyril* well observes. So then, He that here puts this word in our mouths, to call God *Father*, He it is by whom we have this dignity and comfort that we call Him so. (See on Matt. xxviii. 9, 10.)"

13. "Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

^aMatt. xxviii. 10. Luke xxiv. 10.

The reasons which induced our Lord to appear first to Mary Magdalene, were, we suppose, as follows: 1. To display to His Church the sovereignty and abounding riches of His grace. Human reason, if it had been consulted, would have said, Let the risen Mediator go, from His sepulchre to the streets of Jerusalem, and show Himself there in triumph to the people who crucified Him, or, with eager haste to His beloved disciples, and gladden their sorrowful hearts. But, His first act after His resurrection is to comfort and honor this humble Mary. 2. To elevate woman in society, and in Divine privileges. Male and female were not, then, "one" in Moses, as they are now "all one in Christ Jesus." They had neither that place in the Church, nor that rank in society which they now enjoy. Nor was it in the mind of the Saviour that any such invidious distinction between the sexes, as took its rise in the appropriation in the Second Temple of a particular court to the females, called "the court of the women," and continued in a greater or less degree until His day, should be perpetuated. Besides, never did a solitary female appear among Christ's enemies, either during His life or at His crucifixion. And He knew how closely identified with all the best charms and

charities of social life, is woman's elevation to her proper station of dignity and influence. Hence our Lord's appearing first to Mary, was at once of special good will to the sex, and an emancipation of them from human impositions. 3. That He might put honor on her earnest seeking of Him, and on her singular obedience and love. Jesus seldom manifests His sovereignty alone. As we look more closely into what He does, we can generally discover in His doings something beyond it. It was the loving, affectionate, the conscientious, the seeking, earnest Mary, whom He thus honored in the morning of the Resurrection day.

19. ¹Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

²Mark xvi. 14: Luke xxiv. 36; 1 Cor. xv. 5.

The same day. This is added to show that our Lord's appearance to the Apostles, was on the very day of His resurrection. *At evening.* It must have been when the evening was somewhat advanced, for His appearance to the disciples on their way to Emmaus had taken place previously, and it was not until the day was far spent (Luke xxiv. 29. *The first day of the week.* A day ever since dedicated to the special service of Him who on this day rose from death! This was the first time the Church had ever met, and lo, Jesus Christ was found to be there, in the midst of them! Consider the repeated sanction which His presence gave to the next "Lord's Day," (see verse 26; Rev. i. 10; also Acts ii. 1.) Observe, too, the many indications that the first day of the week became regarded thenceforth as the Christian Sabbath. (See Acts xx. 7; also 1 Cor. xvi. 2.) *Came Jesus.* He came unexpectedly. Without apprising them of His being near, He entered the room where they were assembled. *Bloomfield* says: "As a beautiful economy similar to that which we observe in nature, may be discerned in our Lord's working of miracles, by which no *more power* is employed than is necessary to accomplish the purpose in view, we may suppose with the best commentators (as *Calvin*, *Grotius*, *Whitby* and *Campbell*) that our Lord caused the doors to preternaturally open of themselves, as

the angel (Acts v. 19, 23) "opened the prison doors in which the Apostles were confined." (See also Acts xii. 10.) Thus, as it is observed by *Calvin*, "the circumstance of the doors being barred was purposely introduced, as containing in it an illustrious *specimen* of the Divine power inherent in our exalted Saviour, who, we may suppose, by thus entering not without a miracle, intended to afford His disciples a striking proof of His Divinity." This seems alluded to at verse 30. *Peace be unto you*—not the mere *wish* that even His own exalted peace might be theirs (chap. xiv. 27), but conveying it into their hearts, even as He "opened their understandings to understand the Scriptures." (Luke xxiv. 45.)

20. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. ³Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.—4Chap. xvi. 22.

He showed unto them his hands, &c.—not only as *ocular* and *tangible* evidence of the *reality* of His resurrection (see on Luke xxiv. 37–43), but as through "the *power* of that resurrection," dispensing all His peace to men. *Then were the disciples glad, &c.* They were so for the following reasons: 1. It gave proof that He had escaped the fury of His foes. 2. It afforded an evidence of His character, and a confirmation of His mission and doctrine. (See Acts i. 22, ii. 32, iii. 15.) 3. It proved the acceptance of His sacrifice, and the completion of His obedience, in behalf of His believing followers. 4. It was a proof of their participation in the blessings which He has procured beyond the present state, a pledge of their entrance into heaven. He rose as the Head of His body, the Church. 5. They had thus a pledge of His protection of His Church from its enemies, and of its final triumph over all. Let us keep a serious celebration of the joy which belongs to every remembrance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Sabbath is set apart for the veneration of a risen Saviour. We should follow Him from the cross to the crown: "weep with Him when He wept; rejoice when He rejoiced," and be glad, like His disciples, "when they saw the Lord." This joy is not like that of the world, agitated, but pure and calm, it composes the spirit, it refines the affections.

21. Then said Jesus to them again, *Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.* Matt. xxviii. 18, chap. xvii. 18, 19; 2 Tim. ii. 2; Heb. ii. 1.

Again. (See on verse 19.) *Peace be unto you.* This language was sweet especially considering the troubles of their hearts to whom it was primarily addressed. It is as though Jesus had said, All is well as to the past, and all shall be well as to the future. The commission itself is sweet. Nothing could well be more grateful to those who loved Christ than to be employed by Him on such an errand, and to have such an example to imitate. Jesus came to offer Himself a sacrifice for sin, and by His blood to obtain eternal salvation for poor lost sinners. Yet notwithstanding this disparity between His mission and that of His ministering servants, there are various points of likeness between them. 1. The great objects of Christ's mission were to glorify God, and to seek and to save lost souls, and theirs are the same. 2. In executing His mission, as Mediator, Christ was always under the direction of Him that sent Him, and the ministers of Christ, as His servants, must be the same. 3. Christ, in the execution of His mission, had great difficulties and trials to encounter, and His servants must expect the same. 4. Christ was not sent forth in His undertaking without a promise of support in it, and a glorious reward for it. If many waters could have quenched His love, it had been quenched, but Divine Omnipotence supported Him. As His Father sent Him, so sends He His ministering servants. Faithfully has He promised to be with them always to the end of the world. The joy set before Him encouraged Him to endure the cross, they also shall have their reward—they shall enter into the joy of the Lord.

22. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost:* 23. *Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.*—Matt. xvi. 19 and xviii. 18.

He breathed on them. &c. A symbolic act, denoting the bestowal of the Holy Ghost according to His promise. Not that the promise is here fully accomplished, for this did not take place until the Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit, but it was a precursor and pledge of that which was so soon to be realized in all its abundant

fullness and richness. This *breathing forth* is in beautiful accordance with what is said in chap. xv. 26, that the Spirit proceedeth forth in His work from the Father and the Son, although this was not to take place until the ascension of Jesus to His glorified state in heaven. (Chap. xvi. 7.) Here is proof of Christ's Divinity, He inspired those ambassadors, gave them the Holy Ghost. *Receive ye,* &c. Surely this is the voice of a God, and not of a man. *Holy Ghost.* We are not to suppose that the word "holy" denotes the holiness of the nature of the Blessed Spirit, because holiness, being a property of the Divine essence which belongs equally to all the Persons, cannot be attributed to one of them by way of eminence or distinction. It would be as improper always to call one of them wise, or almighty, or just, or good, while no such adjunct was connected with the names of the others. There can be little doubt that the epithet, holy, refers to His official character. He is the Author of all the holiness which adorns the creation, and particularly in the economy of redemption He sustains the character of the Sanctifier. (Titus iii. 5.) He comes forth from the Father, to restore His image in the soul of man, and all the virtues and the graces are the effects of His mighty operations.

Whosoever sins ye remit, &c. If there is no reference here to the miraculous gift of discerning spirits, by which the Apostles could certainly judge of the state of individuals, and pronounce a sentence upon them which would be ratified in heaven, nothing further can be intended than that, as preachers of the Word, they were authorized to declare the character of those who should be justified, and of those who should be condemned, to assure believers of eternal life, and unbelievers of eternal death. (See on Matt. xvi. 19 and xviii. 18.) The absolute power of forgiveness, or condemnation, was not vested in the Apostles, any more than the power to perform miracles, although this was conferred in similarly unqualified terms. As Jesus had been the authorized messenger of the Father, able to communicate without mistake His will, so the Apostles were to be fully authorized to act in the Mes-

siah's place, as making known the great principles of the new religion, and able to answer the inquiry, Who shall receive forgiveness of sin, and from whom shall forgiveness be withholden? They would be qualified to instruct men respecting the will of God in reference to pardon, and whatever principles they should announce as regulating the pardon of sin, those would be the principles recognized in heaven. This fullness of qualification, which would render them the authoritative ambassadors of the Messiah, and interpreters of His will, would proceed from the influence of the Holy Spirit.

24. † But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.
 † Chap. xi. 16.

Thomas called *Didymus*. (See on chap. xi. 16.) *One of the twelve*. They are still called "the twelve" by a familiar figure of speech, though two, as we know, were wanting: a part being put *synecdochically* as it is termed, according to Greek usage, for the whole. The disciples had congregated like a family of orphans deprived of their head. They were together like a nest of unfledged birds, from whom the murderous hand had carried off their dam, beneath whose sheltering wing they used to find repose. They had entered an "upper chamber," and shut their door upon the cold bleak world, to show that no comfort was to be expected from *without*. But Thomas *was not with them*, when Jesus came to them in the evening, on the day of His resurrection. We are not told how it happened that Thomas was absent at this time. Had he been there, he would probably then have been convinced of the blessed fact that Christ had risen, as the other Apostles were: and hence we may well remind ourselves how unwise it is to neglect religious ordinances.

25. The other disciples therefore said unto him, "We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, 'Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.'

† 1 Cor. ix. 1 and xv. 5. † Job ix. 16; Ps. lxxviii. 11, 32, xcv. 8, 10 and cvi. 21, 24.

No sooner had Thomas returned, than his fellow-Apostles said to him, with a rapture becoming the discovery, *We have seen the Lord*. Upon hearing this, who would not have expected that Thomas, after some inquiry, would have exclaimed, "Happy you who have been privileged with the

sight of a risen Saviour! Oh that I had been with you! Could I have foreseen that He would have honored this place with a visit, nothing should have induced me to quit the sacred spot." But instead of this emotion which was so natural, he avows his determination not only to have the evidence of sense, but to trust no one's senses but his own. *Except I shall see in his hands, &c.* We have already seen that one cause of Thomas' unbelief was his absence from the assembly of his fellow-Christians. Another was his establishing an improper criterion of truth. The report of Christ's resurrection was made to him by men whose veracity he did not doubt, for they had been for three years his companions, and he knew them, in a matter of such moment, to be incapable of falsehood, and yet he refused to credit it. He declared that he would see, and put his finger into the print of the nails, which had been used in the crucifixion, and thrust his hand into the side, which had been pierced by the soldier's spear, or else he would reject all other evidence. And yet, how strange was the conduct of Thomas! Had he constantly judged according to the rule here laid down for himself, how little could he have believed at all! He could not have believed that ever there was such a law-giver as Moses, or such a prophet as Isaiah, or anything recorded in the Jewish Scriptures, for nothing of all this had he seen or heard. It might easily be shown how absurd would be the adoption of this rule by ourselves, as it was applied to countries, persons and events, which we have never seen, but in which we believe on the testimony of others. How many things are certainly true, the truth of which falls not within the compass either of reason, experience or sense.

26. † And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, *Peace be unto you*.

After eight days. Note again the day on which this occurred, the first day of the week, the Lord's day, the Christian Sabbath, weekly festival of the Resurrection, duly to keep which is at once our duty and our privilege. (See on verse 19.) "Every Lord's Day ought to be a day of *spiritual resurrection*. Every succeeding

Lord's Day ought to prepare us for the day of the Lord. Then "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall also appear with Him in glory." *His disciples were within*, &c. Thomas this time was with the Apostolic band, no longer absent, not forsaking their assembling even in the sadness of his spirit. *Then came Jesus*, &c.—as before, the Lord greets them with His "comfortable words," now for this third time repeated, speaking peace to their yet anxious minds, and even for this hitherto excepted and restless one pronouncing His peace. (See on verses 19, 21.) For eight, days in just punishment of this his unbelief, Thomas walks in gloom, while the other Apostles, and the faithful women, and many a humble disciple, are walking in the light, he was like some low and gloomy vale, untouched, ungladdened by the rays of the risen sun, while all the neighboring heights long since were smitten and lighted up with His glory.

27. Then saith he to Thomas. Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing. *1 John i. 1.

Behold the condescension of our Lord and Saviour in dealing with this man. (See on verse 29.) *Reach hither thy finger*, &c. Observe the evidence of Christ's Omniscience which was shown by His acquaintance with the disposition of the erring disciple, and by His using word for word in His prescription, the terms which had been employed in asserting the existence of the disorder which he was about to remove, although He had not been personally present to see or hear when this asseveration was made. It is evident that our Lord retained after His resurrection the memorials of His Passion—there were marks of the nails and of the spear. John saw Him after His ascension as "a lamb that had been slain." These marks, which served to prove the truth of His resurrection, will forever remind us of the way in which our happiness was procured, and excite us to adoration and praise. In all the Divine dispensations, truth is gradually revealed, and here we have a conspicuous example of this progressive system. An angel first announces the event. The empty sepulchre confirms the women's report. Our Lord's appearance showed

He was alive, that to the disciples at Emmaus proved that at least His spirit lived, that to the eleven demonstrated the reality of His body, and the evidence given Thomas decided that the self-same body that had been crucified was risen from the dead. *Be not faithless, but believing*. "Do not become unbelieving. Thomas was *doubtful*, not unbelieving. Our Lord warns us, through him, that if we miss opportunities of having our scruples removed, if we close our eyes to the evidences of the truth, our *doubts* will be hardened into *unbelief*."—*South*. Let us be watchful against all symptoms of unbelief. Let us live with the recollection that the unseen world, with all its powers and realities, is not far from every one of us.

Note, 1. The failings of the disciples are ingeniously detailed in the Book which makes us acquainted with their history, whether the writer be himself the character he records, or whether he describes the lives and actions of others. In either case there is evident strict impartiality—not a fault is shielded or shadowed by prejudice—not an error is concealed from mankind, but the whole truth is faithfully, fearlessly and prominently exhibited. Strong evidence is thus furnished that the pen with which they wrote, was one that was free from all the imperfections of our depraved nature, and one that was guided by a wisdom that yields no more to human weakness than to wrath, in the accomplishment of its records and the fulfillment of its purposes. 2. The unbelief of Thomas was overruled by the Saviour for His own honor and the good of His Church. If the disciples of our Lord had been men of easy credence, men of hasty persuasion, men who, without examination, would receive as true any tale that corresponded with their wishes, their deposition would have been suspicious. But, instead of this, they were full of doubts, and admitted nothing till evidence extorted conviction. They yielded with backwardness to the force of evidence, obstinately adhered to preconceived opinions, pertinaciously held the ground they had once taken, opposed anything new and unexpected, and hesitated to admit as a fact that which tallied not with their own experience. Hence

their testimony is so much the stronger.

28. And Thomas answered and said unto him. My Lord and my God.—1 Tim. iii. 15; Rev. v. 9, 14.

And Thomas answered, &c. Here is additional evidence that the unbelief of Thomas was overruled by Christ for His own honor. *My Lord and my God.* This exclamation implies, 1. A full and decided conviction of the truth of our Lord's resurrection from the dead. (See Rom. i. 4.) 2. A conviction of our Saviour's essential dignity and supreme Divinity. This is language which could not have been employed in addressing the most exalted creature without the guilt of impious blasphemy. 3. An humble hope of personal interest in Christ as our Lord and God. Thomas, being conscious of His faith in the risen Redeemer, claims interest in Him, and all who believe the testimony of God concerning Jesus Christ, who trust in the promise and repose in the Saviour for salvation, may also claim interest in Him as *their* Lord. 4. Holy joy and humble triumph in the Redeemer. 5. Thomas' admiration of our Lord's condescension, and shame on account of His former incredulity. "My Lord and my God, I admire Thy kindness in bearing with my infirmities, and I am ashamed and humbled at the recollection of my previous unbelief." 6. A deep sense of obligation to the risen Redeemer, subjection to His authority, and devotedness to His service. Accordingly, Thomas addressed Him as His Lord and God. Every Christian receives Christ in the whole extent of His Mediatorial character, and while he listens to Him as his instructor, and relies upon Him as His atoning and interceding High Priest, he submits to Him as His Sovereign, and obeys Him as His Lord.

29. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

72 Cor. v. 7; 1 Peter i. 8.

Because thou hast seen me, &c. The evidence to which Thomas yielded was the evidence of the senses—touch, and sight, and hearing. And the feeling which arose from this touching, and feeling, and demonstration, Christ pronounced to be faith. Observe, then, it matters not *how* faith comes, whether through the intellect, as in

the case of Thomas, or in the heart, as in the case of John. God has many ways of bringing different characters to faith, but that blessed thing which the Bible calls faith is a *state* of soul in which the things of God become glorious certainties. Remark again this; The faith of Thomas was not merely satisfaction about a fact, it was trust in a person. The admission of a fact, however sublime, is not faith, we may believe that Christ is risen, yet not be nearer heaven. It is a Bible fact that Lazarus rose from the grave, but belief in Lazarus' resurrection does not make the soul better than it was. Thomas passed on from the fact of the resurrection to the person of the risen: "My Lord, and my God!" Trust in the risen Saviour—that was the belief which saved his soul. It is not belief *about* the Christ, but personal trust *in* the Christ of God, that saves the soul. *Blessed are they that have not seen, &c.* Jesus said on another occasion, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see." (Luke x. 23.) The former of these passages pronounces a blessing upon those who saw the fulfillment of what others have believed, the latter upon those who should believe the Gospel upon the ground of their testimony, without having witnessed the facts with their own eyes. There is no contradiction in these blessings, for there is a wide difference between *requiring sight as the ground of faith*, which Thomas did, and *obtaining it as a completion of faith*, which those who saw the coming and kingdom of the Messiah did. The one was a species of unbelief, the other was faith terminating in vision. Faith, which is the great instrument employed by God in man's restoration, is belief in things unseen. The more, therefore, any one walks by sight rather than by faith, the less is his soul possessed of what God uses as the great means of blessing it. And if he be obstinate in requiring the evidence of his senses for what is otherwise sufficiently proved, such obstinacy shows that unseen things have little hold on his affections, little reality in his contemplations. Peter mentions it to the praise of those whom he addressed, that they loved their Saviour though they had not seen Him. (1 Peter i. 8.)

30. ¶ "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book : " Chap. xxi. 25.

Many other signs. The Greek word for signs here is often rendered miracles, for the miracles of Jesus were all *signs*, indicating the Divinity of the Author. The signs omitted in John's account, were done *in the presence of the disciples* of Jesus, and were consequently of as good authority as those related by himself. This was but a necessary piece of caution : for John wrote his Gospel late toward the end of his life, after the Apostles and disciples of Christ had spread the Gospel far and near, and had both by preaching and writing published the great works and signs, done by their Master. To prevent, therefore, the suspicions which some might be apt to entertain of their teachers, when they found the great evidences, insisted on by them, not mentioned by John, who, being the last writer of the Apostles, would naturally for that reason be supposed to be the most accurate, he declares, that he had not recounted all the signs, done by Jesus, but that there were many others, which, having been wrought *in the presence of His disciples*, might very well be taught and published by them, though omitted by himself. (xxi. 24, 25.) From this it appears that we are not to infer that the Evangelists were ignorant of a given fact because they omit to notice it. It is no presumption against the truth of the narrative because it is given by but one Evangelist.

31. ¶ But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.
* Luke i. 4. * Chap. iii. 15, 16 and v. 24 ; 1 Peter i. 8, 9.

That ye might believe, &c. It is assumed that the things written are sufficient to carry conviction. "He that wrought such wonders in the world," says *Howe*, "restoring (upon all occasions as they occurred to Him) hearing to the deaf, sight to the blind, soundness to the maimed, and life to the dead, even by a word speaking—He certainly was the Son of God. Here is sufficient evidence that doth speak the thing to any man's conscience that doth consider ; yea, He that did display such beams of His majesty and glory, living in flesh, that even the devils themselves were constrained to do Him homage, under that

notion, "the Christ, the Son of the living God," surely this must tell every man's conscience—this cannot but be the Son of God. *And that believing ye might have life through his name.* The term "life," thus applied, includes : 1. Pardon of sin. 2. A renewed nature. 3. Eternal glory in heaven. All this is obtained by "believing in the name" of Jesus Christ, believing that He is "the Christ, the Son of God." The belief, however, be it remembered, which is the means of giving us an interest in these blessings, is not a mere assent of the understanding to certain truths brought before it, but an acceptance of those truths by the heart as the principles on which it would regulate its thoughts, words and actions, even unto death. Thus John, in the very close of his Gospel . . . iterates the testimony with which he began it—to the Godhead of the Word who became flesh.

NOTE.

It is supposed that several women agreed to meet at the sepulchre, to embalm the body of Jesus, and that Joanna and some others with her, having undertaken to prepare the spices, purposed being there about sun rising (Luke xxiii. 55, 56, xxiv. 1-10), but Mary Magdalene, the other Mary, and Salome, came to view the sepulchre, as the day "began to dawn." (Matt. xxviii. 1.) Mary Magdalene seems to have arrived some short time before her companions (1), and observing that the stone had been removed, left them to wait for Joanna and her company, and returned back to inform Peter and John. In the meantime, the other Mary and Salome came to the sepulchre, and saw the angels, as recorded by Matthew and Mark. While these women returned to the city, Peter and John went to the sepulchre, passing them at some distance, or going another way, but the angel did not appear to them. After their return, Mary Magdalene saw a vision of two angels, and then Jesus Himself, as here related (Mark xvi. 9-11), and immediately after Jesus appeared to the other women as they returned to the city. (Matt. xxviii. 9, 10.) In the meanwhile, Joanna and her company arrived at the sepulchre, and, entering it,

at first saw nothing, only observed that the body was not there; but two angels appeared and addressed them, as the one angel had done the other women. (Luke xxiv. 1-10.) They therefore returned immediately to the city, and found the Apostles, before the other women arrived, and informed them of what they had seen, upon which Peter went a second time to the sepulchre, but saw no angels, only the clothes lying. (Luke xxiv. 12.) About this time the two disciples set off for Em-

maus, having only heard the report of these women, and neither that of Mary Magdalene, nor yet that of the other Mary and Salome. (Luke xxiv. 22-24, 33, 34.) These at length arrived, and informed the Apostles that they had seen Jesus Himself, and that two of them had been permitted to touch Him; and some time after, on the same day, He appeared to Peter. This is one of many ways by which the apparent differences between the Evangelists may be reconciled.

1. Who came early to the sepulchre? 2. What did she do? 3. What is said of Peter? 4. Where did the disciples go? 5. What did the angels say to Mary? 6. What did Jesus say to her? 7. In what circumstances did Jesus appear to the disciples? 8. What account is given of Thomas? 9. What is said of "many other signs?" 10. Why were "these" signs written?

CHAPTER XXI.

1 *Christ appearing again to his disciples was known of them by the great draught of fishes.* 12 *He diavth with them;* 13 *earnestly commendeth Peter to feed his lambs and sheep;* 18 *foretelleth him of his death;* 22 *rebuketh his curiosity touching John.* 25 *The conclusion.*

AFTER these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself.

After these things. There is reason to conjecture that more than a week elapsed before Jesus showed Himself as here related, although, as *Sier* suggests, it was most probably on the first day of the week, or our Sabbath. This would give two weeks as the interval between the appearance in xx. 16, and this at the Sea of Tiberias, or three weeks from the time of His resurrection. Nineteen days would then remain for His interviews with His disciples in Galilee, and His subsequent return to Mount Olivet, from which He made His ascension. *Shewed himself.* This expression implies that there was in His appearing something wonderful. (Mark xvi. 12.) *At the sea, on the shore of the sea. Of Tiberias.* It cannot be wondered that the disciples returned to their native sea, when the announcement is recalled, made first by the angels and repeated by the Lord Himself, that He was "to go before them into Galilee," and that "there they were to see Him." *On this wise, or thus.*

2. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and ^aNathanael of Cana in Galilee, and ^bthe sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. ^aChap. i. 45. ^bMatt. iv. 21.

Simon Peter. (Matt. x. 2.) *Thomas*, who so late was doubtful. *Nathanael* (that is Bartholomew), of whom we have heard nothing since the day of his first call to Apostleship, and the mention of whose native town—*Cana in Galilee*—connects the record of this, our Lord's last miracle with the "beginning of miracles." *The sons of Zebedee*—James and John. John assumes as a thing known from the other Evangelists, who the sons of Zebedee were, as well as Zebedee himself. *Two other of his disciples*, doubtless Andrew and Philip. They were both from the same city (John i. 44), and their names are found connected on two (John vi. 5, 8 and xii. 21, 22), indeed on three (Mark iii. 18) occasions.

3. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately, and that night they caught nothing.

These disciples seem to have been assembled together, for counsel, it may be, or devotion, and to them Peter proposes a return to their former occupation. They were in Galilee, expecting their Lord, waiting for His promised return: but they were poor, for they had left all to follow Him; and it was needful by honest labor to pro-

vide for themselves and for their households. So, moved thereto by their necessities, and not from any lust of gain, or weariness of their Lord's service, they return to a craft with which they were familiar, and go out of the house where they had been assembled, into the small fishing vessel which awaits them, and plied all night upon the waters of their native sea. But their task was an unprofitable one—that night they caught nothing—as at the first miraculous draught (see on Luke v. 5); no doubt so ordered that the miracle might strike them the more by contrast. The same principle is seen in operation throughout much of Christ's ministry, and is indeed a great law of God's spiritual procedure with His people. The fact that their Lord and their God could suffer the men He loved to remain in such a low estate and precarious condition, should teach Christians to submit cheerfully to poverty, as well as to behold with a feeling akin to reverence, the brother of low degree. This world is a place of fruitless toil, for men are not willing to be instructed. Like the disciples, they toil over the sea of life in the dark, fishing for happiness as they go, but generally in vain. Being unwilling to profit by the wisdom of those who have toiled over the sea before them, their net is mostly found on the *wrong* side of the vessel, while they are quite ready to throw the blame of their numerous failures on anything and everybody rather than themselves.

4. But when the morning was now come Jesus stood on the shore; but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.—Chap. xx. 14.

When the morning was now come, &c. It is ever morning when Jesus visits His disciples. However dark the night, when He appears the light at length gets through the clouds, and the morning breaks. O what a bright morning broke upon the dark night of human sorrow at the Incarnation, when Jesus robed Himself in frailty, and for the first time placed His foot upon the shores of this guilty, wrecked, and storm-tossed world! And oh what a bright morning will burst upon the vision of the perfected just, when, standing upon that sea of glass which John saw in Apocalyptic vision, they be-

hold their glorified Lord: when, the full fruition of their hopes being realized, their sun shall no more go down, the days of their sorrow having forever passed away. *Jesus stood on the shore.* "What," observes an ancient writer, "does the sea represent, but this present world, which dashes itself with the tumults of business, and the waves of this corruptible life? What is represented by the solidity of *the shore*, but the perpetuity of eternal rest? It is as if our Lord spake to them thus, by facts, of the mystery of His resurrection: "Now from henceforth I appear not unto you on the sea (Matt. xiv. 25) being no longer exposed together with you to the disturbance of the waves. (Deut. xii. 9.)" *Knew not that it was Jesus.* The distance and the dimness of the morning light might account for their not knowing him. But still the narrative intimates that our Lord maintained, at least for a time, a supernatural reserve, so that His Apostles could scarce discern His identity. So, while His ministry and church are here on this *sea* of life, He ever stands on yonder high *shore* of immortality, earnestly watching them, though but dimly recognized by them.

5. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.
6 Luke xxiv. 41.

Children, have ye any meat? This was in our Lord's wonted style to His disciples, making them tell their case, and so the better prepare them for what was coming. *Meat*—food. The original word expresses *something to be eaten with bread*, such as meat or fish. *Children.* This term would not necessarily identify Christ, but when they did recognize Him, they would feel it sweetly like Himself. It should be remembered that this honorable and endearing title was given by the Saviour to men, who, whatever might have been their former fidelity and attachment, had, within only a few days, forsaken Him and fled, had deserted Him in the hour of His utmost need, had abandoned Him on the very cross to which He had been nailed for their own eternal deliverance. On these poor, frail and inconsistent creatures, because He perceived in them "the root of the matter"—contrition, lowliness and love to Him, a willing spirit and a warm

heart—He bestows this high and delightful appellation. To *all* those who faithfully serve Him, Jesus addresses questions of a similar import: “Children, have you” what you need or desire? Have you supplies for the body and the soul? Have you strength, and peace, and joy? Have you an humble hope that your sins are pardoned, and a well grounded expectation of heaven?” Numerous are the discoveries which, even in this world of trial and perplexity, the real follower of the Redeemer makes of the compassion of the Master he loves and serves, and it will no doubt be one of the delightful occupations of heaven, to discover by its light, how early and how late, how constantly and how earnestly, in the midst of how much negligence and ingratitude on our own part, the grace of the Redeemer has been exerted in our favor, His wing spread over us, and His everlasting arm outstretched for our deliverance. *They answered him, No.* In this instance, the disciples of Christ are simply acknowledging a want of the body. They had no food, and, as is always the case in wants of this nature, they were sufficiently ready both to admit and to deplore the want of it. Bodily privations are not only keenly felt, but readily acknowledged, because the acknowledgment does not necessarily imply any fault in him who makes it. But this, alas! is not equally true as to the wants of the soul. In this case, men are neither quick-sighted to discover their necessities, nor free to confess them. Many of those who are, in fact, “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,” are described in Scripture as considering themselves “rich, and increased with goods, and having need of nothing.” The great Teacher from the distant shores of eternity, now through His truth, says to every anxious laborer on the sea of life, “Have you any meat for your soul?”

6. And he said unto them, “Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.—*Luke v. 4, 6, 7.*

The mysterious Stranger bids them *cast the net on the right side of the ship*. The result was so vast an enclosure of fishes that they were unable to draw it to land. (See notes on *Luke v. 4, 5.*) Behold what faith in the

words of Christ will do. The disciples had toiled all night in their own way, and taken nothing, while in a few moments’ labor, in accordance with the instructions of Christ, the net was filled! And when Jesus speaks to the guilty and self-condemned sinner, tells him what to do, and gives him the power to do it, O what a change transpires! and how richly is he blessed! and what a shoal of blessings comes pouring into the soul, until the man so favored is compelled to exclaim, Lord, it is enough! We may not, in these days, as in those of the disciples, expect that a miracle will be wrought for the benefit of those who comply with the will of God. It is, however, hazarding nothing to say, that every true servant of Christ, setting himself sincerely, and in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, to accomplish His will, may expect much from the grace and love of his Redeemer, acting by the instrumentality of ordinary means, but producing effects which may be considered as, in a sense, *beyond nature*. How striking, for example, are those *answers to prayer* which may not seldom be observed in the lives of the devout and consistent servants of God! How often are deliverances granted, are wants supplied, are calamities removed, are sudden fountains of hope and joy opened in the path of the destitute and disquieted soul! Let us strive, even amidst the worst emergencies and disappointments of life, to “cast the net on the right side of the ship,” or, in other words, to seek our happiness and interest in the very place, and after the very manner which our Lord Himself prescribes. He who has said that “to obey is better than all burnt sacrifice,” will fulfill every promise by which He invites us to a life of resignation and conformity to His holy will.

7. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher’s coat unto him, for he was naked, and did cast himself into the sea. *Chap. xiii. 23 and xx. 2.*

That disciple whom Jesus loved, &c. John recognized Jesus first, reminded, as it would appear, by a former miracle of the same kind, and on the performance of which, Peter had exclaimed, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” (*Luke v. 8.*) Yet Peter was not at present struck

with the recollection himself. But no sooner does John say to him, *It is the Lord*, than the ship can hold him no longer, but at a place where the boat could not probably draw to land for the shallow water, girding himself with his *fisher's coat*, he plunges into the sea to reach Him! What rashness! What zeal! How perfectly in character does this man always appear! He was fervent, but acted by feeling, rather than reflection. He had a warm heart. The Lord had lately turned and looked upon him in the judgment hall, and he went out and wept bitterly. He had much forgiven, and he loved much. The Saviour had more than pardoned his late sad conduct, and had sent a message to him distinctly, "Go, tell my disciples, and Peter!" And how could he love Him enough? And love is strong as death. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.

8. And the other disciples came in a little ship, (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

A little ship, probably the boat in which the disciples had been during the night. *Two hundred cubits*, equal to three hundred feet. The rest of the disciples followed slowly, but surely, dragging the net. Had all done like Peter, the fish had been abandoned, and the vessel left to be drifted and injured. While we admire some we must not condemn others. The dispositions and the duties of men are various; and while some perform splendid actions, and excite notice, others go ploddingly on in the sober discharge of their common calling—but they also have the testimony that they please God. *For they were not far from land*, &c. They were not far from Jesus. Only that hundred yards or thereabouts, and they shall converse with their dearest Lord, and in His heavenly company forget all their toil. This is that joy of the morning which awaits them after their night of heaviness. Let us think of this at any time, when in the night of our heart we wish for the day, saying, "When will the day break, and the shadows flee away?" "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord." "The Lord is at hand," and with Him is peace, and we shall no more remember the anguish for very joy.

"When the shore is won at last,
Who will count the billows past?"

9. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.
10. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. 11. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

They saw a fire, &c. This might, indeed, be accounted for without supposing miraculous agency, but from the air of the passage it should rather seem that the fire and food were not only provided by Christ, but provided *miraculously*, as the draught of fishes had been a little before. Both of the miracles being probably intended to teach them, by symbolical actions, that their Lord could and would abundantly supply the *temporal* as well as spiritual necessities of His disciples. "O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him! The young lions do lack and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." You serve a kind Master, and the world is His, and the fullness thereof—Jehovah-jireh! But we read, "Thou shalt eat the labor of thine hand," and nothing has such a peculiar relish as what is gained by the blessing of God upon our own endeavors. He therefore also said unto them, *Bring of the fish which ye have now caught, and Simon Peter went up, and drew the net*, &c. Thus, while they must have marveled and adored at what was nothing less than a miracle, they were not only supplied for their immediate use, but the sale of the capture would pay their expenses back to Jerusalem, and while waiting there for the promise of the Father. *A hundred and fifty and three*. The count took place, either at the command of Jesus, or from their own wish to preserve the remembering of the great miracle. *And for all there were so many*, &c. "In the Church of heaven, where there will be none but saints, how great soever the number of them be, yet will not the net be broken. There will be no longer any division or schism to be feared in the bosom of unity in the center of peace, in the kingdom of perfect charity. Vouchsafe, Lord, to give us a foretaste of these fruits of peace, and to shed abroad in our hearts the love of unity and the spirit of charity."

12. Jesus saith unto them, *Come and dine.* And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. 13. Jesus then cometh and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. 14. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.—Acts i. 41. See chap. xx. 19, 26.

Dine. The verb thus rendered, was applied by the ancients to any meal which was taken before supper. Many of our Lord's actions around these shores were symbolic of some great spiritual truths, and it cannot be doubted that morning hour and morning meal were fraught with momentous lessons to the disciple-guests, and to the Church in every age. Observe, 1. The disciples met their Lord while they were engaged in prosecuting their former calling. We are thus taught that, instead of worldly industry proving a hindrance and impediment to the religious life, it may rather, if not perverted and abused, become the very channel through which God delights to meet His people. 2. The disciples were reminded, by this renewed miraculous capture, of their former call and consecration as *Fishers of men*. They had forsaken Jesus, but He would have them know that the gospel-net is still to be entrusted to their hands, and feel assured that in the darkest hour of their worldly and spiritual toil, they might think of a watchful eye of heavenly love that would never suffer them to toil, unowned and unrecompensed. 3. There was thus taught the final glorious and safe ingathering of the whole Church of God. The fishermen are done with the sea of life, its storms and toils, and night watchings, they have planted their own footsteps on the heavenly shore, and brought their net unbroken along with them. It is a lovely picture of the Resurrection morn, when all divisions and separations among Churches and Christians shall be at an end; when every fish in the sea of immortal being, "all the children of God scattered abroad," shall be gathered in. Notwithstanding the vast aggregate, not one shall be wanting. 4. Christ thus demonstrated His own real and undoubted humanity—convinced the disciples that it was no shadowy apparition which, at that morning hour, saluted them and then vanished away, but *the Man Christ Jesus*—the same Adorable Being who had been known to them oft before on these same

shores in "the breaking of bread." 5. This feast was, as it were, a type of the nobler and better festival Jesus was then on His way to prepare for His Church in glory. When the world's long night-season is over, and the eternal morning dawns, they who have faithfully and manfully toiled, will find that Jesus, faithful to His own promise, has "come again to receive them unto Himself, that where He is there they may be also," and then shall they "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob," in His Father's kingdom. *Durst*, or, *ventured to ask him*. Their backwardness proceeded from no other fear than that which may be in consequence of the most perfect esteem or veneration. *This is now the third time, &c.* Not the third time in succession—for He had appeared before this to the women, and to Cephas, and to James, and to the two disciples going to Emmaus. But the third time in kind: that is, the third time when the disciples were together. The Saviour seems to design to make His Apostles amends for the three days wherein they were deprived of the comfort of His presence. He obviates all suspicions of mistake and delusion, it being impossible that so many persons could be deceived all at once, and at so many different times. Throughout the Bible, "the third time" (a number ever Divinely allusive to the mystery of the Blessed Trinity), is either for confirmation or consummation.

15. ¶ So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?* He saith unto him, *Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.* He saith unto him, *Feed my lambs.*

Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? referring lovingly to those sad words of Peter, shortly before denying his Lord, "Though *all men* shall be offended because of thee, *yet will I never* be offended" (Matt. xxvi. 33), and intending by this allusion to bring the whole scene vividly before his mind and put him to shame. "Christ puts Peter upon a three-fold profession of his love unto Him," says *Burkitt*, "answerable to his three-fold denial of Him; his three-fold denial required a three-fold confession. True repentance ought, and will be as eminent in the fruit and effects of it, as the saint's fall hath been."

Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He adds not, "more than these," but prefixes a touching appeal to the Saviour's own omniscience for the truth of his protestation, which makes it a totally different kind of speech from his former. Observe, Peter being asked of the *measure* of his love to Christ, answers only concerning the *truth*, being asked of the *quantity*, answers only concerning the *quality*. "For the quantity, it matters not so much with Thee, none loves Thee so much as he ought, but for the sincere quality, which is all in all with Thee—as for that, I appeal to Thyself" (See notes on verse 17.) *Feed my lambs.* By the "lambs" we are to understand *young and tender* disciples, whether in age, or Christian standing (Isa. xl. 11; 1 John ii. 12, 13), and by the "sheep," verses 16, 17, the more *mature*. (See notes on verse 16.) What is said to Peter is said to all the Apostles. Not *thy lambs or thy sheep*, but "*my lambs and my sheep*." (1 Peter v. 2.) Jesus not only provides shepherds, but pasture, the Gospel of which He is the subject. Feed them with thy mind, feed them with thy mouth, feed them with thy labors, feed them with the prayer of thy heart, the admonition of thy word, the view of thy good example. (1 Thes. iv. 1; 2 Cor. xii. 15.)

16. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Acts xx. 28; Heb. xiii. 20; 1 Peter ii. 25 and v. 2, 4.

Again. The repetition is designed to impart emphasis to the inquiry, and produce a deep impression on Peter's mind. *Lovest thou me?* Christ would not trust His people with one who did not love Him. It is by this a good shepherd is distinguished from a hireling. (John x. 11.) Love will inspire vigilance and boldness in feeding the flock, and defending them from danger. *Thou knowest, &c.* (See on verses 15, 17.) *Feed my sheep.* "*My sheep.*" They are Christ's as given Him by the Father. (John x. 29.) They are His as having purchased them with His blood. (Acts xx. 28.) And they are His as being the travail of His soul, the reward of His death, which "satisfied" Him. The word here rendered "feed" signifies the whole duty of a shepherd, and not merely to supply them with

food—to govern them, protect them, to care for them, or (as Peter himself expresses it) "to take the oversight of them." (See on verse 15.) To discharge this duty as it demands is a great matter. 1. It requires that a minister be divested of a selfish spirit. 2. That he be conversant with the Gospel. How else can he lead others into it? If he be worldly-minded, he shall feed their evil principles and propensities, but not their graces, at best, only their mental faculties. Many are thus fed by ingenious, speculative preachers. But the faithful pastor must feed his people's best principles—their faith, hope and love. Lord, who is sufficient for these things?

17. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.—Chap. ii. 24, 25 and xvi. 30.

The third time. The kindness of our Lord to Peter is affecting, but the moral of it extends to us. When our Lord asks a disciple three times whether he loves Him, and puts him upon examining his heart, He teaches us that love to Christ is essential to our discipleship, and He gives to love the same eminence which it has always held among angels and men. It is "the first and great commandment." *Peter was grieved.* Peter now sees that it is his *three-fold* denial that demands his *three-fold* confession. He is *grieved*, not because the demand is made, but for the sad cause that renders it necessary. He had thrice said, *I know not the man*, he may now thrice declare how he *loves the man*. But the recollection of the sad scene of his denial of his Master melts him to sorrow in this hour of tenderest kindness and compassion. "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee—I do not say I shall never yield to temptation again—Lord, preserve me! And I wonder not that those who can only judge from outward appearance, think unfavorably of me, after all that I have done, but Thou seest the heart." We ought to stand clear with men, but it is a peculiar satisfaction, when we are misjudged of our fellow-creatures, to know that our witness is in heaven, and our record is on high. (See on verses 15, 16.)

19. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

¹Chap. xlii. 36; Acts xli. 3, 4.

Our Lord proceeds to predict the future martyrdom of Peter. In allusion to Peter's late alacrity in girding himself to go forth out of the ship to meet his Lord, (verse 7), the Lord draws a contrast between this vigor of his youth and the feebleness of his age, between the occurrences of the beginning of his ministry and Apostleship, and what shall happen at its close. In the expression, *whither thou wouldest*, may be a gentle reminder of his late desertion, but in its correlative *whither thou wouldest not*, we must not imagine that any unwillingness to suffer is implied. It can only mean that natural shrinking from a violent death which is common to us all, which may bespoken of even where such a death is, as it would be in this case, willingly embraced. Jesus Himself, with strong crying and tears, said, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Peter would, and would not; there would be nature in him, as well as grace. And while the spirit would be willing, the flesh would be weak. We see this related of some of the martyrs. *Latimer*, in one of his letters in prison, says to his friend: "O! pray for me! I sometimes shudder, and could creep into a mouse-hole, and then the Lord visits me again with His comforts, and thus, by His coming and going, shows me my infirmity." *Ridley*, at the stake, said to the smith that was driving in the staple: "Knock it in hard, my good fellow, for the flesh may have its freaks." And when they were leading *Rawlins* along to the flames, chancing to see his wife and children among the crowd, he burst into a flood of tears, and striking his breast, he exclaimed: "Ah, flesh, you would have your way, but I tell thee, by the grace of God, thou shalt not gain the victory."

19. This spake he, signifying why what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.—2 Peter i. 14.

By what death, i. e., by what kind of death. That Peter suffered martyrdom there can be little doubt. Nothing short of a violent death at the hands of his enemies can satisfy the conditions of this prophecy. It is an ecclesiastical tradition that he was cru-

cified with his head downward, at Rome, during the reign of the emperor Nero. *He should glorify God.* "The revelation of God unto the world by the Gospel," says an ancient writer, "is called the light of the knowledge of the glory," that is, of the manifestation "of God, in the face of Jesus Christ," and in 1 Peter iv. 14, those that suffered for Christ, are said, in allusion to the Schechinah, to have "the glory and Spirit of God to rest upon them," because, I conceive, God appeared as eminently in them in their confessions and sufferings, as if His glory had descended upon them in lambent fires, and rested upon their heads. (Isa. xxiv. 15; Matt. v. 11.) Persecution has always been overruled to advance the cause it aimed to destroy. The wrath of man has praised God. The blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the Church. The death of such men has been honorable to the truth and grace of the Gospel. We are not martyrs. But we are often called to suffer, and we may glorify God in the fires. There is only one way into the world, but there are many ways out. By which of these we are to pass we know not. But we may glorify God by the death we shall die—if we are enabled to exercise faith, patience and repentance, if the joy of the Lord is our strength, and we can, from experience, recommend His service. *Follow me.* Our Lord, we now suppose, rose from the meal and prepares for His disappearing. He moves from the company and bids Peter "follow Him." Peter was, perhaps, startled by the prospect which his Master had opened to him, and needed a repetition of this charge, "Follow me," which he had received on being first called to be an Apostle. That charge, delivered this second time, would remind him of all which his blessed Master had lately undergone, and so strengthen his feeble will, and make him content to drink of that cup which Christ Himself had drunk before him.

20. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved, following, which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? 21. Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shalt this man do?

¹Chap. xlii. 23, 25 and xx. 2.

Turning about—uneasy, perhaps, at having been singled out from the other Apostles, for the purpose of being prepar-

ed for what he would naturally shrink from. (See notes on chap. xiii. 23.) The Lord speaks to Peter, John hears, at once applies the word to himself, and *follows*. The sensitive conscience of an advanced Christian catches at the first intimation of a duty, however indirectly made, nor does it fail to do so, when, as here, there is a call to suffering. Trials, undertaken in this spirit, the ready ventures of a true faith and love, show our wills to be united to the will of God, and that we are, indeed, "in the Spirit," living members in the Body of Christ. (Ps. lxxxv. 8; Acts xxi. 11-14.) On the other hand, the mistake of the other disciples, who spread the saying that *that disciple should not die* (verse 23), shows how prone sometimes we are, through that infection that remains in the regenerate, to construe the promises of God in a mere temporal or worldly sense. We are the more inclined to do this, if by such interpretations we can save ourselves from the necessity of suffering. (iv. 15, 33, 34; Ps. cxix. 25; 2 Cor. v. 16, 17.) *What shall this man do?* Peter ventures to ask the Lord what would become of John, who was following their steps. It was natural that he should expect this question would be answered, for at the last supper, when he had asked John to inquire who should betray the Lord, a reply had been granted. But there was a great difference between these two inquiries. *Anxiety* to clear themselves of the foul crime that one of their number would commit, led all the faithful Apostles to desire to know who the traitor was. But it was *curiosity* that induced Peter *now* to ask, "What shall this man do?"

22. Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry 'till I come, what is *that* to thee? Follow thou me.
2 Matt. xvi. 27, 28 and xxv. 31; 1 Cor. iv. 5 and xi. 26; Rev. ii. 25 and iii. 11 and xxii. 7, 20.

If I will, &c. This answer of our Lord contains a plain proof of His Divinity. He here intimates that it depends upon His will how long John shall remain alive. But *the issues of life and death* proceed from God *alone*, Christ therefore must be God. *Tarry till I come.* In regard to this coming of Christ, there are three modes of explanation, based on our Lord's three comings, one at the hour of death, another, His coming to destroy Jerusalem, and put

an end to the Jewish persecuting power, and the third, to which the first two are subordinate and secondary, His coming at the last day to judge the world. In our judgment the second mode of explanation is the true one. And such was in truth the portion of John. He outlived the other Apostles, and survived the destruction of Jerusalem, and though banished and exposed often to various perils, yet he died, it is said, in extreme old age. So that we should reflect in what various ways God's saints are called to glorify Him: some, by dying for His sake: some, by living long to serve Him here. The martyr's death may seem to us to be the more honored lot: but the lengthened service, the patient tarrying for that blessed summons, which those, whom we loved early in life, have perhaps long received and gone home before us, may, in some instances at least, need yet higher grace, and be the more glorious course. *What is that to thee? Follow thou me.* (See on verse 19.) There is nothing revealed in the Scriptures to gratify curiosity. Man would like to know the history of the *angels*, but he is only told his *own* history, for this alone concerns him: he would like to know who are the inhabitants of the worlds suspended in the heavens, but he is only told who *he* himself is. We should not perplex ourselves with needless questions on matters which do not concern us. We are apt rather to speculate on our neighbor's faults, our neighbor's spiritual state and eternal prospects, than to attend to our own. We have all a great work to do, even to follow Christ, and the less we entangle ourselves in vain questions, and affairs of others with which we have nothing to do, the more simply and singly shall we be likely to attend to the one thing really needful, the work which God has given us to do.

23. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die: but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is *that* to thee?

See notes on verses 20, 22.

Then went this saying, &c. Observe, how much more ground of dependence there is in the Scripture, than in tradition. A *saying* may among brethren be interpolated through mere error, without any fraudu-

lent design. The hand of the Apostle (*i. e.*, in writing), heals the error, and preserves the truth to the present day. (See at xx. 9.) Observe also the sincerity of John, and his jealousy for his Master's honor in not suffering an erroneous report to be spread among the brethren, though it were in favor of himself. (1 Cor. xiii. 5.) Into this "saying" the "brethren" more easily fell, from the prevalent expectation that Christ's second coming was then near at hand.

24. ¶ This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.—Chap. xix. 35; 3 John 12.

It is an argument of John's humility, that he does not call himself a master in Israel, or a doctor, but a *disciple*, and that five times in this Gospel. (xiii. 23, xix. 26, xx. 2, xxi. 7, 23.) *Which testifieth*, &c. This verse completely identifies John as the writer of this Gospel. *These things* refers to the whole Gospel, and not to the last chapter merely. The "*we know*" and what follows, is by some ascribed to the Church. But the phrase is in John's style (see 1 John v. 18, 19, 20; also iv. 14, 16), and followed as it is by *I suppose* (verse 25), furnishes no positive proof that a collection of persons, rather than a single individual, is referred to. If the phrase, in its reference, reached beyond the Evangelist himself, it must have been to such of his fellow-Christians as had either personally seen Christ, or had an abundant measure of faith wrought in them by the Spirit, or to the testimony which the Apostles and disciples had borne of the acts and words of Jesus, to whose number John regarded himself as belonging, although at that time perhaps the only surviving one.

25. ¶ And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.
*Chap. xx. 30. *Amos vii. 10.

Many other things which Jesus did. To be convinced of the numerous unrecorded miracles performed by Him, who, "in the days of His flesh, went about doing good," we may see at Matt. ix. how many He wrought in one day. Again, no mention is made in any of the Gospels of the performance of miracles at Chorazin, nor are we even told that Jesus was ever there; and yet "the mighty works," as our Lord calls them, done in that city, would have

been sufficient to make the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon repent, had they seen them. (Matt. xi. 20, 21.) "*I suppose*"—an expression used to show that what follows is not to be pressed too far, *even the world itself would not hold the books*, &c.—not a mere hyperbolical expression, unlike the sublime simplicity of this writer, but intended to let his reader know that, even now that he had done, he felt his materials so far from being exhausted, that he was still running over, and could multiply "Gospels" to almost any extent within the strict limits of what "Jesus did." But in the *limitation* of these matchless histories, in point of number, there is as much of that Divine wisdom which has presided over and pervades the living oracles, as in their *variety* and *fullness*."

It can scarcely be doubted that it will be one of the employments of the family of the redeemed in heaven, to hold converse together on "all that Jesus began to do and to teach," in the days of His humiliation, including, as a most interesting part, His unrecorded miracles and discourses. If we are made worthy, through the blood of Jesus, to enter His kingdom of glory, we may hear from the *lips* of Apostles circumstances which their *pens* have not recorded. *Angels* were witnesses of scenes where Apostles were not present: hereafter those holy watchers may describe events that occurred among the green hills near Bethlehem, and on the sultry plains of Egypt, in the lowly dwelling at Nazareth, and on the shady banks of Jordan, amidst the dismal caverns of the wilderness, and upon the sorrowful summit of Mount Olivet—events which have never yet been heard by mortal ear. And may not the Lord Jesus Himself condescend to reveal to His people some passages in His life, and some feelings of His heart, which are known to none but Himself? In the meantime, let us remember that we do not want the aid of traditional supplement, or human additions, to the Scriptures of truth—that though short, they are sufficient, leaving nothing obscure as to our duty or welfare, and that they are able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus.

John adds with his three co-Evangelists

before him the solemn and confirmatory *Amen*, the *Verily* of his Lord, sealing up the record with such a formula ; so setting seal to this his testimony. Let our hearts and lives answer, *Amen*.

It was in old age that John wrote his Gospel, which has been so blessed a source

of light and life to God's Church. Thus may we serve God even to the end, and be it our prayer that we may have grace to receive whatever is written for our learning in this or other books of Holy Scripture, as the engrafted Word, which is able to save our souls.

1. Where did Jesus again show Himself to His disciples? 2. Under what circumstances? 3. What did our Lord say to Peter? 4. Why did he thrice repeat the question to him? 5. Explain verse 13. 6. What did Peter inquire respecting John? 7. What answer did he receive? 8. What is said about "many other things which Jesus did?"

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OF

THE GOSPELS AND ACTS,

FOR

PULPIT, SUNDAY-SCHOOL, AND FAMILY.

LUKE.

ALFRED NEVIN, L.B., D.D.



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SYNOPSIS OF THE LIFE OF JESUS.

I.

HIS BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD.

TIME: About thirteen and a half years.

An angel appears to Mary, Luke i. 26-38; also to Joseph, Matt. i. 18-25; Jesus born at Bethlehem, Luke ii. 1-7; his circumcision and presentation in the temple, Luke ii. 21-38; the visit of the Magi, Matt. ii. 1-12; flight into Egypt, Matt. ii. 13-23; at twelve years of age Jesus goes to the Passover, Luke ii. 41-52; his genealogy on the side of Joseph, Matt. i. 1-17; on that of His mother, Luke iii. 22-38.

II.

ANNOUNCEMENT AND INTRODUCTION OF OUR LORD'S PUBLIC MINISTRY.

TIME: About one year.

Jesus comes to John to be baptized, Matt. iii. 13-17; Mark i. 9-11; Luke iii. 21-23; is tempted of the devil, Matt. iv. 1-11; Mark i. 12, 13; Luke iv. 1-13; is testified to by John, John i. 19-34; gains disciples, John i. 35-51; attends a marriage at Cana, where He performs His first miracle, John ii. 1-11; goes down to Capernaum, John ii. 12.

III.

OUR LORD'S FIRST PASSOVER, AND THE EVENTS OF HIS MINISTRY UNTIL THE SECOND.

TIME: One year.

Jesus attends the Passover, and drives the traders out of the temple, John ii. 13-25; discourses with Nicodemus, John iii. 1-21; remains in Judea and baptizes, John iii. 22-24; is further testified to by John the Baptist, John iii. 25-36; departs into Galilee, Matt. iv. 12; Mark i. 14; Luke iv. 14; John iv. 1-3; discourses with the woman of Samaria, John iv. 4-42; teaches in Galilee, Matt. iv. 17; Mark i. 14, 15; Luke iv. 14, 15; John iv. 43-45; heals the son of a nobleman at Cana, John iv. 46-54; is rejected by his fellow-townsmen of Nazareth, Luke iv. 16-29; takes up His abode at Capernaum, Matt. iv. 13-16; Luke iv. 30, 31; calls Peter, Andrew, James and John, at the time of the miraculous draught of fishes, Matt. iv. 18-22; Mark i. 16-20; Luke v. 1-11; heals a demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum, Mark i. 21-28; Luke iv. 31-37; heals Peter's wife's mother and many others, Matt. viii. 14-17; Mark i. 29-34; Luke iv. 38-41; goes with His disciples throughout Galilee, Matt. iv. 23-25; Mark i. 35-39; Luke iv. 42-44; heals a leper, Matt. viii. 2-4; Mark i. 40-45; Luke v. 12-16; returns to Capernaum, where He heals a paralytic, Matt. ix. 2-8; Mark ii. 1-12; Luke v. 17-26; calls Matthew, Matt. ix. 9; Mark ii. 13, 14; Luke v. 27, 28.

IV.

FROM OUR LORD'S SECOND PASSOVER UNTIL THE THIRD.

TIME: One year.

Jesus goes up to Jerusalem to the feast of the passover, John v. 1; heals an infirm man at the pool of Bethesda, John v. 2-9; his discourse with the Jews consequent thereon, John v. 10-47; on His way back to Galilee, His disciples pluck ears of grain on the Sabbath, for which act He justifies them against the charge of the Pharisees, Matt. xii. 1-8; Mark ii. 23-28; Luke vi. 1-5; heals a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath, Matt. xii. 9-14; Mark iii. 1-6; Luke vi. 6-11; withdraws to the sea of Tiberias, whither He is followed by multitudes, Matt. xii. 15-21; Mark iii. 7-12; ascends a mountain and spends the whole night in prayer, Luke vi. 12; chooses and ordains the Twelve, Matt. x. 2-4; Mark iii. 13-19; Luke vi. 13-19; delivers the Sermon on the Mount, Matt. ch. v.-vii.; Luke vi. 20-49; heals the centurion's servant at Capernaum, Matt. viii. 5-13; Luke vi. 1-10; raises the widow's son at Nain, Luke vii. 11-17; receives a message from John the Baptist, Matt. xi. 2-6; Luke vii. 18-23; discourses with the multitude respecting John, Matt. xi. 7-19; Luke vii. 24-35; upbraids Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, Matt. xi. 20-30; sits at meat with a Pharisee, when His feet are anointed by a woman who had been a sinner, Luke vii. 36-50; makes with the Twelve a second circuit in Galilee, Luke viii. 1-3; heals a demoniac, at which the scribes and Pharisees blaspheme, Matt. xii. 22-37; Mark iii. 19-30; Luke xi. 14, 15, 17-23; refuses a sign to the scribes and Pharisees, and reproves them for their unbelief, Matt. xii. 38-45; Luke xi. 16, 24-30; is sought by His mother and brethren, Matt. xii. 46-50; Mark iii. 31-35; Luke viii. 19-21; dines with a Pharisee, Luke xi. 37; and reproves the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy, Luke xi. 38-54; warns His disciples and the multitude against the leaven of the Pharisees, Luke xii. 1-12; refuses to act as umpire in secular disputes, Luke xii. 13-15; pronounces the parable of the rich fool, Luke xii. 16-21; exhorts to reliance upon God, and to watchfulness, Luke xii. 22-53; reproves the people for their unbelief, Luke xii. 54-59; pronounces the parable of the barren fig tree, Luke xiii. 6-9; and of the sower, Matt. xiii. 1-23; Mark iv. 1-25; Luke viii. 4-18; and of the tares, Matt. xiii. 24-30; and other parables, Matt. xiii. 31-53; Mark iv. 26-34; crosses the lake and stills the tempest, Matt. viii. 18-27; Mark iv. 35-41; Luke viii. 22-25, ix. 57-61; heals the two demoniacs of Gadara, Matt. viii. 28-34, ix. 1; Mark v. 1-21; Luke viii. 26-40; is entertained by Levi, Matt. ix. 10-17; Mark ii. 15-22; Luke v. 29-39; raises Jairus' daughter and heals the woman with a bloody flux, Matt. ix. 18-26; Mark v. 22-43; Luke viii. 41-56; heals two blind men and casts out a dumb spirit, Matt. ix. 27-34; is again rejected at Nazareth, Matt. xiii. 54-58; Mark vi. 1-6; makes a third circuit in Galilee and commissions and sends forth the Twelve, Matt. ix. 35-38, x. 1, 5-42, xi. 1; Mark vi. 6-13; Luke ix. 1-6; retires with the Twelve across the lake, and feeds five thousand, Matt. xiv. 13-21; Mark vi. 30-44; Luke ix. 10-17; John vi. 1-14; walks upon the water, Matt. xiv. 22-36; Mark vi. 45-56; John vi. 15-21; discourses with the multitude on the true bread of life, John vi. 22-71, vii. 1.

V.

FROM OUR LORD'S THIRD PASSOVER UNTIL HIS FINAL DEPARTURE FROM GALILEE AT THE FESTIVAL OF TABERNACLES.

TIME: Six Months.

Jesus justifies His disciples for eating with unwashed hands, Matt. xv. 1-20; Mark vii. 1-23; goes into the coast of Tyre and Sidon, where He heals the daughter of the Syro-Phœnician woman, Matt. xv. 21-28; Mark vii. 24-30; returns to Decapolis and heals

a deaf and dumb man, and feeds four thousand, Matt. xv. 29-38; Mark vii. 31-37, viii. 1-9; refuses a sign to the Pharisees and Sadducees, Matt. xv. 39, xvi. 1-4; Mark viii. 10-12; cautions the disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees, Matt. xvi. 4-12; Mark viii. 13-21; heals a blind man at Bethsaida, Mark viii. 22-26; departs to the region of Cæsarea Philippi, and receives from Peter and the disciples the profession of their faith, Matt. xvi. 13-20; Mark viii. 27-30; Luke ix. 18-21; foretells His own death and resurrection, Matt. xvi. 21-28; Mark viii. 31-38, ix. 1; Luke ix. 22-27; is transfigured, Matt. xvii. 1-13; Mark ix. 2-13; Luke ix. 28-36; heals a demoniac whom His disciples could not cure, Matt. xvii. 14-21; Mark ix. 14-29; Luke ix. 37-43; again foretells His own death and resurrection, Matt. xvii. 22, 23; Mark ix. 30-32; Luke ix. 43-45; returns to Capernaum and miraculously provides tribute-money, Matt. xvii. 24-27; Mark ix. 33; exhorts His disciples to humility and brotherly love, Matt. xviii. 1-35; Mark ix. 33-50; Luke ix. 46-50; instructs and sends forth the Seventy, Luke x. 1-16; takes His final departure from Galilee and goes up to the feast of tabernacles, John vii. 2-10; Luke ix. 51-56; passes through Samaria where he cleanses ten lepers, Luke xvii. 11-19.

VI.

FEAST OF TABERNACLES AND OUR LORD'S SUBSEQUENT ACTS UNTIL
HIS ARRIVAL AT BETHANY, SIX DAYS BEFORE THE
FOURTH PASSOVER.

TIME: *Six months wanting six days.*

Jesus attends the feast of tabernacles, and teaches publicly, John vii. 11-53, viii. 1; takes occasion from their charge against the woman taken in adultery, to rebuke the Pharisees, John viii. 2-11; reproves in a further discourse the Jews, who in consequence attempt to stone Him, John viii. 12-59; pronounces the parable of the good Samaritan, Luke x. 25-37; visits Martha and Mary at Bethany, Luke x. 38-42; teaches His disciples again how to pray, Luke xi. 1-13; receives the Seventy on their return and rejoices in their spiritual knowledge, Luke x. 17-24; heals at Jerusalem on the Sabbath a man who was born blind, at which the Pharisees are highly displeased, John ix. 1-41, x. 1-21; is present in Jerusalem at the feast of dedication, after which he retires beyond Jordan, John x. 22-42; raises Lazarus from the dead at Bethany, John xi. 1-46; again retires from Jerusalem in consequence of the murderous designs of the chief priests and Pharisees, John xi. 47-54; is followed by multitudes beyond Jordan, and heals an infirm woman on the Sabbath, Matt. xix. 1, 2; Mark x. 1; Luke xiii. 10-21; teaches on His way to Jerusalem, Luke xiii. 22-35; dines with a chief Pharisee on the Sabbath, Luke xiv. 1-24; shows what is required of true disciples, Luke xiv. 25-35; pronounces the parables of the lost sheep, the prodigal son, the unjust steward, and the rich man and Lazarus, Luke xv. 1-32, xvi. 1-31; inculcates forbearance and faith, Luke xvii. 1-10; predicts the suddenness of His final coming, Luke xvii. 20-37; pronounces the parables of the importunate widow, and the Pharisee and publican, Luke xviii. 1-14; gives precepts respecting divorce, Matt. xix. 3-12; Mark x. 2-12; receives and blesses little children, Matt. xix. 13-15; Mark x. 13-16; Luke xviii. 15-17; answers the inquiry of the rich young man, and pronounces the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, Matt. xix. 16-30, xx. 1-16; Mark x. 17-31; Luke xviii. 18-30; foretells a third time His death and resurrection, Matt. xx. 17-19; Mark x. 32-34; Luke xviii. 31-34; replies to the ambitious request of James and John, Matt. xx. 20-28; Mark x. 35-45; heals two blind men near Jericho, Matt. xx. 39-44; Mark x. 46-52; Luke xviii. 35-43, xix. 1; visits Zaccheus and utters the parable of the ten pounds, Luke xix. 2-28; arrives at Bethany six days before the passover, John xi. 55-57, xii. 1-11.

VII.

OUR LORD'S PUBLIC ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM, AND THE SUBSEQUENT
TRANSACTIONS BEFORE THE FOURTH PASSOVER.*Time: Four days.*

Jesus makes His public entry into Jerusalem, Matt. xxi. 1-11, 14-17; Mark xi. 1-11; Luke xix. 29-44; John xii. 12-19; curses the barren fig tree and cleanses a second time the temple, Matt. xxi. 12, 13, 18, 19; Mark xi. 12-19; Luke xix. 45-48; His authority questioned by the chief priests, on which He pronounces the parable of the two sons, Matt. xxi. 23-32; Mark xi. 27-33; Luke xx. 1-8; and of the wicked husbandmen, Matt. xxi. 33-46; Mark xii. 1-12; Luke xx. 9-19; and of the marriage of the king's son, Matt. xxii. 1-14; replies to the question of the lawfulness of giving tribute to Cæsar, Matt. xxii. 15-22; Mark xii. 13-17; Luke xx. 20-26; teaches the Sadducees the doctrine of the resurrection, Matt. xxii. 23-33; Mark xii. 18-27; Luke xx. 27-40; is questioned by a lawyer as to what is the great commandment of the law, Matt. xxii. 34-40; Mark xii. 28, 34; proposes a question to the Pharisees respecting the relation of Christ to David, Matt. xxii. 41-46; Mark xii. 35-37; Luke xx. 41-44; pronounces woes upon the Pharisees, and laments over Jerusalem, Matt. xxiii. 1-39; Mark xii. 38-40; Luke xx. 45-47; commends the widow who cast two mites into the treasury, Mark xii. 41-44; Luke xxi. 1-4; foretells the destruction of the temple, Matt. xxiv. 1-42; Mark xiii. 1-37; Luke xxi. 5-36; exhorts to watchfulness in reference to His final coming, Matt. xxiv. 43-51; pronounces the parables of the ten virgins and five talents, Matt. xxv. 1-30; describes the scenes of the last judgment, Matt. xxv. 13-46; sups at Bethany, Matt. xxvi. 1-16; Mark xiv. 1-9; Luke xxii. 1, 2; John xii. 2-8; is betrayed by Judas Iscariot, Matt. xxvi. 14-16; Mark xiv. 10, 11; Luke xxi. 3-6; prepares to eat the passover, Matt. xxvi. 17-19; Mark xiv. 12-16; Luke xxii. 7-13.

VIII.

FOURTH PASSOVER; OUR LORD'S PASSION AND THE ACCOMPANYING
CIRCUMSTANCES UNTIL THE END OF THE JEWISH SABBATH.*Time: Two days.*

Jesus eats the passover with His disciples, Matt. xxvi. 20; Mark xiv. 17; Luke xxii. 14-18; washes their feet, John xiii. 1-20; points out Judas as the traitor, Matt. xxvi. 21-35; Mark xiv. 18-21; Luke xxii. 21-23; John xiii. 21-35; foretells Peter's fall, Matt. xxvi. 31-35; Mark xiv. 27-31; Luke xxii. 31-38; John xiii. 36-38; institutes the Lord's Supper, Matt. xxvi. 26-29; Mark xiv. 22-25; Luke xxii. 19, 20; 1 Cor. xi. 23-25; comforts His disciples, John xiv. 1-31; declares Himself to be the true Vine, John xv. 1-27; promises the Comforter, John xvi. 1-33; prays for His disciples and other believers, John xvii. 1-26; goes forth to Gethsemane where He is in a dreadful agony; Matt. xxvi. 30, 36-46; Mark xiv. 26, 32-42; Luke xxii. 39-46; John xviii. 1; is betrayed and made prisoner, Matt. xxvi. 47-56; Mark xiv. 43-52; Luke xxii. 47-53; John xviii. 2-12; is brought before Caiaphas and denied by Peter, Matt. xxvi. 57, 58, 69-75; Mark xiv. 53, 54, 66-72; Luke xxii. 54-62; John xviii. 13-18, 25-27; is brought before the sanhedrim and condemned and mocked, Matt. xxvi. 59-68; Mark xiv. 55-65; Luke xxii. 63-71; John xviii. 19-24; is led away to Pilate, Matt. xxvii. 1, 2, 11-14; Mark xv. 1-5; Luke xxiii. 1-5; John xviii. 28-38; is sent to Herod, Luke xxiii. 6-12; is delivered by Pilate to be crucified, Matt. xxvii. 26-30; Mark xv. 15-19; John xix. 1-3; is led away to Calvary, Matt. xxvii. 31-34; Mark xv. 20-23; Luke xxiii. 26-33; John xix. 16, 17; is crucified, Matt. xxvii. 35-38; Mark xv. 24-28; Luke xxiii. 33-38; John xix. 18-24; is mocked on the cross, Matt. xxvii. 39-44; Mark xv. 29-32; Luke xxiii.

35-43; expires on the cross, Matt. xxvii. 45-50; Mark xv. 33-37; Luke xxiii. 44-46; is taken down from the cross and buried, Matt. xxvii. 57-61; Mark xv. 42-47; Luke xxiii. 50-56; John xix. 31-42.

IX.

OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION, SUBSEQUENT APPEARANCES AND ASCENSION.

TIME: *Forty days.*

The women visit the sepulchre, Matt. xxviii. 1; Mark xvi. 2-4; Luke xxiv. 1-3; John xx. 1, 2; vision of angels in the sepulchre, Matt. xxviii. 5-7; Mark xvi. 5-7; Luke xxiv. 4-8; Jesus meets the women on their way back to the city, Matt. xxviii. 8-10; Mark xvi. 8; Peter and John run to the sepulchre, Luke xxiv. 12; John xx. 3-10; Jesus shows Himself to Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, Mark xvi. 9-11; John xx. 11-18; the report of the watch, Matt. xxviii. 11-15; Jesus is seen by Peter, 1 Cor. xv. 5; and by the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, Mark xvi. 12, 13; Luke xxiv. 13-35; shows himself the same evening to the disciples, Thomas being absent, Mark xvi. 14-18; Luke xxiv. 36-40; John xx. 19-23; 1 Cor. xv. 5; and again one week after, Thomas being present, John xx. 24-29; shows Himself to seven of them at the Sea of Tiberias, John xxi. 1-24; meets above 500 brethren on a mountain in Galilee, Matt. xxviii. 16, 20; 1 Cor. xv. 6; is seen of James, and then of all the Apostles, 1 Cor. xv. 7; Acts i. 3-8; ascends to heaven, Mark xvi. 19, 20; Luke xxiv. 50-53; Acts i. 9-12.

PREFACE

TO THE GOSPEL OF LUKE.

It is not easy to determine *when* or *where* this Gospel was written. There is a tradition that it was published in Achaia, whither it had been transmitted from Cæsarea. All that can satisfactorily be ascertained as to its date is, that it was written shortly before the death of Paul, A. D. 65.

The Evangelist, by whom it was written, also wrote the *Acts of the Apostles*. Both books are properly successive parts of one Christian history. Considering that we owe to the pen of Luke so large a portion of the New Testament, the source of our hope and instruction in all truth, our information concerning him, apart from the uncertain traditions preserved by the early Christian writers, is exceedingly small. His Greek name, *Loukas*, is a familiar contraction of a fuller form, either Lucilius or Lucanus. He is recorded by the best ecclesiastical historians to have been a Syrian, born at Antioch, a city at the time of his birth the third among the most renowned of the civilized world, and afterward remarkable as the second center of Christian organization after Jerusalem, and the first locality to give the name to the new religion. (Acts xi. 26.) He has been supposed, and not without reason, to have been the brother "whose praise was in the gospel throughout all the churches," and of whom it is said (2 Cor. viii. 18) that he was sent to Corinth with Titus to make the collection there for the poor saints at Jerusalem. By some it has been maintained, with confidence, that the unnamed disciple from Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 18), to whom the risen Jesus appeared, was the modest Luke himself. There is reason to suppose that he was not a Jew, but a converted Gentile; and if this be so, unless we except the book of Job, he is the only Gentile who has been permitted to contribute a book to the Bible.

Luke was Paul's companion in his travels. This he indicates by the employment of the first person plural in his narrative. We trace their course together, from Alexandria Troas, through Samothrace, to Philippi; then back again to Troas, down the coast of Asia Minor to Tyre, Cæsarea, and Jerusalem. When Paul, appealing to Cæsar, departed to Rome, through voyage, shipwreck and journey, Luke was his companion. And when the Apostle, just before his martyrdom, writes from his Roman prison to Timothy—"only Luke is with me," is his touching testimony to our faithful Evangelist.

Luke was by profession a physician. Paul, in his Epistle to the Colossians (iv. 14), alludes to him as "the beloved physician." We recognize the physician by the minute accuracy with which he describes certain diseases. It would seem as if he had felt the necessity of transferring to his Master the very calling to which his own life had been hitherto devoted, while depicting to us, far oftener than the other Evangelists, the great Physician who came not only to "minister" (Matt. xx. 28), but "who went about doing good" (Acts x. 38), who felt compassion for all diseases, both of mind and body, and whose power was present to heal. (Luke v. 17.)

The literary character of Luke is evinced not only by his profession, but by his style of composition. He seems to have had more learning than any other of the Evangelists, and his language is more varied, copious and pure. His Greek education is apparent from the philological excellence of his writings, which present the purest Greek in the whole New Testament. On account of the simplicity of his manner, and his artlessness and power of fixing attention and exciting the affections, many have thought him, as a writer, capable of standing the competition with the most celebrated historians of Greece itself.

The Gospel of Luke has indubitable evidence of genuineness. It was certainly extant at an early period, and from the first received by the Church as of Divine authority. *Lardner* thinks that there are a few allusions to it, in some of the Apostolical fathers, especially in *Hermas* and *Polycarp*, and in *Justin Martyr* there are passages evidently taken from it, but the earliest author, who actually mentions Luke's Gospel, is *Irenæus*, and he cites so many peculiarities in it, all agreeing with the Gospel which we now have, that he alone is sufficient to prove its genuineness. His testimony, however, is supported by *Clement of Alexandria*, *Tertullian*, *Origen*, *Eusebius*, *Jerome*, *Chrysostom* and many others.

Luke's Gospel has the following, among other distinctive peculiarities: 1. While *Matthew* and *Mark* narrate with the authority of original witnesses their own collection of evangelical facts, and *John* furnishes his own individual reminiscences, Luke, as his preface shows, is the critical historian, who, having examined original witnesses and documents, discriminates, selects and arranges them in historic form. 2. Whilst *Matthew* relates his history according to *chronological order*, Luke relates his according to a *classification* of events—a fact which accounts for the diversity in the order of time noticeable in these two Evangelists. 3. Luke's Gospel has the predominant feature of *universality*; for whilst *Matthew* presents Christ to us as the Messiah of Israel, and *Mark* announces the Gospel of the Son of God, Luke represents the Son of man appearing indeed in Israel, but for the benefit of the whole race of man. 4. *Matthew* and *Mark* show us who Jesus *was*; Luke informs us *how he became what he was*, pointing us successively to the unborn (ii. 22), the infant (iii. 16), the child (ii. 27), the boy, (ii. 40), and the man (iii. 22). 5. This Gospel contains many things which are not found in the other Gospels, the principal among which are the following:

1. The vision of Zacharias, and conception of Elizabeth,	i. 5-25
2. The salutation of the Virgin Mary,	26-33
3. Mary's visit to Elizabeth,	39-56
4. The birth of John the Baptist, and hymn of Zacharias,	57-80
5. The decree of Cæsar Augustus,	ii. 1-3
6. The birth of Christ at Bethlehem,	4-7
7. The appearance of angels to the shepherds,	8-20
8. The circumcision of Christ,	21-
9. The presentation of Christ in the temple,	22- 4
10. The account of Simeon and Anna,	25-38
11. Christ found among the doctors,	41-52
12. Date of beginning of John's ministry,	iii. 1-2
13. Success of John's ministry,	10-15
14. Genealogy of Mary,	23-38
15. Christ preaching and rejected at Nazareth,	iv. 15-30
16. Particulars in the call of Simon, James, and John,	v. 1-10
17. Christ's discourse in the plain,	vi. 17-49
18. Raising of the widow's son at Nain,	vii. 11-17
19. Woman in Simon's house,	36-50
20. Women who ministered to Christ,	viii. 1- 3

21. James and John desiring fire to come down,	ix. 51-56
22. Mission of seventy disciples,	x. 1-16
23. Return of seventy disciples,	17-24
24. Parable of the Good Samaritan,	25-37
25. Christ in the house of Martha and Mary,	38-42
26. Parable of friend at midnight,	xi. 5- 8
27. Christ dining in a Pharisee's house,	37-54
28. Discourse to an innumerable multitude,	xii. 1-53
29. Murder of the Galileans,	xiii. 1- 5
30. Parable of the barren fig-tree,	6- 9
31. Case of the woman diseased eighteen years,	10-20
32. Question on the few that be saved,	22-30
33. Reply to the Pharisee's warning about Herod,	31-33
34. Case of a dropsical man,	xiv. 1- 6
35. Parable of the lowest room,	7-14
36. Parable of the great supper,	15-24
37. Difficulties of Christ's service,	25-35
38. Parables of the lost sheep and piece of money,	xv. 1-10
39. Parable of the prodigal son,	11-22
40. Parable of the unjust steward,	xvi. 1-18
41. Parable of the rich man and Lazarus,	19-31
42. Instruction to disciples,	xvii. 1-10
43. Healing of ten lepers,	12-19
44. Question and answer about coming of God's kingdom,	20-37
45. Parable of the importunate widow,	xviii. 1- 8
46. Parable of the Pharisee and Publican,	9-14
47. Calling of Zaccheus,	xix. 2-10
48. Parable of the pounds,	11-28
49. Christ weeping over Jerusalem,	41-44
50. Special warning to Peter,	xxii. 31-32
51. Direction to buy sword,	35-38
52. Appearance of an angel, and bloody sweat in garden,	43-44
53. Pilate sends Christ to Herod,	xxiii. 6-16
54. Women deplore Christ's suffering,	27-32
55. The penitent thief,	39-43
56. The appearance of Christ to the disciples going to Emmaus,	xxiv. 13-35
57. Circumstances attending Christ's appearance to the eleven,	37-49
58. Christ's departure in the act of blessing,	50-53

The Gospel of Luke has a complete beginning, middle and end. The beginning, i.-iv. 13. The middle, iv. 13-xxii. 1. The end, xxii. 1-xxiv. 53.

I. The *Beginning* embraces the prelude to the ministry. 1. The birth of the forerunner, and of the Messiah. The Messiah's childhood and growth. 2. The forerunner's announcement and ministry until his imprisonment. 3. The Messiah's baptism, genealogy and temptation.

II. The *Middle* embraces the Messiah's ministry. 1. His Galilean ministry (mainly) iv. 14-ix. 51. 2. His Perean ministry, ix. 51-xviii. 30. 3. His last journey to Jerusalem, and closing ministry there, xviii. 31-xxi. 38.

III. The *End* embraces the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension, xxii. 1-xxiv. 53.

CHAPTER I.

1 *The preface of Luke to his whole gospel.* 5 *The conception of John the Baptist.* 25 *and of Christ.* 39 *The prophecy of Elizabeth, and of Mary, concerning Christ.* 57 *The nativity and circumcision of John.* 67 *The prophecy of Zacharias, both of Christ, 76 and of John.*

FORASMUCH as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, 2. ^aEven as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; 3. ^bIt seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, ^cmost excellent Theophilus, 4. ^dThat thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

^aHeb. ii. 3; 1 Peter v. 1; 2 Peter xi. 16; 1 John i. 1. ^bMark i. 1; John xv. 27. ^cActs xv. 19, 25, 28; 1 Cor. vii. 40. ^dActs xi. 4. ^eActs i. 1. ^fJohn xx. 31.

The phrase, "the Gospel according to Luke," here signifies the unwritten, oral, Christ-history possessed by the Church, as shaped and recorded by Luke. The ancient titles do not say the Gospel *by* Luke, or Matthew, for that would obscure the fact that the body of Gospel facts was accumulated before the Gospel books were written.

Luke dedicated his Gospel, as he did also the Acts of the Apostles, to *Theophilus* (verse 3). This name signifies *a lover of God*. Some take it not for a proper, but a common name, denoting every one that loves God. It is strongly probable, however, that it designated a particular person of rank and distinction, perhaps a governor. Some indications are given in the Gospel about him. He was not an inhabitant of Palestine, for the Evangelist minutely describes the position of places which to such an one would be well known. It is so with Capernaum (iv. 31), Nazareth (i. 26), Arimathea (xxiii. 51), the country of the Gadarenes (viii. 26), the distance of Mount Olivet and Emmaus from Jerusalem (xxiv. 13; Acts i. 12). By the same test he probably was not a Macedonian (Acts xvi. 12), nor an Athenian, nor a Cretan. (Acts xxvii. 8, 12.) The strong probability is, that he was a native of Italy, and perhaps an inhabitant of Rome. He had become a convert to Christianity. The words *most excellent*, ordinarily indicated respect for official dignity, but in this instance they expressed as well regard for elevated moral character. Theophilus, though a nobleman, had been *instructed* (verse 4, the same word in the Greek from which

catechumen and *catechize* are derived) in religion, by some of God's servants; probably orally, as this was then the principal means of disseminating truth, inasmuch as written books were then few and expensive, but Luke wished him to know the history of the Lord still more perfectly. Not for Theophilus alone, however, was this Gospel written; he was a representative man for every Christian reader. Neither the Gospel nor the Acts can be viewed as a private letter to him. In a similar way, Cicero addressed his treatises on Old Age and Friendship to Atticus; Horace addressed his Art of Poetry to the Pisos, and Plutarch addressed his treatise on Divine Delay to Cynius.

Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth, &c. Different persons in that age, some perhaps with good intent, others imprudently and inconsiderately, had undertaken to write histories of Jesus. But as these persons had not been directed by the Spirit of God, neither had witnessed the events they had related, but had written from "report," their accounts contained errors which required correction by a true narrative. Such disjointed and fragmentary accounts would not supply the wants of the Church, and especially of such persons as *Theophilus*, who, living, at a distance from the scene of the events, would be more likely to be imposed upon by fallacious or erroneous statements, or confused and perplexed by contradictions and inconsistencies, than others having better opportunities for arriving at the truth, by their intimacy with those who had themselves seen our Lord, or had become well acquainted with the facts of His history, from persons who had enjoyed that privilege. It therefore *seemed good* to Luke to furnish a more extended, complete and accurate narrative, which he felt himself able to do, not only because *he had perfect understanding of all things from the very first*, or from the earliest part of our Saviour's life, partly from his familiarity with Paul, and partly from his conversation with the other Apostles, who were eye and ear witnesses of the things he was about to relate—but also, and mainly, because he was

under the directing influence of the Holy Spirit. Without this inspiration, indeed, his history would never have been reckoned a part of the Bible. He well knew the weakness of man's memory, and the readiness with which a history alters its shape both by additions and alterations, when it depends only on word of mouth and report, and therefore, as if to rebuke all trust in unwritten traditions, he takes care to *write*. It is evident that the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, even if written previous to the publication of that of Luke, were not included in the many defective sketches or summaries to which Luke refers—not only because the former was written by one who was an eye-witness, and Mark drew his materials directly from Peter, if even he did not write, as it is quite probable he did, under his immediate supervision, but also because Matthew's Gospel as yet was in the Hebrew language, and Mark's was published in distant Italy, so that neither probably was yet in circulation in the locality where Luke was conversant. It has been remarked that Luke did not *take in hand*, nor Matthew, nor Mark, nor John, but the Divine Spirit supplying them with abundance of all words and matter, they accomplished what they began without any effort.

In order. These words may refer to the order of time, or of things, or of both. They probably denote the arrangement of the facts of the history in a connected form, not so much chronologically, however, as in reference to the general plan or outline of the work. Luke, like the other Evangelists, often disregards the order of time, and groups together his incidents from their general resemblance, or to produce a given effect on the mind of his reader.

That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, &c. The great benefit that has accrued to the world by receiving the Word of God, even by His own appointment committed to *writing*, we are not able to estimate as the value thereof deserves. (Ex. xxiv. 4; Hos. viii. 12; Rev. i. 11, xiv. 13.) God is only a worthy witness of Himself in His Word, and by His Spirit (Isa. lix. 21), which give mutual testimony one to the other, and work that assurance

of faith in His children, that no human demonstration can make, nor persuasions and enforcements of the world can remove. (John vi. 63; Prov. i. 23; 2 Sam. xxiii. 2; Jer. xxxi. 33; Rev. xxii. 17, 18.)

It is evidence at once of the wisdom and the goodness of God, that, in order to confirm our faith in the Gospel, He raised up a sufficient number of witnesses to attest the infallible certainty of all that it contains. The Evangelists did not write anything but what they either heard or saw themselves, or received from those who had seen or heard it. To be "witnesses chosen before of God" of the doings and sayings of Jesus was the very essence and object of the Apostolic office. (Acts x. 41, i. 8, 22, xxvi. 16.) They were to be eye-witnesses of the facts, in order to be *ministers*, or official rehearsers of the history. In accordance with this is the bold declaration of Peter at a later day: "We have not followed cunningly devised fables but were eye-witnesses." (2 Peter i. 16.) On equally strong ground does John, near the close of the first century, later, in fact, than the publication of this Gospel, place his own testimony: "That which was from the beginning, which we have *heard*, which we have *seen with our eyes*, which we have *looked upon*, and our *hands* have *handled* declare we unto you." (1 John i. 1.) Such declarations afford no room, no interval of time, no chance for the intervention of fabricators for forming traditions, legends, or myths. Our Gospels are the plain records of the statements of actual spectators, and well would it be for infidels to reflect that they cannot now possibly be as good judges in the matter as those who lived at the time, and who were thus competent to determine whether the things *which were most surely believed among them* were true or false.

It is important, also, that all should remember that Christianity came before mankind in the shape of *facts*. The first preachers did not go up and down the world, proclaiming an elaborate, artificial system of abstruse doctrines and deep principles. They made it their first business to tell men great plain facts. They went about, telling a sin-laden world that the Son of God had come down to earth,

and lived for us, and died for us, and risen again.

How should we value everything that concerns the Lord Jesus! With Him none of our earthly friends can be compared, and therefore we should desire to know everything about Him that we can. It is affecting to hear how the poor heathen, when first converted, value the Word of God. Before the missionaries in the South Sea Islands could print the Bible in the language of the people, the poor natives eagerly listened to all that was read aloud on the Sabbath, and many wrote down upon the leaves of the trees the texts they had heard, and studied them wherever they went, till they knew them by heart. We are without excuse if we remain ignorant of the history of our Lord. Let us not forget, however, for what purpose we read: that we may learn to love Jesus.

5. ¶ There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia; and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.

¶ Matt. ii. 1. ¶ 1 Chron. xxiv. 10, 19; Neh. xii. 4, 17.

Here properly commences Luke's Gospel, the preceding verses constituting what may be called the preface. *In the days of Herod*—Herod, surnamed "the Great." Eras in the Old and New Testament are marked by the life or times of some principal man. *A certain priest named Zacharias, &c.* The opening scene is laid in the village of Hebron, and in the family of a venerable pair, whose solitary home was enlivened by the unexpected prospect of a son, destined, from the mysterious circumstances of His birth, to fill no secondary place in the Church and the world. The burden of the story turns so much on the character and office of this child of promise, that his parentage is passed over with a slight and incidental notice; and almost the only memorials transmitted to posterity of the two individuals who had the honor of giving birth to the precursor of Messiah, are comprised in the knowledge of their names, and in the honorable testimony borne to their piety and worth. But data are not wanting at the same time to establish the high respectability of the Baptist's family.

The sacerdotal order to which both Zacharias and Elizabeth are said to have belonged, enjoyed in Judea all the rank

and consideration which in other countries attaches to an ancient and noble pedigree. Not only did the priests form a distinct order, chargeable with the exclusive performance of offices which have ever been reckoned the most dignified of all employments; but as their honors and immunities flowed through certain families, and were unattainable to any beyond that pale, either by purchase or the greatest personal merits, there was thus drawn between them and every other class of society, a line of demarcation, which none could pass without previously establishing the certainty of their descent from the lineage of Aaron. In consequence of this provision, a knowledge of family history was among the Jews a principal object both of private and public attention.

Zacharias signifies whom Jehovah remembers, and Elizabeth, God her oath, or my God hath sworn. Of the course of Abia. (See 2 Chron. xxxv. 10; also on verse 8.) As Zacharias was married, marriage, which was not improper for the priest under the law, cannot be so for the minister of Christ under the Gospel. (1 Tim. iv. 1-3.)

6. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

¶ Gen. vii. 1, xvii. 1; 1 Kings ix. 4; 2 Kings xx. 3; Job i. 1; Acts xxiii. 1; Phil. iii. 6.

Commandments mean the moral law, and ordinances, the ritual. They were righteous, both as being justified by the righteousness of Christ, which is imputed to all believers, and as having the righteousness which is wrought inwardly in believers by the Holy Ghost for their sanctification. These two sorts of righteousness are never disjoined. This aged couple believed in the *promise* of a Saviour, and thus became partakers of His righteousness. They were pardoned and sanctified. Though still subject to sin, they indulged in no sinful *habits*. They made conscience of every known duty, and endeavored to obey every divine precept. They were strict, exact, punctual. Their obedience was marked by *universality*; they walked *in*, that is, kept, or obeyed, *all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord*—all the duties of religion which were made known to them. Their obedience was also characterized by *blamelessness*. That they were

still subject to sin, we shall soon find proof. (See verses 18-20.) "Many sins," says an old writer, "may be in him that has true grace; but he that has truth of grace cannot allow himself in any sin."

7. And they had no child, because that Elizabeth was barren, and they both were *now* well stricken in years.

Barrenness was thought a very heavy affliction by the Jews, yet Zacharias gave no countenance to the practice of polygamy or divorce, by taking another wife, the latter of which especially was common at that time, though by the pious Jews generally disapproved. The foundation of the feeling that the want of children was a calamity lay, perhaps, in the hope which each married couple may have entertained of being the progenitors of the expected Messiah.

8. And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, 9. According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

1. Chron. xxiv. 19; 2 Chron. viii. 14. xxxi. 2. 1 Ex. xxx. 7, 8; 1 Sam. ii. 28; 1 Chron. xxiii. 13; 2 Chron. xxix. 11.

At the time of his being favored with the angelic vision, Zacharias was on duty, and in order to understand the nature and mode of appointment to the office he was discharging, it is necessary to observe that, owing to the immense number of priests who were scattered over all parts of Judea, amounting to about a tenth part of the whole population, a system of rotation was established, according to which every family of the twenty-four courses into which the sacerdotal order was divided, repaired to Jerusalem by turns twice a year—the period of service, which began always on the Sabbath, lasting for a week. At first there was no regular division of duty—the members of each family whose weekly turn it was to attend, taking indiscriminately, or arranging among themselves, the several parts of the ceremonial; but as some offices came to be regarded as more honorable than others, and unseemly contests sometimes occurred, it was ordained that the same method by which the courses were originally determined, should be resorted to for assigning to each particular priest his part in the service of the temple; that it should be decided by lot, which, for instance, was to carry out the ashes, to feed the fire, or to

attend the altar of incense. In this latter service, which consisted in the offering of fragrant spices on an altar never stained with blood, and which was the most honorable of all, as it introduced the functionary alone into the holy place, Zacharias was employed on this memorable occasion.

The most minute circumstances are under the Lord's control, and are often the beginnings of very great events. The service of offering the incense was performed twice every day, just before the morning and evening sacrifice; that is, at nine in the morning and three in the afternoon, and the time of offering the incense was also the time of prayer—sweet fumes of the ascending incense being indeed representative of the prayers of the people ascending to God.

10. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

1. Lev. xvi. 17; Heb. iv. 14-16 Rev. viii. 3, 4.

When the priest entered the holy place to offer the incense, a service which was performed by placing incense in a vase or cup, called the *censer*, upon the golden altar, with burning coals beneath, producing by its smoke a powerful perfume, filling the temple with its fragrance, the sound of a small bell notified the assembled people that the time of prayer was come. When this was heard, the priests and Levites, who had not taken their stations, hastened to do so; the space in the court between the great altar of burnt-offerings and the porch of the Lord's house was cleared, and the people, in the different courts of the temple, "stood and prayed."

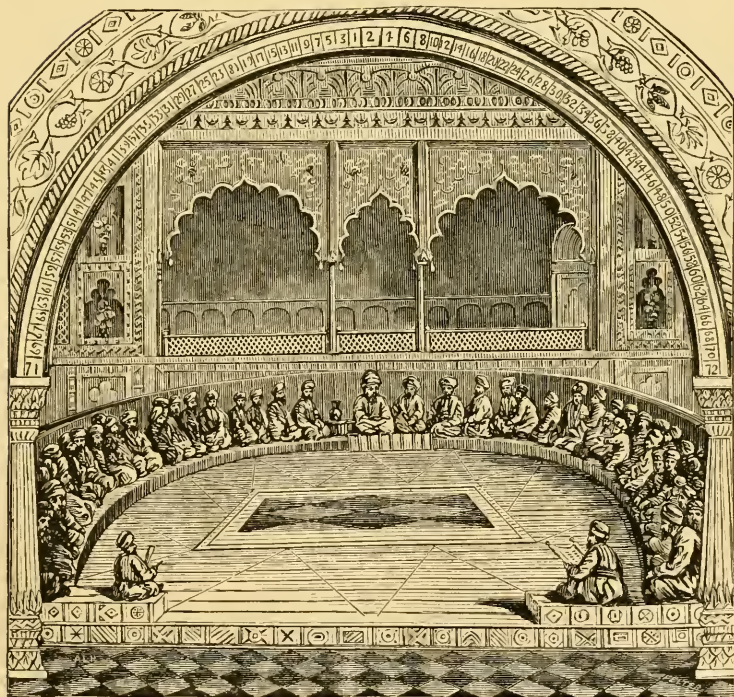
11. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

1. Ex. xxx. 1; Lev. xvi. 13; Rev. viii. 3, ix. 13.

The altar of incense stood close by the vail which divided the holy place from the most holy; on the north stood the table of shew-bread; on the south the golden candlestick; and as the priest entered with his face to the west, the angel must have stood to the north, or near the table of shew-bread. Whether the angel was already visible when Zacharias came in, or afterward suddenly appeared, has been questioned. When we are nearest God, the good angels are



HIGH PRIEST AT THE ALTAR OF INCENSE.



THE SANHEDRIN IN COUNCIL.

nighest us. Especially are they present with us in our private devotion and public worship.

12. And when Zacharias saw *him*, *he* was troubled, and fear fell upon him.
Verse 29, li. 9, 10; Judg. vi. 22; Job iv. 14, 15; Dan x. 7; Acts x. 4; Rev. i. 17.

The idea of an angelic visitant, so familiar to his people in their early history, had from disuse become a strange matter to them. In the *presence* of angels they believed in the fullest extent; but of their *manifested* presence there had long ceased to be any authentic examples. The experience of this righteous man here tallies exactly with that of other saints under similar circumstances—Moses at the burning bush, and Daniel at the river of Hiddekel; the women at the sepulchre, and John at the isle of Patmos. How are we to account for this fear in seeing visions of things belonging to another world? It arises from our inward sense of weakness, guilt and corruption.

13. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.
Verses 60, 63.

The attempt to calm the trepidation of Zacharias shows us that holy angels really pity our frailties, and suggest comfort to us. To what *prayer* did the angel refer? Was it the prayer which Zacharias, probably offered frequently, that he might not go down childless to the grave? or was it, as some suppose, the national prayer offered by him in his ministerial capacity for the appearance of the Messiah? It will be observed that the angel afterward goes on to explain that this son was to be Christ's appointed harbinger, thus laying the stress rather upon the fact of Messiah's coming, than of a son being born to Zacharias. Both these blessings were soon to be bestowed.

14. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.—Verse 58.

Well might a father rejoice at the birth of such a son! His very name, *John*, signifying "the grace or favor of God," showed that God would bless him, and make him a blessing. The giving of significant names to children has been an ancient and pious practice: names which carried a remembrance either of duty or of mercy in them. When a child has been born, it has very seldom been known

whether it would become a curse or a blessing. There has often been great joy at the birth of children, who have lived to do great harm, and even to break their parents' hearts. When Cain was born Eve rejoiced, saying, "I have gotten a man from the Lord," little knowing or thinking how wicked a man he would be. Other children who have excited little interest at their birth, or even in their boyhood, have lived not only to rejoice their parents, but to save souls from eternal death. We cannot tell when we look upon young children what they will become, but we may offer up our earnest prayer that they may be a comfort and not a sorrow, a blessing and not a curse. A child of prayer and faith is likely to be a source of comfort to his parents. Were proper attention paid to this point, there would be fewer *disobedient* children in the world, and the number of *broken-hearted* parents would be lessened. But what can be expected from the majority of matrimonial connections, *begun* without the *fear* of God, and carried on without His *love*?

15. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. 16. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. 17. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

*Num. vi. 3; Judg. xiii. 4; Chap. vii. 33. *Jer. i. 5; Gal. i. 15. *Mal. iv. 5, 6. *Mal. iv. 5; Matt. xi. 14; Mark ix. 12.

Great in the sight of the Lord, that is, really or truly great, God would regard him as such. They are *little* men in the sight of the Lord, whatever importance their riches and reputation may give them in the sight of men, who live in the world to little purpose, render little service to God, and bring little glory to His name. *Drink neither wine nor strong drink*. Wine was the juice of the grape. The kind of wine commonly used in Judea was a light wine, often not stronger than cider in this country. It was the common drink of all classes of the people. Why then was John to drink no wine? Because he was a Nazarite. (See Numb. vi.) Jewish ceremonies have ceased since the Lord Jesus has made known to us the Gospel, yet it is our duty in all things to be devoted to the service of God, and

separated from the sinful pleasures of an ungodly world. Our modern temperance societies are properly a Christian Nazarism. They are a moral *enterprise*, aiming to raise the public practice to a standard of temperance by exhibiting an abstinence from even an otherwise innocent measure of indulgence. *Strong drink*, among the Jews (as distilled spirits were not then known), was probably nothing more than fermented liquors, or a drink obtained from fermented dates, figs, and the juice of the palm, or the lees of wine, mingled with sugar, and having the property of intoxicating. The words denote all exhilarating liquors besides wine. *Filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb*—that is, *before his birth*, or *from his very birth*, the plenary influence of the Holy Spirit should be upon and in his spirit. There is no Scripture ground for supposing that a child, even before birth, is no possible subject of sanctifying power.

Many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. The Jewish people at this time were sunk in formalism and sin. (See Matt. iii. 5, 6; Mark i. 5; Luke iii. 7.) *Go before him in the spirit and power of Elias. Him*, that is, *before the Lord their God*. An evident reference to the last of the prophets—Mal. iii. 1, iv. 5, 6—whose words are thus indorsed by the angel. This seems to be a clear ascription of the Divine title to the Messiah before whom John was to go. There was a great resemblance between John the Baptist and the prophet Elijah, under whose name he was predicted by Malachi, iv. 5. *In spirit*. Both were clothed in hair-cloth, with leathern girdles around their loins, and dwelt much in the wilderness. Both were faithful and courageous in times of universal corruption. John came also in the *power* of the great prophet, denouncing speedy vengeance from heaven unless men repented. *Turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, &c.* The fathers here are the holy ancestry of degenerate Israel, who had, as it were, been offended with the apostasy of their descendants. John would so infuse a better spirit into this generation that a reconciliation should take place between the holy *olden time* and the fallen *present*. *The disobedient. Unbelief and disobedience* are so intimately con-

nected, that the same word in the sacred writings often serves for *both*. *To the wisdom of the just*, the original preposition implies not only the entering upon, but continuance in the state of wisdom, or true religion, here predicated of the just: *to make ready a people for the Lord*, by fitting men to receive Christ upon His own terms and conditions. Though the Son of God was coming into the world to shed His blood to save sinners, yet it was necessary that one should go before Him to *turn* the hearts of men toward Him. What a proof this of the wickedness of the human heart! Every one is an enemy of God until he is converted.

18. And Zacharias said unto the angel, *Whereby shall I know this?* for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. 19. And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings. 20. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. ²¹Gen. xvii. 17. ²²Dan. viii. 16, and ix. 21, 22, 23; Matt. xvii. 10; Heb. i. 14. ²³Ezek. iii. 26, and xxiv. 27.

Zacharias was so much astonished at the message of the angel, that he asked of him by what sign he should know that this thing, so far above the ordinary course of nature, should come to pass. *And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel*—"The might of the strong God," a name peculiarly appropriate now, as pointing out that *all-prevalent power* by which the *strong God* could accomplish every purpose, and *subdue* all things to Himself. *Stand in the presence of God*. To stand or dwell in the presence of a sovereign is an oriental idiom, importing the most eminent and dignified station at court. Why was it wrong in him to desire a sign? Because he had already had one. It was sinful in Zacharias not to believe after he had seen the glorious angel. Unbelief is a great sin, for it is an insult to the truth of God. It was, therefore, both a sign and a judgment that Zacharias was told he should be dumb.

21. And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple. 22. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless. 23. And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house. 24. And after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and hid herself six months, saying, 25. Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men. ²⁶2 Kings xi. 5; 1 Chron. ix. 25. ²⁷Gen. xxx. 23; Isa. iv. 1, liv. 1, 4.

The priest, it is said, was not accustomed to remain in the temple more than half an

hour commonly. When Zacharias came out, it was expected that, according to the custom of the priest after the service of the temple was finished, he would dismiss the people with the beautiful words recorded in Numbers vi. 24-7, but *he could not speak*. His excited aspect showed that something had happened to him in the sacred place, and the people suspecting that he had seen an appearance or spectre, he made signs to show them what he had seen in the temple. Zacharias, though he ceased to speak, did not cease to minister in the temple. It is the duty of ministers of the Gospel to remain at their work until they are entirely unfitted for it.

His own house. This is generally thought to have been Hebron. What a history he had to unfold to Elizabeth! For he was able to inform her in writing. What a proof she beheld of the power of God in the dumbness of her husband! We should take notice of God's dealings with others. (Ps. cxviii. 43.) *He himself five months, saying, &c.* How humbly and gratefully Elizabeth behaved on this occasion! She acknowledged the goodness of the Lord in having condescended to look upon her affliction, for she had been exposed to much reproach on account of having no child. It might be that this strict seclusion was adopted partly for the better securing opportunities of devotion to one so peculiarly circumstanced, and partly for the purpose of avoiding wine or strong drink, or coming in contact with anything unclean, as became the destined mother of a Nazarite. But it might have been done, too, in accordance with the manners of her country, as it is probable that the ladies of ancient Palestine observed the custom which prevails among other Eastern females of the present day, who, from motives of delicacy hide themselves from the public, for some time before the birth of their first child.

Thus hath the Lord, &c. A holy minister named Rutherford, in one of his letters, written two hundred years ago, says, that one of the things which most showed him his own wickedness by nature, was his feeling more disposed to call upon the Lord in trouble, than to thank him when delivered.

26. And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, 27. To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David: and the virgin's name was Mary. 28. And the angel came in unto her, and said, *Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.* 29. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. 30. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. 31. *And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name JESUS.* 32. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. 33. *And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.* 34. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? 35. And the angel answered and said unto her, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.* 36. And, behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. 37. For with God nothing shall be impossible. 38. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

«Matt. i. 18; chap. ii. 4, 5. «Dan. ix. 23. x. 19. «Judg. vi. 12. «Verse 12. «Isa. vii. 14; Matt. i. 21. «Chap. ii. 21. «Mark v. 27. «2 Sam. vii. 11, 12; Ps. cxxxiii. 11; Isa. ix. 6, 7, xvi. 5; Jer. xxiii. 5; Rev. iii. 7. «Dan. ii. 14, vii. 14, 27. «Matt. i. 7; John xii. 34; Heb. i. 8. «Matt. i. 20. «Matt. xiv. 33, xxvi. 63, 64; Mark i. 1; John i. 34, xx. 26; Acts viii. 37; Rom. i. 4. «Gen. xviii. 14; Jer. xxxiii. 17; Zech. iiii. 6; Matt. xix. 26; Mark x. 27; chap. xviii. 27; Rev. iv. 21.

The angel Gabriel. God appointed that his Son should be born six months after John. An evil angel was the first author of our ruin; a good angel, though he could not be the author of our restoration, yet was made the joyful reporter of it. It was the same angel who had, many hundred years before, declared to the prophet Daniel the coming of Messiah (Dan. ix. 21-7), that now came to Mary. *A city of Galilee.* As Joseph and Mary were both of the family of David, the patrimonial estate of which lay in Bethlehem, it seems as if the family residence should have been in that city and not in Nazareth, for we find that even after the return from the captivity the several families went to reside in those cities to which they originally belonged (See Neh. ii. 3.) But it is probable that the holy family removed to Galilee, for fear of exciting the jealousy of Herod, who had usurped that throne to which they had an indisputable right.

To a virgin espoused, &c. At length the moment is come which is to give a son to a virgin, a Saviour to the world, a pattern to mankind, a sacrifice to sinners, a temple to the Divinity, and a new principle to the new world. The Son of God comes to humble the proud, and to honor poverty, weakness and contempt. He chooses an obscure place for the mystery which is most glorious to

his humanity, its union with the Divinity; and for that which is most *degrading* (his sufferings and death), He will choose the greatest city. *Of the house of David.* Mary was descended from King David, who had lived more than a thousand years before, and she was engaged to be married to a man called Joseph, also descended from King David. It had been prophesied that the Son of God should be born among David's family. Isaiah calls the Saviour "A rod out of the stem of Jesse" (Isa. ix. 1), for Jesse was the father of David. Jesse was like a tree, of which Jesus was a rod or branch.

Hail!—a word of salutation, equivalent to *Peace be with thee*, or, *Joy be with thee*, *thou art highly favored*, thou that are designated as the happy individual to whom the great honor is to pertain of giving birth to the world's Redeemer—the *Lord is with thee*—as the word "*is*" is not in the original, this passage may be rendered either "the Lord is with thee," or "the Lord be with thee," implying the prayer of the angel that all blessings from God might descend and rest upon her—*blessed art thou among women*, not *above* women, but *among* women, that is, "thou art the most happy of women." The Roman Catholics allege that the words "highly favored" mean "full of grace," and say, that Mary can now impart grace, and that the angel worshiped her. The original word, however, does not signify *full of grace*, but *freely beloved*, and it is perfectly plain that the angel's address was a salutation and not a prayer. Besides, we know that Mary was but a creature, and even a sinful creature, and hence, however great the distinction she enjoyed in being selected to be the mother of the Messiah, it is idolatry to treat her as the Lord.

She was troubled, &c. Mary was afraid and perplexed at the speech of the angel, it was so unexpected and extraordinary, and, with her sense of humility, the honor was so undeserved. The angel therefore desired her not to fear, and then informed her of the wonderful event about to happen. The Saviour, so long expected, was to be her son. He was to be called "Jesus," which signifies Saviour, and is the same

name as Joshua. He was to be "great," distinguished, or illustrious, great in respect to His person and His offices; He was to be called the son of the highest, that is, He was to be the Son of the infinitely exalted God; He was to receive from the Lord God the throne of his father David, that is, God would settle upon Him a spiritual kingdom, of which the earthly one of David, from whom He was lineally descended, was a type: *he was to reign over the house of Jacob forever*: as this was the name by which the ancient people of God were known, this was in effect saying that He should reign over His own Church and people forever, and of his kingdom there was to be no end—He should reign among His people on earth until the end of time, and still be their King in heaven. He should be the only King that shall never lay aside his diadem and robes, and that shall never die.

How shall this be? Some would render this as if she would be resolved whether this birth were to be produced in a common or a miraculous manner. But we think it is more natural to suppose that she understood the former words as an intimation that the effect was immediately to take place, to which her present circumstances seemed, humanly speaking, an invincible objection. *The Holy Ghost*, &c. As the Messiah came to redeem sinners—to make atonement for others, and not for Himself—it was necessary that His human nature should be pure, and freed from the corruption of the fall. Hence a body was to be prepared for Him, not by ordinary generation, but by the direct power of God. His body was to be miraculously formed by the power of the Holy Ghost, though born of a human mother. The phrase, *that holy thing*, shows the purity and immaculateness of Christ's human nature. Jesus had flesh and blood like ourselves (Heb. ii. 14), and He was subject to all our bodily weaknesses; He needed food and sleep; He suffered pain; He shed tears, and sweat drops of blood; but He was *without sin* (Heb. iv. 15.) He was "holy, harmless, undefiled." (Heb. vii. 26.) *Shall be called the Son of God.* The angel did not give the appellation *Son of God* to the *Divine nature of Christ*, but to that *holy person or thing*

which was to be born of the virgin, by the energy of the Holy Spirit. The *Divine nature could not* be born of the virgin, the human nature *was* born of her. The phrase does not mean constituted and made, but evidenced and declared. Christ was God before He assumed flesh, even from eternity; but His taking flesh in this manner would evidence Him to be the Son of God. To confirm Mary's confidence in what he had told her, the angel mentioned the wonderful conception of her cousin Elizabeth, and reminded her of the almighty power of God. The result was, that she was willing to bear the trial. She knew that many would disbelieve her story, and treat her with contempt; nevertheless, in expression of her resignation to the will of God, and of her faith in the promise, she said: *Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word*. All disputations with God, after His will is made known and understood, arise from infidelity and unbelief. God often makes those suffer most deeply whom He designs to honor most highly. When he intends that persons should do much good to souls (and this is one of the highest honors) He often permits suspicion to be cast upon their character, but at length He establishes their innocence.

23. And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill-country with haste, into a city of Judah.
Josh. xxi. 9, 10, 11

In those days, that is, soon after she had received the extraordinary message from the angel, before mentioned, as soon as she could conveniently fit herself out for the journey. *Went into the hill-country*. The portion of Palestine originally allotted to the tribe of Judah was divided in accordance with its natural features into the southern district, or the plain bordering on the Mediterranean sea; the hill-country of Judah, running through the center from north to south; and the district of Judah.

With haste, such as results from zeal and eager desire. The intimation which the angel had given respecting Elizabeth greatly impressed the mind of Mary, and created a strong desire to visit and confer with that aged relative, under the very peculiar circumstances in which she was placed. There were grounds on which

she might suspect the actual relation between these extraordinary circumstances. She could not but know what had happened to Zacharias at the temple, and if, as would seem from her not being already apprised of the fact, the particulars of the vision had not yet become equally notorious, the information given by the angel pointed, as coming from him, a connecting link which she would be anxious to trace more fully. If we may suppose Hebron to have been Elizabeth's residence, Mary's journey would be about one hundred miles. *Into a city of Judah*; probably Hebron, the city of the priests (Josh. xxi. 14), situated in the tribe of Judah. This was the chief city in that part of Judea, as may be gathered from 2 Sam. ii.

40. And entered into the house of Zacharias and saluted Elizabeth.

Here were the two wonders of the world met under one roof, to communicate their joys to each other, and to strengthen each other's faith. How interesting that interview between those two holy women! There was a great difference between their ages. Elizabeth was very old; Mary was not old; it is probable she was quite young. Yet she was far more highly honored than her aged relative. The old are often envious of the young, but the pious Elizabeth was ready to do honor to Mary. *Saluted Elizabeth*. The salutations of the Jews were usually of a religious character, at least in form, and were attended with much ceremony. They were various, such as, "Be thou blessed of Jehovah," "God be with you," "Peace be with you." (See Ruth ii. 4; Judges xix. 20; 2 Sam. xx. 9; Ps. cxxix. 8.) To the last mentioned form, which was the most common, striking allusion is made by our Saviour. (John xiv. 27.)

41. And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

No sooner had Mary spoken than the child in the womb of Elizabeth leaped, as if transported with joy, or sensible of the approach of Him whose forerunner he was appointed to be, and already offering Him involuntary homage. The reference to the movement of the child by Luke, in connection with the words of Elizabeth, verse 44, shows that it was attributed to a

secret and powerful spiritual influence. The expression, *Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost*, seems to have been the accomplishment of the promise made by the angel, verse 15. This expression attaches the weight of inspiration to the words Elizabeth uttered in reply to Mary's salutation.

42. And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, *Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.*—*Judg. v. 24; verse 28.*

With a loud voice, such as testified the greatness of the emotion of her mind. *Blessed*, &c., repeating the words of the angel, verse 28, of which she had probably been informed by Mary, in the present interview, esteeming it the highest honor among mothers to be the mother of the Messiah. Both had been highly favored—but Mary most. Mary was *blessed*, not so much for carrying Christ in her womb by sense, as for bearing Him in her heart by faith. *And blessed is the fruit of thy womb*; alluding, probably, to the child's being the promised seed in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, and who for that reason was blessed Himself. (Ps. lxxii. 17.) While we cannot but own that we are more *favored* of God than we deserve, let us by no means envy others who are *more highly* favored than we are.

43. And whence *is this* to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

If Elizabeth had not been extraordinarily inspired, she could not so much as have suspected that Mary was to be the mother of the Messiah, but this being revealed to her, she was greatly struck with the honor that was done her by the visit. Her son, the Baptist, used the same language of humility. (Matt. iii. 14.) Elizabeth seems to have been the first one who employed this title, *My Lord*, of such common use among Christians.

44. For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

"Thou certainly bringest some extraordinary tidings, some extraordinary blessings with thee, for *as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears*, not only my heart leaped for joy, but *the babe in my womb did so, too.*" The reference is to verse 41, where the verb used denotes something more than the natural movements of the

unborn child. It seems most plainly accordant with the mind of the inspired writer, that upon this occasion the unborn harbinger salutes with *joy* the unborn Messiah at his first approach. This would serve very much to strengthen Mary's faith, and would be in part the fulfillment of the prediction. (Ps. xcvi. 8, 9.)

45. And blessed is she **that believed*; for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord. —**Or, which believed that there.*

The language of Elizabeth here passes from the second to the third person, but the expression, although in form indefinite, was designed to apply directly to Mary, and commended her for her faith and humility, when she received the message from *the Lord*, by His angel. Mary's faith is made to stand in contrast with Zacharias' unbelief; but this is done in such a manner as to show the great decorum which the Spirit of God, as well as the rules of modesty and piety, taught Elizabeth to observe, when the faults of a husband were in question. *For there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.* The invariable certainty of God's promises, is the true ground of faith, and the source of happiness to those who build upon them. *Blessed* is every one that *believes*. It was a good answer that was once given by a poor woman, when, to a minister who asked her, "What is faith?" she replied, "I am ignorant; I cannot answer well; but I think faith is taking God at His word."

46. And Mary said, *My soul doth magnify the Lord,*—*1 Sam. ii. 1; Ps. xxxiv. 2, 3 and xxxv. 9; Hab. iii. 18.*

Though there was much to try Mary in her present circumstances, for many people would not believe her account of the angel's visit, and would treat her with scorn, yet she was filled with joy, because she enjoyed the favor of the Lord, thus showing us how faith can enable us to rejoice in the midst of trials. Having heard Elizabeth speak, she likewise was filled with the Holy Ghost, and under His influence uttered extempore this hymn, remarkable for the beauty of its style, the sublimity of its sentiments, and the spirit of piety which runs through the whole of it; and manifesting the deep sense she had of her own unworthiness, and the goodness of God in choosing her to the

high honor of being the Messiah's mother. This song properly consists of three parts: 1. In verses 49-50, Mary praises God for what He had done for *herself*. 2. In verses 51-3, she praises Him for what He had done, and would do, against the oppressors of *his people*, and that He *exalts the humble*, and brings low the proud. 3. In verses 53-56, she praises Him for what He had done, and would do, for His *Church*.

47. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

She seems to turn her thoughts here to Christ Himself, who was to be born of her, as the angel had told her He should be the Son of the Highest, whose name should be called *Jesus*, the Saviour. And she rejoiced in hope of salvation through faith in Him, which is a blessing common to all true believers, more than in being His mother in the flesh, which was an honor peculiar to her. (See Matt. xii. 50; Luke xi. 27, 28.) In this language Mary confesses herself a sinner, for none but sinners need a *Saviour*. Those that have Jesus for their God and Saviour, have great reason to rejoice—to *rejoice in spirit*; that is, to rejoice as Christ did, with spiritual joy. (Luke x. 21.)

48. For he hath regarded the low estate of his hand-maiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

¹ Sam. i. 11; Ps. cxxxviii. 6. ² Mal. iii. 12; chap. xi. 27.

All the blessedness she had, she felt she could claim only on a different basis from that of personal merit—it was because the Lord had *regarded her low estate*; in the most tender and compassionate manner visiting her in her humiliation, in which besides her poor outward condition, she was also conscious of inward poverty, which could discover no pre-eminence in herself, in virtue of which such happiness should have fallen to her lot. *For, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed*. There are several other passages in the Scriptures in which the word here rendered *blessed* should rather be rendered *happy* than *blessed*. (See Prov. xxxi. 28; Mal. iii. 12; 1 Tim. i. 11, vi. 15; James v. 11; Rom. xx. 6.) This utterance of exuberant joy was first used by Leah on the birth of Asher. (Gen. xxx. 13.) Mary knew that whatever men thought of her then, that *all generations* would “call her blessed,” as the mother of the Saviour,

thus invested by Heaven with a high and lasting honor above all her sex. *The blessed or happy virgin* was the character by which alone Mary wished to be known. It is worthy of note, that Mary is invariably called in the sacred narrative *Mary*, without any of those titles of reverence or superstition, such as *Queen of Heaven*, *Mother of God*, &c., by which men, trying to adorn her incomparable dignity, have sown the seeds of Mariolatry. The words of Mary show that she regarded the blessings of the Messiah's advent, as reaching to the end of time.

49. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.

¹ Ps. lxxi. 19, cxxvi. 2, 3, cxi. 9.

He that is mighty, beyond all our conceptions, even the Almighty God, to whom this strange event is not only possible, but easy. *Hath done to me great things*, probably having especially now in her eye her miraculous conception of the Messiah, it is the *power of the highest* that appears in this. *Holy*, i. e., revered, is his name. Personal blessings are here lost sight of in the Divine glory and goodness which they serve to reveal to her view. Hannah said in her song, *There is none holy as the Lord*, which she explains in the next words, *for there is none beside thee*. (1 Sam. ii. 2.) Glorious things may be expected from Him who is both *mighty* and *holy*, who can do everything, and will do everything well and for the best.

50. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

¹ Gen. xvii. 7; Ex. xx. 6; Ps. ciii. 17, 18.

From a contemplation of God's goodness to her, Mary's mind reaches forth to a grateful recognition of the Divine mercy to others. God's exuberant kindness has ever manifested itself in acts of mercy to all those who feared or revered His name. He has regarded them with peculiar favor. But He manifested His mercy, as He had never done before, in that event with which Mary knew her name would be perpetually connected—in sending His Son to bring in an everlasting righteousness, and work out an everlasting salvation for them that look up to Him with an eye of filial fear, and this *from generation to generation*, literally for *generations of generations*, that is, throughout all time.

51. *He hath shewed strength with his arm; *he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
 *Ps. cxviii. 1, cxviii. 15; Isa. xl. 10, li. 9. iii. 10. *Ps. xxxiii. 10; 1 Peter v. 5.

With his arm. He hath shown the greatness of His power. God's great power is represented by His *finger*, His greater power with His *hand*, and His omnipotence by His *arm*. The plague of lice was the *finger* of God. (Ex. vii. 18.) The plagues in general were wrought by His *hand*. (Ex. iii. 20.) And the destruction of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea was brought to pass by His *arm*. (Ex. xv. 16.) *He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.* Here the proud and haughty persecutors of God's people are especially referred to, such as Pharaoh, Sennacherib, Antiochus Epiphanes and others, whose cruelties were a matter of historical record, but all are meant who are puffed up with pride, who wish to be noticed in preference to all others, and feel sovereign contempt for all but themselves. Such men are *scattered*, like a defeated army, or like the chaff which the wind blows away. (See 2 Cor. x. 5; Ps. ii. 1-3.)

52. *He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.
 *1 Sam. ii. 6, &c.; Job v. 11; Ps. cxlii. 6.

Seats, literally, *thrones*. There is probably an allusion in particular to the removal of *Saul* from the throne of Israel, and the establishment of the kingdom in the person and family of David. But as Mary spoke *prophetically*, this saying may also allude to future events. *And exalted them of low degree.* In the revolutions and overturnings by which the proud and mighty were brought low, persons of obscure condition were raised up to the occupancy of their thrones and seats of power. (See 2 Sam. vii. 8; 1 Chron. xvii. 7; Ps. lxxviii. 70; Neh. xxi. 7.)

53. *He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.
 *1 Sam. ii. 5; Ps. xxxiv. 10.

He hath fed the poor and needy, who came to Him with humble hearts, and not unfrequently withheld from those who came to Him with lofty hearts, and insatiable desires, what they asked, or taken away their riches by fire or flood, thus *sending them away empty*. (Rev. iii. 17, 18.) The original word strictly signifies *hath sent* or *turned them out of doors*, and very beautifully represents God as the great Proprietor of all, and the greatest of men

as His tenants at will, whom He can strip and turn out whenever He pleases. The language is to be understood mainly in a spiritual sense. Poverty and hunger are here opposed to wealth and fullness, just as dominion and power, in the preceding context, were contrasted with lowliness of birth and condition. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." Such hungry souls shall never be sent empty away.

54. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; — *Ps. cxviii. 3; Jer. xxxi. 3, 20.

The word rendered *he hath holpen*, which is an old English form for *hath helped*, properly signifies, to interpose in favor of a person in great necessity or extreme danger, and also to hold by the hand, to sustain from falling, or to lift up when fallen, and so to afford aid or help. Sad had been the humiliation of Israel, God's covenant people, from a high to a low estate had he been brought, but the time of his exaltation has now arrived. God has blessed them with a Saviour, who lived in the faith, hope and expectation of the promised Messiah. Those that were sunk under the burdens of a broken covenant of innocence, are *helped up* by the blessings of a renewed covenant of grace. The Messiah was also to be a great blessing to all who should become the seed of Abraham by faith. (Gal. iii. 7.) *In remembrance of his mercy*; that is, that He might show Himself mindful of the mercy promised to Israel. (See verse 72.)

55. *As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.
 *Gen. xvii. 19; Ps. cxxxii. 11; Rom. iv. 28; Gal. iii. 16.

This is a reference to the covenant God made with Abraham (Gen. xv. 18), which covenant proceeded from God's eternal mercy, and in which salvation was promised to all the nations of the earth. (Gen. xii. 3; xxii. 18.) This covenant was in one form or other given to *all the fathers*. We have here a remarkable proof that Mary's expectations concerning the Messiah's appearance were not of an exclusive, but of a universal nature. It was designed that in Him all the nations of the earth should be blessed. The closing words *for ever*, are to be joined in sense with *his seed*, being equivalent to *throughout all generations*. What God hath spoken to the

fathers, he will make good to their seed, even their seed's seed forever.

56. And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

This must have been a few days before the birth of John. (See verse 36.) Having, to her unspeakable satisfaction and great comfort, found all things as the angel had told her, Mary returned to Nazareth, to keep silence before Joseph, as she had broken silence before Elizabeth. She still wished retirement, and therefore did not remain at the home of her relative, when the birth of her child of promise would draw a great deal of company to the house. After Mary's return home, those events seem to have occurred, concerning the difficulties and conduct of Joseph in respect of her, which are recorded in Matt. i. 18, 19. *Her own house*. If the supposition just referred to be correct, the house here spoken of must have been her own, as she was yet unmarried.

57. Now Elizabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

This birth was six months previous to that of the Messiah. *Full time came*, exactly according to the prediction of the angel, *that she should be delivered*, though this child was conceived in the womb by a miracle, he continued in the womb according to the ordinary course of nature, as did our Saviour also. Promised mercies are to be expected when the full time for them is come, and not before. How great an event is the birth of a child! It exceeds in importance the creation of the sun. The sun sees not its own light, feels not its own heat, and is destined to be extinguished; but the little babe that has just been brought into the world, has a rational soul which must live in rapture or in woe, when the heavens pass away, and the elements melt with fervent heat.

58. And her neighbors and her consins heard how the Lord had showed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.—(Verse 14.)

Her kinsfolk and relations having heard that the Lord in so illustrious and remarkable a manner had magnified His mercy to her, came together to testify their joy, and sincerely congratulate her on the happy occasion. Too little on such occasions are the power and goodness of God gratefully recognized. To rejoice

with those whom God has favored, and to congratulate them on the advantages which He has granted to them, is a duty which humanity, charity and religion call upon us to fulfill.

59. And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.
—(Gen. xvii. 12; Lev. xii. 3.)

On the eighth day (from the birth of the child inclusive), which was the day, in the patriarchal and Mosaic law (see Gen. xvii. 12; Lev. xii. 3), for the circumcision of the male offspring. This day was fixed because the mother was considered as unclean seven days (Lev. xii. 1, 2), and until that time the child was too weak to endure the pain of circumcision. *They came*, probably to the house of Zacharias, for no particular place was prescribed, and no particular person as performer of the rite. *To circumcise the child*. Circumcision, as a rite of the Jewish religion, consisted in cutting around the flesh of the foreskin of all males. The instrument used was a knife, a razor, or even a sharp stone. (Exod. iv. 25; Josh. v. 3.) This rite was established as the token of God's covenant with Abraham (Gen. xvii. 9-14), who immediately subjected himself and all his family to its observance. By this rite all the natural male descendants of Abraham were separated from all the rest of the world. The precept of circumcision was renewed to Moses (Exod. xii. 44; Lev. xii. 3; John vii. 22, 23), requiring that all should submit to it who would partake of the paschal sacrifice. (Exod. xii. 43-48.) This was enjoined with great solemnity. The Jews have always been very scrupulous in the observance of this rite or ceremony, though it was omitted in their journey through the wilderness for obvious reasons. *They called*, were then naming, were about to name, or *would* have named. This is frequently the sense of the imperfect tense here used. There is no direction that the child should be named on the day of its circumcision, but this was always done (though in some instances the name was given at its birth), probably because God changed the names of Abraham and Sarah when the rite was instituted. Girls were not named until they were weaned. *Zacharias, after the name of his*

father. *Zacharias*, signifying the remembrance of God, pointed at God's mercy in remembering him, and his duty in remembering God.

60. And his mother answered and said, ^aNot so; but he shall be called John.—^bVerse 13.

The answer of Elizabeth was decided and emphatic. In determining that the child should be called *John*, as this was the name which the angel desired should be given him (verse 13), she might have been influenced by revelation, or *Zacharias* might have explained the whole affair to her in writing. The Jews made it a part of religion to give suitable and significant names to their children.

61. And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

A feeling of pride or admiration leads men to perpetuate the virtues of their illustrious ancestors by reviving their names in the person of a descendant, and as these are often repeated in the course of successive generations, they become a kind of inheritance in the tribe, with which it is understood to be improper for the members of another to interfere. That this feeling was prevalent among the ancient Jews, is abundantly evident from many parts of their history; from the genealogical tree which *Josephus* has drawn of his own family, in which, through a long line of progenitors who had borne the highest honors of their country, we may observe the same names frequently recurring, and these exclusively such as pertained to the male branches of his house; and, in short, from a variety of incidents, all manifesting the predilection of that people for perpetuating the memory of their most distinguished forefathers, and the extreme reluctance they felt to admit any names among them that had not been formerly familiar, or known at least, in their families. With these circumstances in our knowledge, we can be at no loss to account for the surprise and dissatisfaction expressed by the assembled relatives of *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth*, on discovering that they had determined, by mutual consent, and for reasons which they did not explain, to deviate from established usage in the intended designation of their son.

But the relations themselves, in proposing to give the child the name of *Zacharias*, departed as widely from prevailing customs, which made it usual to call a son, not after his father, but after his grandfather, great-grandfather, or some honored member of the family. It is probable that *Lightfoot* is right in his conjecture, that respect for the character and age of the father, who could have no prospect of another son, were the motive, that made his friends desirous of seeing his name perpetuated in the person of his child. But both of the parents expressed their determination to give him the name of *John*.

62. And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.

Wishing to know the mind of *Zacharias* in the matter, whose office it properly was to name the child, they made signs to him—literally *nodded*, or *winked with the eye*. From this kind of inquiry we may conclude with certainty he was deaf as well as dumb, otherwise they might have asked him, and obtained his answer in this way.

63. And he asked for a writing-table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

^cVerse 13.

The *writing-table*, or tablet, was used much like a slate, for temporary use. Sometimes it was of lead, the writing on which was formed with a bodkin or stylus and could be beaten out when no longer needed. Sometimes it was composed of a thin board covered with wax, on which, also, the characters were traced with a metal stylus, and often it was merely a small, clean board, on which the writing was formed with chalk.

And wrote, saying, his name is John. Not, "it shall be so," or, "I would have it so," but "it is so"—his name is *John*. The matter is determined already, the angel had given him that name. (Verse 13.) *John* was a very appropriate name for him who was to be the first preacher of the kingdom of grace, and who was to point out Him from whose fullness we receive grace for grace. (John i. 16.) As *Zacharias*, when he could not speak, wrote, so ministers, who are prevented by disease or persecution, from preaching, may yet be doing good so long as they have strength to write. Many of the martyrs in prison wrote letters to their

friends, which were of great use. Paul himself did so. *Bunyan* wrote his "Pilgrim's Progress" when shut up in Bedford jail, for righteousness' sake. Our religious literature has been greatly enriched by contributions from good men in their affliction. *And they marvelled all*—they wondered, were amazed. Had not Zacharias been deaf as well as dumb, and heard the previous conversation, there would have been nothing strange in this coincidence with the name given by his wife.

64. *And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God.
†Verse 20.

His mouth was opened, not by the force of joyful emotion, nor by his breaking a voluntary silence, but by a miracle, whereby the prediction of the angel (verse 20), was fulfilled at exactly the right time. No sooner had he recovered his speech, than, with an audible, articulate voice, he praised God in holy raptures, before even addressing his friends or his wife, although he had not interchanged a word with them from the time he returned from Jerusalem (verse 23), nine months before. As the want of faith had produced the dumbness, so the act of faith reproduced the speech. His first use of his recovered faculty was not to utter a complaint, but a doxology: a proof that the cure had taken place in his soul also. When God *opens our lips*, our mouths must *show forth His praise*. We might as well be without speech as not use it in *praising God*, for our tongue is most *our glory* when it is employed for *God's glory*.

65. And fear came on all that dwelt round about them; and all these sayings were noised abroad through out all the hill-country of Judea.—*Or, things. †Verse 30.

In view of the miraculous operations which had been witnessed, a feeling, partaking of religious awe and veneration, pervaded all the inhabitants of Hebron and its environs; and *all these sayings*, or, things, which must have produced a deep sensation, were everywhere talked about. The inhabitants of this *hill-country* seem to have been an open, honest-hearted, generous people, who were easily led to acknowledge the interposition of God, and to rejoice in the comfort and welfare of each other. The *fear*, which now spread only through the hill-country of Judea, afterward filled the heart of all Jerusalem.

It was undoubtedly kept up, as well as the expectation of some greater thing to follow, by the unusual manner in which the child John was brought up. We perceive in this event how God can bring good out of evil. Zacharias by unbelief had become dumb, but his gaining his speech again must have helped others to believe.

66. And all they that heard them *laid them up* in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.
†Chron. ii. 19, 51. †Gen. xxxix. 2: 1's. lxxx. 17, and lxxxix. 21; Acts xi. 21.

The extraordinary circumstances connected with the birth of John were all ordered by Providence, that he, who was the Messiah's forerunner, might not seem an obscure and ordinary man, but one that was the peculiar object of the decrees and counsels of heaven, and that the attention of his countrymen being awakened by this magnificent manner of his introduction into the world, he might execute the duties of his ministry with greater advantage, and effectually prepare the people for receiving the Messiah, who was soon to appear in person. And this effect *was* produced. The people began to wonder and conjecture, saying, *What manner of child shall this be? Laid them up in their hearts*, i. e., pondered over them, and sought their import. It argues a vain spirit and temper of mind when we pass over the observation of God's wonderful acts with a slight regard. The true reason why we so little admire the wonderful works of God, is that we so little consider them. (Ps. xxviii. 5.) *And the hand of the Lord was with him*, that is, the help of God, the love and favor of God to support him, the power and providence of God to protect, preserve and prosper him. When our hearts are with the Lord, then *His* heart and *His* helping hand will be with us.

67. And his father, Zacharias, was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,—*Joel ii. 28.

Filled with the Holy Ghost, &c.—brought under the influence of Divine inspiration. God not only forgave him his unbelief and distrust, but as a *specimen of abounding grace* toward believers, He endued him with a more than ordinary measure of the Holy Spirit, supernaturally enlightening his mind in the knowledge of Divine things, and even of future events. The prophetic hymn consists of two parts.

Part first, 68-75, predicts, under Jewish images, the power and safety of Messiah's kingdom. Part second, 76-79, in an address to the infant John, predicts his preparatory office as herald of the Messiah's manifestation, and His glorious kingdom of human salvation on earth and in heaven.

68. *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for she hath visited and redeemed his people.*
 1. Kings i. 45; Ps. xli. 13, lxxii. 18, cvii. 48. *Exod. iii. 16, iv. 31; Ps. cxi. 9; chap. vii. 16.*

It will be observed that it is not for his own particular and private mercy, namely, the recovery of his speech, that Zacharias blessed God, though for that blessing he was undoubtedly very thankful, but for universal mercies bestowed upon His Church and people. *The Lord God of Israel*—who is also the God of the spirits of all flesh. Jehovah was in a peculiar sense the God of Israel. (Rom. ix. 4.) But this did not forbid the induction of other nations into like relationship and privileges. Israel, as a chosen people, was a type of the people of God, to be called out of all nations and ages, whom God had a particular eye to in sending the Saviour.

God is praised for two grand benefits He had granted to His people. 1. He has *visited* them. 2. He has *ransomed* them. He speaks by the Spirit of prophecy, which calls things that *are not*, as though they *were*, because they are absolutely determined by the Most High, and shall be all fulfilled in their season. God had often sent to His people by His prophets, and had still kept up a correspondence with them, but now He himself made them a visit, for Christ was *Immanuel, God with us, God manifest in the flesh*. God has *redeemed* His people. Doubtless Zacharias discerned much of the true nature and glory of the Messiah's kingdom. The object of Christ's visit was the redemption of a lost world. This implies that miserable thralldom and bondage which we were under to sin and Satan, and expresses the stupendous love of Jesus, in ransoming us by His precious blood. *His people* refers primarily to the Jews, and then to all the spiritual seed of Abraham. (Gal. iii. 7.) In Christ, according to promise,

all the families of the earth were to be blessed. (Gen. xii. 3, xxii. 18.)

69. *And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;—Ps. cxxxii. 17.*

Horn of salvation is a metaphorical expression taken from beasts, whose strength, defence, and victory over other animals, lies chiefly in their horns, as also the beauty and glory of several of them, the property likewise of the ancients consisting chiefly in their flocks and herds. The chief import of the words *horn of salvation*, in which the abstract is put for the concrete, is, that Christ is a great, glorious and powerful Saviour to His Church and people. *In the house of his servant David*, or, in the family lineage; as we say, the house of Bourbon, or of Brunswick. In verse 32, the angel stated that Mary was of the *family of David*, and Zacharias, who, from the nature of his office, must have been well acquainted with the public genealogical tables, attests the same thing.

70. *As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began:*
Jer. xxiii. 5, 6, and xxx. 10; Dan. ix. 24, Acts iii. 21; Rom. i. 2.

There is here the same reference as by Mary, verse 55. *As he spake, i. e.*, as he promised. *By the mouth, &c.* It was God that spake by His servants. (2 Peter i. 21.) *Holy prophets*. Those by whom the prophecies of salvation by Christ were uttered were persons who dared not deceive, and who aimed at promoting holiness among men. They were all *holy*, so far as this term is applicable to frail and erring man. Balaam, who was a very bad man, does not constitute an exception to this remark, for, as it was against his will he was forced to bless Israel (Num. xxiii. 8-10, 19-24, xxiv. 3-9), and utter a remarkable Messianic prediction (Num. xxiv. 17), he cannot properly be regarded as a prophet in the sense here meant. The words rendered, *since the world began*, literally mean, *from the beginning of ages*, the promise being made to Adam (Gen. iii. 15), that *the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head*, and to Abraham and the other patriarchs, that in their *seed all nations of the earth should be blessed*. (See Acts x. 43.)

71. *That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;*

That we, the true Church of God, consisting of all faithful believers, whether of the old or new dispensation, should be saved; literally, salvation (i. e., the means of salvation) from our enemies, the construction being continued from verse 69, the intermediate verse being parenthetical. From our enemies, spiritual as well as temporal, invisible as well as visible, and from the hand of all that hate us, from sin, Satan and his angels, all adverse power, and death.

72. *To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;* 73. *The oath which he swore to our father Abraham.* (Lev. xxvi. 42; Ps. xcvi. 3, and cv. 8, 9, and cvi. 45; Ezek. xvi. 60, verse 51. *Gen. xii. 3; xvii. 4; xxii. 16, 17; Heb. vi. 13, 17.

To perform the mercy, is to be referred to verse 69, on which this phrase depends. *The mercy,* the Lord Jesus Christ, the mercy of mercies, is a free, full, suitable, seasonable and satisfying mercy. The origin of our salvation was God's free, undeserved compassion and goodness. The word *promised* in our common version is unnecessarily supplied. *The mercy to our fathers.* The fulfillment of the promises concerning Messiah, is not only a matter of rejoicing for the present, and a source of hope for the future, but also a healing balm for past sorrows. The fathers had, for generations, wept over the decay of their nation, and were now living with God to look down from heaven upon the fullness of the time. (Luke xx. 37, 38; John viii. 56.) *His holy covenant* is explained in verse 73, which is put with it in explanatory opposition. *The oath* is the object of *remember*. *The oath which He swore to our father Abraham*—by which oath He confirmed the covenant before mentioned, that, as the Apostle observes (Heb. vi. 17, 18), by two immutable things, God's promise given in the covenant, an oath, in either of which, much more in both, *it was impossible for God to lie*, all that should truly embrace the covenant, by complying with the conditions of it, in repentance, faith, and new obedience, might have strong consolation in life, in death, and forever.

74. *That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear,*—Rom. vi. 18, 22; Heb. ix. 14.

By the words, *that he would grant us*, we are not to understand the *matter* of the

oath, but the *purpose* for which God once swore it, and was now about to fulfill it. *Being delivered out of the hands of our enemies*, especially our spiritual enemies—the devil, the world, and the flesh—the guilt, power and consequences of our sins, *might serve Him*, might worship and glorify Him, in and with our body and spirit which are His, *without fear*, that is, in a state of holy safety, with holy security and serenity of mind, as those that are *quiet from the fears of evil*.

75. *In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.* (Peter. xxiii. 39, 40; Eph. iv. 24; 2 Thes. xxiii. 13; 2 Tim. i. 9; Titus ii. 12; 1 Peter i. 15; 2 Peter i. 4.

In holiness—toward God, in devotedness to His glory, conformity to His image, subjection to His authority, and obedience to His will. *And righteousness*—toward our fellow-creatures, that is, in the continual exercise of truth, justice, mercy and charity. The two tables of the law, love to God, and love to man, cannot be divorced. He that *talks of holiness*, and *does unjustly* the while, is but a hypocrite. (Eph. iv. 24.) *Before him*, conscious we are in His presence, and under the continual notice of His eye, setting Him always before us, and aiming to please Him in everything.

76. *And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways:*

*Isa. xl. 3; Mal. iii. 1, iv. 5; Matt. xi. 10; verse 17.

Zacharias, as a prophet of God, now addresses the child in language of great beauty and spiritual richness. He always places the Messiah in a more prominent position than His forerunner. *Shalt be called*, refers not only to the reality, but universal acknowledgment of His high prophetic character. *The prophet of the Highest*, or Most High. *Prophet* has two acceptations: 1. A person who *foretells future events*; and, 2. A *teacher* of men in the things of God. (1 Cor. xiv. 3.) John was a prophet in *both* senses; he proclaimed the mercy which *should be communicated*, announced the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and *taught* men how to leave their sins, and how to find the salvation of God. (See chap. iii. 5–14.) He had the honor of being the *last* and *clearest* prophet of the old covenant, and the *first* of the new. *For thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways*; thou shalt be an herald and harbinger to the Most High; thou shalt go

before the face of the Messiah, and by thy severe reproofs and powerful exhortations, shalt prepare His way before Him, and make men fit and ready to receive this mighty Saviour.

77. To give knowledge of salvation unto his people* by the remission of their sins.

*Mark i. 4; chap. iii. 3. *Or, for.

The teaching of John was to be the science of salvation. Men are ignorant, and they must be instructed. Human science may be profitable in *earthly* matters, but cannot profit the *soul*. No science but that which comes from God can ever save a soul from the power, guilt and pollution of sin. (Heb. viii. 11, 12.) *By the remission of their sins.* Remission of sins is the doctrine in which the Christian religion justly glories, as that most necessary and fundamental point in which every other religion fails. The heathen here confesses himself to be in the dark. The blood of bulls and goats cannot wash away the sins of the Jew; and his oblations, since the truth is come which they were intended to prefigure, are preposterous and impious.

78. Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the Day-spring from on high hath visited us,

*Num. xxiv. 17; Isa. xi. 1; Zech. iii. 5, vi. 12; Mal. iv. 2.

Through the tender mercy of our God, literally, the bowels of mercy, a strong Hebraism, implying God's tender compassions for mankind, immersed as they are in sins and miseries. (See Isa. lxi. 15; Phil. ii. 1; Col. iii. 12, in which this expression is used.) *Day-spring.* The dawning of the celestial day hath visited us from on high. Here is doubtless a reference to such texts as Mal. iv. 2, and Isa. lx. 1-3, and possibly to Jer. xxiii. 5, and Zech. iii. 8. The original Hebrew word in these passages signifies that part of the heavens where the light begins to rise. (Compare Rev. vii. 2.) *The dawning of the day* seems, therefore, a very literal version, and beautifully describes the Gospel dispensation which dawned in the ministry of John the Baptist, and which was as superior to the patriarchal or Mosaic, with their types and shadows, as the light of the rising sun is superior to that of the moon and stars. *Hath visited us.* (See note on verse 68.) Jesus Christ is the true Sun of Righteousness. His doctrine is to the souls of men what *light* is to their bodies.

79. *To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.—Isa. ix. 2, xiii. 7; Matt. iv. 16; Acts xxvi. 18.

In darkness and in the shadow of death. Such phrase describes with peculiar propriety the ignorant and miserable state of the Gentile world, and perhaps the former part of the verse may refer to them; but as Christ's preaching to the Jews in Galilee is said (Matt. iv. 14-16) to be an accomplishment of Isa. ix. 1, 2, to which Zacharias here seems to refer, we must not confine the sense of it merely to the Gentiles, for indeed the sad character and circumstances of the Jews at this time too well suited the representation here made. (Isa. ix. 2, lx. 1.) *To guide our feet into the way of peace.* The light of the day-spring is directing, it guides us into the way of making our peace with God, or keeping up a comfortable communion, that way of peace from which, as sinners, we have wandered, and have not known (Rom. iii. 17), nor could ever have known of ourselves.

80. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel.—Chap. ii. 40. *Matt. iii. 1, xi. 7.

As John grew in bodily stature, he also waxed strong in spirit, in courage, understanding, and purposes of good, in the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit; his judgment matured, and he gave indications not only of superior natural abilities and energy of mind, but also of strong faith, vigorous holy affections, great fortitude and resolution in the cause of God, a superiority to groveling desires and pursuits, and a victory over the fear and love of the world. All this was doubtless the result of secret prayer and meditation. *And was in the deserts*, not strictly deserts, but the rural region, little inhabited, of his native hill-country. Such retirement naturally prevented any such intimacy with Christ, in their childhood and youth, as might possibly have occasioned some suspicion as to the impartiality of the testimony which John afterward bore Him. (See John i. 31.)

Till the day of his showing unto Israel. Till the time of his manifestation—till he was thirty years of age, before which time the law did not permit a man to enter into the public ministry. (Numb. iv. 3; see also chap. iii. 23.) *The day* was the

time referred to in Matt. iii. 1; Luke iii. 2. Many a one is qualified for great usefulness who yet is buried alive, and many are long so buried who are designed, and are thereby being prepared, for so much greater usefulness at last.

What a magnificent preparation was that which we have just contemplated for the great Founder of our religion! What an exalted idea must it give us of His dignity and importance to have a fore-runner and a harbinger, such as John, to proclaim His approach to the world, and

call upon all mankind to attend to Him! The fact that John was holy from his birth is suggestive of the importance of early piety. How acceptable to God is the offering up of our early years!

"A flower, when offered in the bud,
Is no mean sacrifice."

How bitter is the remembrance of a childhood and youth of wickedness! The history of the Church shows that a very large majority of those who die Christians were converted in their youth.

1. To whom was the preface of this Gospel addressed? 2. Who was Theophilus? 3. Who was Zacharias? 4. What is said of him and his wife? 5. Who appeared to him in the temple? 6. What did the angel say to him? 7. For what purpose was the angel Gabriel sent to Nazareth? 8. Explain verse 28. 9. What effect had the appearance of the angel on Mary? 10. What did the angel say to her? 11. What does *Zacharias* signify? 12. What, Elizabeth? 13. Why was their child called John? 14. What did Zacharias do when his tongue was loosed? 15. What did his father prophesy?

CHAPTER II.

1 *Augustus taxeth all the Roman empire.* 6 *The nativity of Christ.* 8 *One angel relateth it to the shepherds.* 13 *many sing praises to God for it.* 21 *Christ is circumcised.* 22 *Mary purified.* 28 *Simeon and Anna prophesy of Christ.* 40 *who increaseth in wisdom.* 46 *questioneth in the temple with the doctors,* 51 *and is obedient to his parents.*

AND it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. --*Or, enrolled.

In those days, that is, about the time in which John was born and Christ conceived, in the manner as related in the preceding chapter. *Went out a decree*—was issued an edict, from Cæsar Augustus. "*Cæsar*" was the family name of the then reigning master of the Roman empire, and "*Augustus*" the name which he assumed at his accession. *All the world*, denotes not merely the country of the Jews, but the whole Roman empire. *Should be taxed*, that is, enrolled, or a census of them taken, probably, also, a registry of their property made, whether for the purpose of levying a poll-tax, or of recruiting the army.

2. (*And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)—Acts v. 37.

Cyrenius is a Greek form of the Roman

name Quirinus, whose full name is *Publius Sulpicius Quirinus*.

It has long been objected that the *taxing* (or census, registration, or enrollment) under *Cyrenius*, here said to have taken place at the time of our Lord's birth, and in the reign of Herod, did not really occur till ten years later, in the time of his son Archelaus, and that this is the only census taken by the Romans in Judea of which we have any information. But this objection is baseless. What Luke affirms is, that, in or about the time of our Lord's birth, a decree for a general registration was issued by Augustus, in consequence of which Joseph went, accompanied by Mary, to Bethlehem, to be registered there. In recording this, it seems to have occurred to the Evangelist that, in order to prevent confusion, he should specify that the registration, though then decreed, was not executed, or not carried out to its full results till some years later when *Cyrenius* was president, and therefore he interposes parenthetically the information, that this registration, though decreed, was not fully made until "*Cyrenius* was governor of Syria." Prof.

A. W. Zumpt, of Berlin, has assigned good reasons, based on combining a great number of passages from the Roman literature of those times, for believing that Cyrenius was *twice* governor of Syria, and that the enrollment question was made in his first governorship, which dates from B. C. 4 to B. C. 1, when he was succeeded by M. Lollius. He proves that Cyrenius was honored with a triumph for subduing a tribe of Cilicians; by another train of passages He shows that Cilicia belonged under the governorship of Syria, so that Cyrenius must have *then* been governor of Syria; and by another series of deductions he shows that this triumph must have taken place before A. D. 1 or 2.

3. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

Into his own city. When the census was made in any country, the inhabitants were obliged to attend in the cities to which they belonged. The Jews, however, in carrying out the edict, were left to their own peculiar customs and usages. The policy of Rome, as well as the religious scruples of the Jews, demanded this. For this reason, instead of appearing in the cities where they resided, or to whose jurisdiction the places of their abode belonged, they appeared according to their families, every one in his native city, or the place where his paternal inheritance lay, to be there enrolled. *All went to be taxed.* The obedience of the Jews to this decree is a plain proof, that they were now dependent on the Romans, and the *sceptre* was departing from Judah.

4. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David;) 5. To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

^{b1} Sam. xvi. 1, 4; John vii. 42. ^c Matt. 1. 16; chap. i. 27. ^d Matt. i. 18; chap. i. 27.

Went up. Bethlehem was indeed high ground, but anciently any going from an inferior province or city to one of greater or of more political importance, was *going up*. *From Galilee, &c.* In the time of our Lord all Palestine was divided into three provinces, Judea, Samaria and Galilee. The last included the whole northern section of the country, namely, the ancient territories of Issachar, Zebulon, Asher and Naphtali. *Out of the city of Nazareth.* Nazareth was a very obscure place. It is not

mentioned in the Old Testament, but occurs first in Matt. ii. 23. *Unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David.)* The city of David, the place where the royal David was born and had spent his boyhood. The words *house and lineage* are designed to give full and emphatic expression to Joseph's real descent from David. The name *Bethlehem* anciently signified the *town or house of bread*; in modern Arabic it seems to signify the *house or place of flesh*.

To be taxed, to enroll himself, with Mary. These words are not to be joined in sense with *to be taxed*, but simply denote accompaniment. *His espoused wife.* The propriety of this expression appears from Matt. i. 25, where we are told Joseph knew not his wife till she brought forth her first-born son—they did not enter upon the full relations and duties of man and wife until after the birth of Jesus. *Being great with child.* It may seem strange that Mary, in this condition, should undertake such a journey—about sixty miles. Perhaps, the persons to be registered being classed in the roll, according to their lineage, Mary might judge it proper on this occasion to claim her descent from David, in order to her being publicly acknowledged as one of his posterity, and the rather as she knew in what relation she stood to the yet unborn Messiah. Possibly, though, according to the Roman custom, women could be enrolled without their personal appearance, the emperor may have given particular and exact orders with regard to the *family of David*, as it had been the royal family, and was still talked of as designed to be so, that he might know its number and strength.

At all events, by this visit various ends of Providence were in a most remarkable manner served: 1. Jesus instead of being brought forth in Nazareth, as seemed likely, was born in Bethlehem, thus fulfilling the ancient and important prophecy. (Micah v. 2.) 2. By the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, He was proved to be of the *seed of David*. And this was a material thing, requiring such an authentic proof as this. *Justin Martyr* and *Tertullian*, two of the earliest advocates of the Christian



THE SHEPHERD'S FIELD, RETIREMENT.



religion, appeal to these *rolls* or *records* of the *Roman empire*, for the proof of Christ's being born of the house of David. 3. It also thus appeared that Christ was made *under the law*, for He became a subject of the Roman empire as soon as He was born, a *servant of rulers*. (Isa. xlix. 7.) Thus we see, as we look at the edict of the emperor, and these results from it, how *man proposes* and *God disposes*, and how Providence orders all things for the fulfilling of the Scriptures, and makes use of the projects men have for the serving their own purposes, quite beyond their intention, to serve His own.

6. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

We are not informed how long they had been in Bethlehem before Mary's delivery. Perhaps a short time only elapsed between their arrival and the event alluded to.

7. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling-clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.—Matt. i. 25.

In the East there is built, in or near to a town, generally with a stable attached, a *caravanserai* or *khan*, in which a person who comes to the town and has no friends to receive him into their houses, may seek accommodation, stay as long as he pleases, generally without payment, but is only provided with lodging for himself and beast, if he has any, and with water from a well on the premises. The people of Bethlehem, in order to prevent their hospitality from becoming oppressive by reason of the numerous visits of strangers, built a *khan* in or near the town. To this large structure Joseph and Mary repaired for accommodation. That they did so would seem to imply that they really were strangers in this the native seat of the family to which they belonged, or that, as they clearly came very late, they may have found the friends they had at Bethlehem already overburdened with guests.

And she brought forth her first-born son. These words assert the virginity of the mother of Jesus until the time of His birth. "He was born of the virgin Mary." The word *first-born* does not necessarily imply that Mary was subsequently the mother of other children than Jesus. (See on Matt. i. 25.) And wrapped him in swad-

ding clothes. This binding with bandages or cloth was studiously attended to by the ancients, lest the tender frame of the infant might acquire, through weakness or an accidental wrench, any distortion.

How great was the humiliation of the Son of God, in the manner of His introduction into our world! Let us remember *why* He came. It was not to *enjoy* Himself, but to *save* us. In order to save us, two things were necessary—that He should obey the law of God which we had broken, and that He should suffer the punishment due to us for breaking it. Hence, He was always placed in suffering circumstances from the beginning to the close of His earthly career. Poverty and contempt nursed Him in His infancy. The most splendid palace on earth would have been too humble an abode for Him whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, but instead of opening His infant eyes in a palace, He opened them in a stable. And as He walked through this world, at each step His way became rougher; as his *first* bed was a *manger*; his *last* was a *cross*. We cannot be, in heart and life, the followers of this self-denying Saviour, unless we are content with the portion of this world's good which He sees fit to bestow upon us, however small, unless we are willing to lay down, without repining, our worldly blessings, however dear, and to acknowledge heartily and sincerely, that we had rather be "rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom," than rank among the wealthiest, or take our place among the noblest of the world.

8. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

¹Gen. xxxi. 39, 40; Ex. iii. 1, 2; 1 Sam. xvii. 34, 35; Ps. xlviii. 70, 71; Ezek. xxxiv. 8. ²Or, the night watches.

In the same country, i. e., in the region near Bethlehem. The Gentile magi were brought from afar, but these shepherds are brought from nigh. *Abiding in the field*, both day and night, whether in tents or in the open air is uncertain, but the word *abiding* seems to indicate that near by the fold were temporary tents or booths, for the convenience of the shepherds. *Keeping watch over their flock by night*. The expression seems to indicate that they were stationed at various posts, and perhaps relieved one another. The

original word may be more literally rendered *watching the watches of the night, i. e.*, each one keeping watch (which ordinarily consisted of three hours) in his turn. The sheep were not confined under a covered fold by night, it being regarded more conducive to the excellence of the wool to let them remain under the open sky by night as well as by day. It was necessary to watch the sheep in the field, to guard them against the wolves, foxes, and other beasts of prey common there. As Abraham, David and Moses, to whom the promise of the Messiah was first made, were shepherds, so was the completion of this promise first revealed to shepherds.

Fabricius gives a catalogue of no less than one hundred and thirty-six different opinions concerning the day of Christ's birth. It has been placed in every month of the year. The Egyptians place it in *January*—*Wagenseil* and *Wiesler* in *February*—*Bochart* and *Paulus* in *March*—some mentioned by *Clement* of *Alexandria*, and *Greswell* and *Alford* in *April*—the *Alexandrian Church* in *May*—*Epiphanius* speaks of some who placed it in *June*—*Lichtenstein* places it in *July* or *December*—*Strong* and *Lardner* place it in *August*—*Lightfoot*, *Webster* and *Wilkinson* place it in *September*—*Scaliger*, *Casaubon* and *Calvisius* and *Archbishop Newcome* in *October*, others in *November*. *Dr. Robinson* places it in autumn; *Clinton* in spring; and *Andrews* between the middle of *December*, 749, to the middle of *January*, 750 A. U. The fixing of the nativity of Christ on the 25th of *December*, was really done at *Rome*, and was transmitted from thence over the *Eastern Church*. "The authority for the selection of that day was the government record of the *taxing*, or census of *Cyrenius*, said to be in the imperial archives at *Rome*. But the authenticity of these records is too untenable to allow any weight to the argument." "Pope *Julius I.*" says *Dr. Adam Clarke*, "was the person who made this alteration, and it appears to have been done for this reason: The sun now began his return toward the northern tropic, ending the winter, lengthening the short days, and introducing the Spring. All this was probably deemed emblematic-

cal of the rising of the Sun of Righteousness on the darkness of this world, and causing the day-spring from on high to visit mankind."

The widely conflicting views which have been stated as to the day of our Saviour's birth, are most manifestly attributable to the absence of all certain evidence as to the precise date of that event. Revelation is silent on this point. The tradition of the Church is widely diverse and discrepant. There are no data upon which any calculations may be based, and hence everything rests on mere conjecture. The question is one of little importance, even for those who observe the day, as the celebration of a public event is not necessarily confined to the day of the year on which it occurred. It is happy for us that the particular day on which Jesus was born, is not necessary to be ascertained in order to our salvation, nor at all material to true religion. It is sufficient for us to know that, in the fullness of time, just when He was most needed, and when the Jewish and Gentile world was fully prepared for this central fact and turning point in history, the Saviour was born, was made flesh, and dwelt among us, assumed our nature, and in consequence thereof is become an all-sufficient Saviour and Redeemer, in whom *whosoever believeth* with a right faith *shall not perish, but have eternal life*.

9. And, 10, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them. and they were sore afraid.—*Chap. i. 12.*

The angel of the Lord—no particular angel is specified. *Came upon them*, in a sudden and unexpected manner; the original words might be rendered, *stood over them*, that is, appeared in a visible form, standing in the air over their heads. *And the glory of the Lord shone round about them*. Not only a great light, but such a glorious splendor as used to represent the presence of God—the Shechinah surrounded them with its effulgence. *And they were sore afraid*—thrown into consternation at so uncommon and so awful an appearance. (See on i. 12.)

The fact that the shepherds, whilst in their calling, were chosen to receive the first intelligence of the salvation of a world, teaches us that God often meets

men in the paths of their worldly employment. He sanctified the astronomy of the *wise men*, writing the lesson He wished to teach them, on the glittering alphabet with which their studies had made them especially conversant. It was from the sheepfold David was taken to be anointed king, and from his father's barn that Gideon was called to deliver Israel. It was when Zacharias was burning incense in the temple, that the angel of the Lord promised him gladness and joy in a son. Matthew was sitting at "the receipt of custom," when called to follow Christ; and the fishermen, Peter, James and John, were casting a net into the sea, when our Lord called them to be "fishers of men." It is remarkable, that on all the more important occasions in our Lord's life, on which His lowliness and humiliation are signally manifested, there is always (or generally), in conjunction with this, some august exhibition of His Godhead. Though born in a stable, angels sang of His glory. When receiving baptism (a sinner's rite) at a sinner's hand, the heavens were opened, and a sublime voice from "the excellent glory" attested His Divinity. He wept with the sisters in Bethany; but with a word of omnipotence, summoned the sheeted dead from the tomb. Calvary, with its crown of thorns, the gash of the spear, the criminal's torture, the malefactor associates, shows us *a dying man*; but a blackened sun, riven rocks, the earth trembling to support its Creator's cross, were nature's glorious testimonies that He who hung in ignominy on that tree, was "*The mighty God*."

10. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

¹Gen. xii. 3; Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark i. 15; verses 31, 32; chap. xxiv. 47; Col. i. 23.

Fear not. As if he had said, "The design of my appearing to you hath nothing terrible in it, but the contrary; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy." The original expression here is peculiar: *I announce, or evangelize, unto you good tidings*, which shall be matter of great joy to all people, literally, to all the people. As these shepherds were representatives of the Jews, so Israel is the people to whom is the immediate joy, yet it redounds to all the world besides. In verse 14, *good will*

is proclaimed to all men. (See Matt. xxviii. 19.)

11. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

¹Isa. ix. 6. ²Matt. i. 21. ³Matt. i. 16 and xvi. 16; chap. i. 43; Acts ii. 36 and x. 36; Phil. ii. 11.

Unto you, not only the shepherds and the Jews, to whom the Gospel was first preached, but all mankind—to *you men*, not to *us* angels. He took not on Him our nature. There is a reference to Isa. ix. 6. *This day*, at this time. *In the city of David*, the true place for the birth of David's royal son. This reference to Bethlehem would recall Micah v. 2, which, according to Matt. ii. 5, 6, was, in those days, universally understood to refer to Messiah. *A Saviour*. The word thus rendered properly denotes such a Saviour as perfectly frees us from all evil and danger, and is the author of perpetual salvation.

Christ. The Greek word signifies, *Anointed*. (See on Matt. i. 1.) *Christ the Lord*—not the Christ of the Lord, as He is called, chap. ii. 26, but the Messiah, who, equally with the Jehovah of the Old Testament, bears the name *Lord*. (Comp. chap. xxiii. 2 and Acts ii. 36.) The Greek word rendered *Lord* corresponds to the Hebrew *Jehovah*; and the application of this word to Christ in this sense receives much strength from the fact that in verse 9 the same Greek word is used twice of Jehovah. It is certain that the Lordship of Christ must be considered in a mere *spiritual* sense, as He never set up any *secular* government upon earth, nor commanded any to be established in His name, and there is certainly no spiritual government but that of God.

12. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

They might have expected to find Him dressed in splendid robes, lying in state, in the best house in the town, with a numerous train of attendants. As if, therefore, at once and forever, to rectify the common notions of earthly glory which prevailed, and which they may have in some degree shared, connected with the appearance of this great personage, the angel forewarned them that they should find the babe in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger, and made this the particular signal by which they should

distinguish Him. The designation of the city of David, which they knew to be Bethlehem, as the place of the child's birth, gave them the general direction which they were to take. As Jesus came into our world as a *babe*, we learn that He is able to sympathize with us from the beginning of our life, and that His errand was one of tenderness and love. He came, not to condemn, but to save.

13. ¹And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, ²Gen. xxviii. 12, xxxii. 1, 2; Ps. ciii. 20, 21, cxlviii. 2; Dan. vii. 10; Heb. i. 14; Rev. v. 11.

A *multitude of the heavenly host*, or army, called *an host*, partly for their number and partly for their order. This is a usual appellation of the angels, who are represented as the body guard of the Lord. (Comp. 1 Kings xxii. 19; Dan. vii. 10; 2 Chron. xviii. 18; Ps. ciii. 21; Matt. xxvi. 35.) These angels were not silent witnesses; they sang a song, whose very words are handed down to us. It is the only song sung by angels upon *earth* that we ever heard. (See next verse.) What gratitude and joy these heavenly beings appeared to have felt on this occasion! The reasons of this were, their *love to God*, who, through this wonderful event, was to be glorified in a pre-eminent manner, and, their *benevolence to man*, who, by this same event, was to be redeemed, and become the subject of a glorious and endless salvation.

14. ¹Glory to God in the highest, and on earth ²peace, good will toward man.

³Chap. xix. 38; Eph. i. 6 and iii. 10, 21; Rev. v. 13. ⁴Isa. lvii. 19; chap. i. 79; Rom. v. 1; Eph. ii. 4, 7; Col. i. 20. ⁵John iii. 16; Eph. ii. 4, 7; 2 Thes. ii. 16; 1 John iv. 9, 10.

The heavenly host take up the announcement of the angel (verses 10, 11), repeating it in substance, and confirming and stating it more distinctly as a message of glad tidings. In their song there is a threefold correspondence: 1. Between *glory* and *peace*; 2. Between *in the highest* and *on earth*; and 3. Between *God* and *good will toward man*. The shouts of a multitude are generally broken into short sentences, and are commonly elliptic, which is the cause of some ambiguity in these words, which may be understood in different senses. Some read the phrase *Glory to God*, *Glory is to God*; others, *Let there be glory to God*. By some, *in the highest* is supposed to refer to the Jewish threefold heavens, so that the meaning is, "this

glory ascends to the *highest*." Some read the whole doxology thus: *Glory to God in the highest*—that is, in heaven—and *on earth peace, yea, favor, toward men*. Others understand it as signifying, *hat the good will, or favor, which was now shown to men, is the glory of God in the highest*, and is the peace and happiness of those who dwell on earth. According to others, the sense is, "Glory be to God among the angels in heaven for sending the Messiah—and peace or salvation on earth among men of His good pleasure, *i. e.*, among God's chosen people in whom He is well pleased."

From the words, considered in a doctrinal point of view, we learn, 1. That the birth of Christ is an event which, above all others, brings glory to God, giving such a display of several of His perfections as had never been made before, particularly of His *holiness* and *justice*, in requiring such a sacrifice as was hereby to be prepared for the expiation of human guilt, and His *mercy* in providing and accepting it, His *wisdom* in devising such a plan for the redemption of lost man, and His *power* in executing it. 2. It brings *peace on earth*, that is, peace to man, peace with God, through the atonement and mediation of Christ, peace of conscience, as the consequence of knowing that we have peace with God, and peace with one another. 3. It displays the *good will*, the benevolence, the love of God to man, as no other of His works or dispensations ever did, or could do. (See 1 John iv. 7, &c.; John iii. 16.) If the angels, who are not otherwise interested in the incarnation of Christ than as it affords the brightest display of the Divine attributes, adore and glorify God on account of it, how much more should man do this, for whose salvation this astonishing interposition of love was designed?

15. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, ²the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.—³2Gr., *the men, the shepherds*.

The good shepherds waited but to hear the close of the angels' song, and when all again was dark and silent, they hurried away, leaving their flocks behind, to witness at Bethlehem that which the Lord had made known unto them. Those who delay to seek Jesus, when the messengers of God bring them glad tidings of

salvation, risk their present safety and their eternal happiness. *And see this thing which is come to pass.* Observe: not, let us go and see whether this thing *be* come to pass, which the Lord hath made known, but, let us go and see this thing which *is* come pass. They never for an instant questioned the certainty and the reality of all that had been revealed to them. What an instance of that true faith which is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen!" This is the faith which we ought to exercise. Instead of questioning, doubting and reasoning, we ought, in all child-like simplicity, to believe and act.

16. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

How must Mary and Joseph have been delighted, and how must their faith have been strengthened, by the visit of the shepherds! Though overlooked by the world, the holy child was honored by these poor men. Even now there are only comparatively a few who acknowledge Him as their Lord and Master, and these few are generally poor, like the shepherds of Bethlehem. Here, as usual in the history of the Nativity, the name of Mary comes before that of her husband.

17. And when they had seen *it* they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

The saying, that is, the appearance of the angels and the prediction by which they had been induced to visit the place where the infant Jesus was. *Made known abroad*: this publication was probably confined to a comparatively small circle, consisting of persons who at day-break may have been in the neighborhood. The shepherds were the first evangelists among men. Such as have found Christ to their comfort, and tasted that the Lord is gracious to themselves, cannot but recommend Him to the love and admiration of others.

18. And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

Wondered, that is, *conversed with amazement* concerning the statements of the angelic ministrations related by the shepherds. We are not told how many, if any of them, visited Mary, and obtained personal information respecting the child, but it is clear that their wonder and

curiosity were strongly excited by what had been told them respecting Him. None who heard were unmoved, yet the contrast between those first hearers and Mary, verse 19, forces upon us the conclusion, that their wonder was less deep and salutary than her silent pondering. It is one thing to *wonder*, and another to *believe*. Neither the hearing of Christ with the outward ear, nor the seeing Him by the outward eye, will suffice for salvation.

19. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.—*Gen.* xxxvii. 11; chap. i. 66; ver. 51.

All these things, the whole train of events, the miraculous birth of John, the annunciation of the angel to herself, the appearance of the angels to the shepherds, and the visit of the shepherds to her. *Pondered* means *weighed*. She *kept*, literally, *noted* or *watched closely*, *all these things*, and *weighed* them, kept them in active remembrance, compared them, reflected upon them. This is the way in which sermons should be heard, and the Bible should be read. We should not listen to sermons, that they may amuse, or merely entertain us. (*Ezek.* xxxiii. 31, 32.) Neither should we listen to God's Word as a person looks in a glass, and then goes away and forgets what he has seen. (*James* i. 24.) Such hearers soon lose the good impressions they have received, and continue worldly-minded and ungodly. (See *Ps.* i. 2.)

20. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

This conduct on their part indicates that the supposition is true, that they piously waited for the hope of Israel, the Messiah, and furnishes a beautiful example of their pious fidelity in their vocation. Their extraordinary experience did not withdraw them from their daily and ordinary duties, but enabled them to perform them with increased gladness of heart. They probably fell asleep, before the beginning of our Lord's public ministry, with the recollection of this night in their hearts, and a frame of mind like that of the aged Simeon. Their names, unknown on earth, are written in heaven, and their experience is the best example of the first beatitude, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

21. And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

*Gen. xvii. 12; Lev. xii. 6; chap. i. 59. *Matt. i. 21, 25; chap. i. 31.

And when eight days, &c., that is, not when the eighth day was ended, but when it was come. The law had appointed that every male should be circumcised at eight days old, or on the eighth day after its birth. (Gen. xvii. 12; see notes on chap. i. 59.) *For the circumcising of the child.* It is obvious, that for one at least of the purposes for which all the other children of Abraham received this rite, as the symbol of the renewing of a corrupt nature, and the putting away the lusts of the flesh, it was to our Lord wholly unnecessary. His spotless purity needed no symbol of the putting off of the sinful Adam. Why, then, did the Saviour subject Himself to this rite?

The rite of circumcision was the initiatory rite of the Jewish religion. When, therefore, the infant Saviour submitted to this important rite, it was in effect, saying that He acknowledged Himself as of the seed of Abraham (Heb. ii. 16); that He would be made in the *likeness*, not only of *flesh*, but of *sinful* flesh (Rom. viii. 3); that "in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto his brethren," sin only excepted (Heb. ii. 17); that He came not to destroy the law, or the prophets, but to fulfill them (Matt. v. 17). And this, it is evident, would be perfectly intelligible to the Jews, however it may need explanation to us, for it was most clearly understood that, as the Apostle expresses it, every man who was circumcised was "a debtor to do the whole law." (Gal. v. 3; see Ex. xxi. 6.) He who was made of a woman, came also at the appointed time under the law of circumcision. (Gal. iv. 4; Rom. v. 15.)

His name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. (See chap. i. 31.) According to Gen. xxi. 3, 4, the performance of circumcision, and the bestowing of a name, had been simultaneous from the very origin of the rite. The name *Jesus* is the Greek form of the Hebrew *Joshua*, which may be variously analyzed, but always with the same essential meaning, that of *Saviour* or

salvation, and with reference to *Jehovah* as its author. (See Num. xiii. 8, 16; 1 Chron. vii. 47; Neh. viii. 17; Matt. i. 21.) Some contend that the word *Jah*, or *Jehorah*, enters into the composition of the name. *Jesus* is the proper name of our Lord; that of *Christ* (signifying *Anointed*) identifies Him with the promised *Messiah* (John i. 41), the name given to the long-promised Prophet and King whom the Jews had been taught by the prophets to expect. (See ii. 11.)

22. And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; 23. (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) 24. And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons.

*Lev. xii. 3-6. *Ex. xiii. 2, and xxii. 29, and xxiv. 19; Num. iii. 13. *Lev. xii. 2, 6, 8.

Days of her purification, that is, thirty-three days after what was termed the seven days of her uncleanness—forty days in all, for that was the time appointed by the law, during which the mother was held ceremonially impure, and remained in her own house. (Lev. xii. 1-8.) As Jesus, whom it behooved to fulfill all righteousness, was circumcised, though perfectly free from sin, so His mother submitted to the purification prescribed by the law, notwithstanding she was free from the pollutions common in other births. It was evident, indeed, that she was a mother, but her miraculous conception was not generally known. They brought him to Jerusalem. Up to this time they had remained at Bethlehem, and thither also they returned after the presentation in the temple. To present him to the Lord. (As it is written in the law of the Lord, every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.) And to offer a sacrifice, &c. In remembrance of the deliverance from Egypt, when the destroying angel spared the first-born of the Israelites, it was ordered that the eldest son of every family should be consecrated to the Lord (Num. iii. 13), and they were to be redeemed from the service of the sanctuary, by the payment of five shekels (Num. xviii. 16). The tribe of Levi afterward took the place of the first-born thus dedicated and redeemed, and was set apart for God's special service. (Num. iii. 12.) A pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, was

the offering required from the poor. (Lev. xii. 6, 8.) Those in better circumstances were commanded to bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a turtle-dove, or a young pigeon, for a sin-offering. God looks for something from every one, not from every one alike. Where there is a willing mind, it shall be accepted according to what a person hath. (2 Cor. viii. 12.)

25. And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon: and the same man *was* just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.
Isa. xl. 1; Mark xv. 43; verse 38.

Of *Simeon*, we know certainly no more than what is here recorded. It was not the design of Luke to refer to Simeon's worldly standing, but only his eminent religious attainments. *He was just and devout*, just in dealings toward men, devout in dealings toward God. The same distinction holds here, as in the words *holiness* and *righteousness*. (Chap. i. 75.)

Waiting for the consolation of Israel—a common phrase among ancient and modern Jews, to denote Messiah. The prophets often introduce the promise of Messiah's coming to comfort the people of God in their afflictions. The time of Messiah's appearance had been revealed to Daniel, as consisting of what, in prophetic language, is denominated *seventy weeks*, that is, every week being seven years, four hundred and ninety years; reckoning from the order issued to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem. However much the Jews misunderstood many other prophecies relating to the reign of this extraordinary personage, what concerned both the time and the place of His first appearance seems to have been pretty well understood by the bulk of the nation. From this chapter, as well as from the other accounts of that period still extant, it is evident that the expectation of this great deliverer was then general among them. It is a point of some consequence to the cause of Christianity, that both the time and the place of our Lord's birth coincided with the interpretations then commonly given of the prophecies by the Jews themselves, His contemporaries. (See Matt. ii. 3-6.)

26. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not *see death*, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.—Ps. lxxxix. 48; Heb. xi. 5.

God, in reward of his piety, favored him so highly as to assure him by a particular revelation, the method of which is not stated, that he should not die till he had seen the Messiah. *See death*, or, as it is elsewhere expressed, *taste death*. (Matt. xvi. 28; Heb. ii. 9.) *The Lord's Christ*, that is, "The Lord's Anointed." (See Ps. ii. 2.) There is a beautiful and striking antithesis between the words *see death* and *see the Lord's Christ*.

27. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,—Matt. iv. 1.

Probably he had in view the prophecy of Malachi iii. 1. This prophecy was just going to be fulfilled, and the Holy Spirit, by a secret but powerful impulse, directed this righteous man to go and see its accomplishment. *Brought in the child Jesus*, that is, into the court of the women, just at this very juncture: *to do for him*, &c., that is, to present Him to the Lord, according to the reference in verse 24, and according to the Divine commandment. (Num. xviii. 15, 16.) Those who come, under the influence of God's Spirit, to places of public worship, will undoubtedly meet with Him who is the *comfort* and *salvation* of Israel.

28. Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God and said,

The aged saint first beheld his Saviour, then transported with the fulfillment of all his hopes, took Him up in his arms and blessed Him, for his faith was so strong that he was able to believe that the infant of the poor woman he saw was the Lord of All. He embraced Him with the greatest affection imaginable. When we receive the record which the Gospel gives us of Christ with a lively faith, and the offer it makes us of Christ, with love and resignation, then *we take Christ in our arms*.

29. Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word.
*Gen. xlv. 30; Phil. i. 23.

This is the beginning of the sweet canticle, or swan-like song of Simeon, a little before his dissolution, which has been celebrated for its beauty in all ages of the Church. This sacred song, which was probably spoken aloud, in the hearing of all the people then present, embodies the full doctrine of the personal glory of Christ, the spiritual purpose of His mission, and its universal extent.

It had been Simeon's earnest desire to see his Lord with his bodily eyes before he died, and now, this desire having been accomplished, he avows his joy in being thus made ready, if not his desire also, to depart in peace. The phrase, *Lettest thou thy servant depart*, signifies a *release* or *loosing* from life—from a sorrowful and dark prison, such as this wretched life certainly is. In the use of the word *depart*, as found in the Scriptures, and the philosophers, there is a manifest profession of hope in a future state, since the body is supposed to enchain the soul, and detain it from its native home. *In peace*, refers to that happy and tranquil state of mind, which results from the full assurance of God's favor. An entrance into perfect peace and felicity, is implied, else death would not be a desired and welcome release. *According to thy word*, a retrospect of the previous revelation. (Verse 26.) Note here, 1. That a good man having served his generation, and God in his generation, faithfully, is weary of the world, and willing to be dismissed from it. 2. That the death of a good man is nothing else but a quiet and peaceable departure; it is a departure *in peace* to the God of peace. 3. That it is only a spiritual sight of Christ by faith that can welcome the approach of death, and render it an object desirable to the Christian's choice.

30. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
Isa. lii. 10; chap. iii. 6.

This was the ground of Simeon's assurance, that he was now to depart from life. As *salvation* had its origin in the wisdom, power and love of God, Simeon ascribed it to Him, putting the effect for the cause, and calling it *God's salvation*. The Lord Jesus Himself is here called "the salvation of God," because the whole salvation of a sinner centers in His person, as "God manifest in the flesh," all the purposes and promises of salvation had reference to Him. (Isa. ix. 2, xlii. 5-7, xlix. 5-6, lx. 1-3; John i. 4-9, iii. 19-21, viii. 12, xii. 34-36.) True believers may make the language of Job's assurance and triumph their own. (Job xix. 25-7.)

31. Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

Here it appears that Simeon knew that this salvation, which God had *made ready in the presence of all people*, was not confined

to the Jews, but was designed for all mankind, and he rejoiced in knowing that. This shows the love to *other* men that dwelt in his heart. He longed that *all* should know his Saviour.

32. A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.
Isa. ix. 2, xlii. 6, xlix. 6, lx. 1, 2, 3; Matt. iv. 16; Acts xiii. 47, xxviii. 28.

By Moses and the prophets, a light of revelation was given to the Jews, in the blessedness of which the *Gentiles* did not partake. By Christ, as a moral light, or teacher, the Gentiles were to receive the knowledge of God, of true religion, and of Divine things in general, especially of a future state, and the true and only method of salvation through His own atoning blood. *And the glory of thy people Israel*. It was an honor to the Jewish nation that the Messiah sprang from one of their tribes, and was born, lived, and died among them. And of those who were *Israelites indeed*, of the spiritual Israel, He was indeed the glory, and will be so throughout eternity. (Isa. lx. 19.) For in Him *shall the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory*. (Isa. xlv. 25.)

33. And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

They did not yet *thoroughly* understand the things which were spoken, or they marveld how Simeon, a stranger, came to the knowledge of the child. Although they had been prepared, by the previous wonderful manifestations, for the remarkable destiny of the child, they did not as yet *fully* know the counsels of God relative to the salvation He was to procure, and hence they were struck and charmed by the new aspect under which this salvation was presented. Simeon sees fit to moderate their transports, by alluding to the approaching sufferings which must precede the glory.

34. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold this *child* is set for the *fall* and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;

Isa. viii. 14; Hos. xiv. 9; Matt. xxi. 44; Rom. ix. 32, 33; 1 Cor. i. 23, 24; 2 Cor. ii. 16; 1 Peter ii. 7, 8. Acts xxviii. 22.

And Simeon blessed them, namely, Joseph and Mary. He pronounced them blessed who had the honor to be related to this child, and were intrusted with the bringing Him up. *Said unto Mary*, he blessed both, but addressed Mary, thus recogniz-

ing that she and not the husband is the parent.

This child is set, &c. Is set, that is, destined, appointed for. This Divine setting or appointing is always to be considered as *caused* by their own fault, in those who fall, by wilfully continuing in unbelief and impenitence. *Of many in Israel*. We are not to limit this rise and fall to persons of the Jewish nation, but to those of every nation where the Gospel should be preached in subsequent times. There seems to be a reference in this verse to Isa. viii. 14, 15. Paul says, in 1 Cor. i. 23, that Christ was to the Jews *a stumbling-block*, or something over which *they fell*. How was it they fell over Him? Through pride. (Rom. x. 3, 4.) And it is for the same reason that any still refuse Christ—they feel satisfied with their own righteousness, and imagine that God is also. People in this state of mind fall over Christ as over a stumbling-stone: they cannot receive Him, because they do not desire His salvation.

Rising again. Many in Israel, who fell over Christ, afterward believed, and rose from sin and death by Him, as myriads of penitent sinners have done since. Many of the priests who joined in crucifying the Saviour, were *afterward* obedient to the faith. (Acts vi. 7.) But as the word *again* is not expressed in the Greek, we need not suppose that the *same persons* would fall and rise again. The meaning is, that many would be ruined by Christ's coming, and many *others* would be made happy, or be saved. God's first design in sending His Son into the world was, *that through Him the world might be saved*. (John iii. 16.) But to those who have no relish for spiritual things, no appreciation of Christ's character and mission, by reason of their pride and perversity, He becomes a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient. (1 Peter ii. 8; see 2 Cor. ii. 16.)

And for a sign which shall be spoken against. The word *sign* seems here to be used for a *mark* or *butt* to shoot or dart at, which finely illustrates the deliberate malice and hellish artifice with which the character and person of Christ were assaulted, while He endured the contradiction of

sinners against Himself. (Heb. xii. 3.) The fulfilment of this prophecy culminated in the crucifixion. True religion is still spoken against. People must often give up the favor of the world, if they would be faithful to Christ.

35. (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.—[Ps. xlii. 10; John xix. 25.]

Mary may be supposed to have thus far congratulated herself on being the mother of the Messiah, and to have had no idea that the honor was to be mingled with much suffering. She is now disabused of this erroneous impression. *A sword*, or javelin, or dart, *shall pierce through thy own soul also*; "the darts that are shot at thy Son shall pierce thee to the heart; the calumnies, persecutions, and sufferings which He shall be exposed to, especially in His death, shall prove matter of the greatest affliction to thee, and shall sting thee with the bitterest griefs." It is clear that Simeon's intimation of the great grief in store for the mother, who stood before him, was founded on Isa. liii. *That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed*. These words are to be taken with verse 34. The word translated *thoughts* is a word of *middle* signification, and denotes *imaginings*, or the prevalent and dominant cause of thought, whether good or bad. "Thus will it be evinced what is the real disposition of every one to the Messiah. Christ shall *bring out* the secret characters, the moral feelings, and thoughts of men—all things in reference to Him were ordered by Providence to produce this effect. Lasting neutrality with respect to the Lord is impossible; he that is not for Him is against Him. (Luke xi. 23.) His appearing brings to light the latent good and evil, as the same sun which dissipates the clouds that obscure the sky, also draws up the mists and vapor of earth. (See Matt. xi. 6.)

36. And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanneel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; 37. And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.—[Acts xxvi. 7; 1 Tim. v. 5.]

The other pious soul, to whom the destiny of the infant Jesus was revealed, was the aged Anna, who heard Simeon's words, shared in his anticipations, and

joined in the song of thanksgiving. Her name is the same with the Old Testament Hannah. It will be observed, that although in this interesting transaction, Simeon is the foremost figure, and his words alone are recorded, yet more is stated personally of Anna than of him. *A prophetess.* Such an appellation must have been caused by some earlier and frequent utterances, dictated by the Spirit of prophecy, by reason of which she ranks among the list of holy women, who, both in earlier and later times, were chosen instruments of the Holy Ghost. *The daughter of Phanuel.* The particularity with which her parentage and lineage is given shows that she was a person whose family as well as personal history was well known to the public.

Of the tribe of Aser, or Asher. Her native province stretched its whole eastern side along the margin of the Mediterranean, and included those among the most ancient cities of the earth, Tyre and Sidon. *She was of a great age.* We do not know her exact age, but if she had been a widow eighty-four years, and if she had been married for seven years, on the supposition that she was twenty years of age when she married, her age at this time must have been one hundred and eleven years. *And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years.* Some maintain that eighty-four years was the sum of her whole life; others that it was that portion of it which had elapsed since the death of her husband. The probability, we think, is in favor of the latter supposition. The years in which she had remained a widow are doubtless mentioned as a matter of commendation, for although widows were quite at liberty to marry again, it was considered praiseworthy in them to abstain from second marriages, and a woman who became a widow when still young, and remained the rest of her days in widowhood, was regarded with great respect and admiration among the Jews. The Romans had a similar feeling in this matter.

Which departed not from the temple. This means, that she was constant in her attendance on every act of worship and sacred service, making her extreme age no

excuse for neglect, but rather rejoicing in it as a privilege—of which thousands younger and stronger than she would not avail themselves. *But served God with fastings and prayers night and day.* She accompanied her devotion with frequent fastings, probably not oftener than *twice* in the week, for this was the custom of the most rigid Pharisees. (Chap. xviii. 12.) When she fasted and prayed she *served God*; she did not do these things in a self-righteous spirit, as some of the Jews did, whom God reproves in Isa. lviii., because they fasted and prayed, and yet were living in their sins. *Night and day.* A considerable part of the night as well as of the day. No doubt Anna was also occupied in many good works, yet she lived in a constant habit of prayer. (See 1 Tim. v. 6, 10.)

38. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

^bMark xv. 43; verse 25; chap. xxiv. 21. *Or, Israel.

That instant, or, at that very time, when Simeon held the blessed Redeemer in his arms, and gave utterance to the foregoing words, the Providence of God so ordering it, that another important testimony might be borne to the child Jesus. *Gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him, &c.* Anna praised God, as Simeon had done (verse 28), for sending the long-expected Messiah. *And spake of him, &c.* She spake afterward of the child, of the nature and design of His mission, to the pious persons dwelling in the capital, who lived in and upon the hope of salvation through the Messiah, and among whom the report of His birth was soon spread.

How great an honor did the Almighty confer upon Simeon and Anna, that, of all the dwellers in Jerusalem, of all the worshippers in the temple, they and they alone should be selected for the first interview with the Lord of the temple! The Holy Spirit often passes by learned and scientific men, and delights in bringing to the temple the man whose heart, like Simeon's, overflows with love to God, and whose mind and thoughts are filled with desire after His name. The woman, who, like Anna, departs not from the service of God night or day—persons like these, who in the sight of men have little, per-

haps nothing to recommend them, but who possess that which, in the sight of God, is above all price; who, in the quiet, unobtrusive duties of a lowly Christian walk and conversation, are daily waiting upon God, and, amidst the toils and business of life, are looking anxiously forward to the day when the Lord Jesus shall appear unto their complete salvation, seeking more of that light which cometh down from above, and of that peace which passeth all understanding.

39. And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

The all things according to the law of the Lord, refer to the circumcision of Jesus, and the purification and presentation in the temple. They returned into Galilee. Luke passes over the coming of the wise men, and the flight of the holy family into Egypt, for it would appear that this return to Nazareth did not occur till some time afterward. Probably they returned to Bethlehem, supposing that Jesus was there to be educated. After some time the wise men arrived, and then, by Divine monition, they fled into Egypt, and on their return went to reside at Nazareth. *To their own city Nazareth,* the place of their usual residence, and where the blessed infant passed the days of his childhood and youth.

40. ¹And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him.—Verse 53; chap. i. 80.

The child grew in bodily strength and stature. *And waxed strong in spirit*—the powers of His human mind daily expanded and improved. *Filled with wisdom,* not by any advantages of instruction and education, but by the operation of the Holy Spirit, everything He said and did was wisely said and wisely done, above His years; in every stage of His human development He was perfect. *And the grace of God was upon him.* The original word not only means *grace* in the common acceptance of the word (some blessing granted by God's mercy to those who are sinners, or have no merit), but it means also *favor* or *approbation*, and this sense appears to be most proper for it here, when applied to the human nature of our blessed Lord. The same word is thus

rendered verse 52. The peculiar favor of God rested upon Christ, even as man. It is evident from this verse that Jesus had a human soul capable of increasing in wisdom and knowledge. As to the manner in which the indwelling Deity gradually communicated knowledge, wisdom and holiness to the human nature of Christ, we must confess that we know nothing. That as man His wisdom and knowledge could not be infinite, or incapable of increase, we know; but how the union was formed, or the communications were imparted, we cannot, in the smallest degree, comprehend or explain. (1 Tim. iii. 16.)

41. ¹Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.

²Ex. xxiii. 15, 17, xxxiv. 23; Deut. xvi. 1, 16.

His parents went—every year. This was their constant custom, because positively enjoined by the law. (Ex. xxiii. 17.) Males only were required to make their appearance at Jerusalem *thrice* in the year, in attendance at the three great festivals (Ex. xxxiv. 23), yet females were not forbidden to be present, and it is quite probable that pious females often, on such occasions, accompanied their husbands. (See 1 Sam. i. 7, 22, 24.) Such as will go no farther than they are dragged in religious exercises, are strangers to Mary's piety and devotion. These parents every year attended the great national feast of the passover, when the slain lamb foretold the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, and the symbols of emancipation from Egypt shadowed forth the far higher redemption. (Lev. xxiii. 5.) No difficulties, no discouragements could hinder their attendance. Though it is no certain evidence of the truth of grace to frequent assemblies for worship, yet it is an infallible sign of the want of grace customarily to neglect them. All worldly business must give place to Divine appointments.

42. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

Every Jewish child of twelve years old was permitted, as "a son of the law," to take part in the celebration of the sacred festival. There existed, also, no longer any reason that Jesus should absent Himself from Judea, as Archelaus, whom Joseph had reason to fear, was already

banished by Augustus, after a reign of ten years.

43. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.

Religious duties are not to be attended to to the prejudice and neglect of our particular callings. God calls us, as well from His house as to His house. When Joseph and Mary *had fulfilled the days*—the seven days of the feast of unleavened bread, which immediately followed the passover, and was usually counted as part of it—making eight days in all—they returned toward their home in Nazareth: *the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem, and Joseph and his mother knew not of it*. In their annual visits to Jerusalem the parents of Jesus must have formed acquaintances and made friends in different parts of the city. The parents of Jesus may then have started for home at a time unknown to Him, supposing that He was with some of their traveling friends or relatives, or they may have joined their elder fellow-travelers in the persuasion that Jesus knowing the time and place of departure, was among the younger ones. Or, again, it may be that Joseph and Mary had committed Him temporarily to the charge of some friends of the family, whose station was in some other part of the caravan, and, on the other hand, these friends with whom He was supposed to be, might justly infer that He was with His parents by some after arrangement. Certainly if Jesus had been in the immediate company of His parents, His absence would have been noticed during the day.

44. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.

As the pilgrims to the passover required to be all at Jerusalem by the same time, those who dwelt in the same neighborhood necessarily left their homes together, and, by previous arrangement as to the time of starting, made up a large traveling company. The Nazarenes doubtless timed their departure from home so as to fall in with parties arriving so far on their way from places more to the north on the same line of road, and in the southward journey were joined by parties from places lying nearer to Jerusalem on the same route. Quitting that city as soon as the festival

was ended, the persons going the same journey would in like manner leave together, but would throw off parties right and left as they proceeded on their way. Thus the stream of travelers increased as it approached, and diminished as it receded from Jerusalem—being in both cases largest when nearest the city. Thus the northward company must have been very large indeed during the first day's journey from Jerusalem, and the conclusion of the parents of Jesus, that their Son, although not at hand, might be with some acquaintance in the company, was perfectly natural.

Went a day's journey. "The usual rate of traveling in the East," says *Prof. Hackett*, "is three miles an hour, and as the number of hours devoted to traveling rarely exceeds six or eight hours, the distance of an ordinary day's journey may be considered as twenty or twenty-five miles. The first day, however, on starting on an expedition, forms an exception to this rule. On that day it is not customary to go more than six or eight miles, and the tents are pitched for the first night's encampment almost within sight of the place from which the journey commences. If the first day's journey of the caravan in which Joseph and Mary were occupied two or three hours only, they had reason to suppose that Jesus was with some of the relatives or friends who were traveling with them. They could act naturally enough under the impression for so short a time, and would have no occasion for anxiety until His continued absence, when they came to halt, aroused their fears." Perhaps, too, they might have become uneasy on His account earlier in the day, but the multitude of the caravans at a time when, as *Josephus* tells us, Galilee contained more than four million inhabitants, would render an instantaneous search impracticable. It must not, besides, be forgotten, that in the East even an ordinary child of twelve would be equal to one of fourteen or fifteen among us, and that they could not, therefore, be extremely uneasy, especially about such a child as He was. *And they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.* Here they would most naturally expect to find Him, for the

members of families, connected by relationship or friendship, doubtless often mingled together on the march, to beguile its tedious monotony by social converse.

45. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

When they found Him not, at the end of the day's journey, they went about seeking Him among the Nazarenes of their acquaintance, but could hear no tidings of Him. The company was to proceed in the morning, and it became necessary to decide either to go on with it or to return to Jerusalem. They probably waited to see the caravan pass out in the morning in order to make sure that He was not in it, and then feeling confident that He must have remained behind at Jerusalem, they hastened back with anxious hearts to seek their lost Son. Those that would find Christ must *seek till they find*; for He will at length be found of those that seek Him, and will prove their Bountiful Rewarder.

46. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

Three days, one day spent in their departure, another in their return, and the third in their search, which resulted in the finding. *In the temple, sitting, &c.* The doctors, struck with the power of His questions, and the depth of knowledge they displayed, probably asked Him to take a seat. The Sanhedrim, which, when full, comprised no less than seventy persons, sat in a semi-circle upon a bench, and the students, arranged according to their proficiency, sat on three benches or forms, one behind another; in front of this arc, and behind these benches, stood the common or occasional auditors. If Jesus was in this part of the temple, Joseph and Mary could the more easily have approached Him to converse with Him in an undertone, which they did. There is no reason to suppose that Christ *disputed* with the doctors, as many imagine, from being unacquainted with the extent to which the system of interrogation, between the teachers and the taught, operated among the Jews in the time of Christ. *Asking them questions*, not as a scholar, to be informed, but as a teacher, taking occasion thus to give instruction.

47. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

¹Matt. vii. 28; Mark i. 22; chap. iv. 22, 32; John vii. 15, 46.

Christ's *understanding* appeared as much in His *answers* as in His *questions*. It may be that He had just heard some passages from the Prophets read, had asked for explanations, put some questions, and then, from the fullness of His own knowledge, had given answers. It can scarcely be doubted that all that was said had special reference to the Messiah, and to the real nature of His Kingdom and His work. At all events, such was His display of wisdom and knowledge, that *all that heard Him*, even the most learned doctors, *were astonished at his understanding and answers*. There seems to have been nothing beyond mere *astonishment*.

48. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

Joseph and Mary were greatly astonished at what they beheld—to find that Jesus had so much respect shown Him, and was exciting so much astonishment. This scene doubtless brought up in remembrance the incidents of His birth and infancy. No longer, however, could Mary restrain the feeling of pain and anguish which His temporary loss had inflicted upon a mother's heart. When, therefore, Jesus, as we may suppose, perceiving His parents, arose dutifully out of His place, and came to them, Mary privately talked with Him about their case—Joseph, knowing he had only the name of father, said nothing. *Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?* Why hast thou caused us so much fear and anxiety? Accustomed, no doubt, to the most affectionate behavior from Him, she was surprised at any conduct that *appeared unkind*. *Thy father and I*. This was not merely the only possible manner in which Mary could publicly speak to her son of Joseph, but is also an indisputable proof of the wisdom with which she brought up the child, a wisdom which taught her to say nothing yet to Him of the mystery of His birth. *Have sought thee sorrowing*, not only distressed that we lost thee, but reproaching ourselves bitterly that we did not take more care of thee to bring thee along with us.

49. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?—John ii. 16.

Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? Or, in the things or affairs of my Father, in that which belongs to His honor and glory. Here already is the germ of that sacred *must* which Christ so often uttered in the subsequent way of His obedience. How full of the dignity, which belonged to Christ as the Son of God, was this reply! In His obedience to His mother, on other occasions, He set an example to *all* children, but in His conduct on this occasion He acted as became the King of kings and Lord of lords. The business which the Father had given the Saviour to do, was, as we learn from other parts of the Scriptures, the salvation of sinful man. God has appointed *us* a work to perform.

50. And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.—Chap. ix. 45, xviii. 34.

They understood Him not well, or only caught glimpses of His meaning. They knew not fully even yet the wonderful relation in which the boy of twelve years old stood to the awful Being who inhabiteth eternity—that His Father, to whose business He was now called, was the Father of the universe, the Father of time, yea, the Father of eternity, and of heaven itself, and that He, that wonderful and blessed child, could truly say, “Before Abraham was, I am.” (John viii. 58.)

51. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.—Dan. vii. 28; verse 19.

This glimpse of Christ's glory in the temple was to be short; it was now over, and He did not urge His parents either to come and settle at Jerusalem, or to settle Him there, but very willingly returned with them to Nazareth. (See on verse 39.) *And was subject unto them.* This is put in strong antithesis with the Divine parentage which He claimed in verse 49, and it is inserted to prevent any inference, that Jesus did not afterward render filial obedience and service to His earthly parents. He behaved toward them with all dutiful submission; He obeyed their commands, and, as is believed, followed Joseph's employment, working at the trade of a carpenter. (Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3.) No child among the Jews

was ever brought up in idleness. *But his mother kept all these sayings in her heart*—rather events, including both actions and words; she treasured them up in her memory, and pondered upon their mysterious import for eighteen years.

Doubtless the faithful memory of *her* who kept and pondered all things in her heart, could have supplied to Luke, not only that one precious anecdote of the boyhood, but also numberless other anecdotes of the youth and early manhood, of the deepest interest. How we long for them! What would we not give to know more of that home at Nazareth, where thirty long years of that sinless life were spent? But no! it is buried in silence. And why? The silence of Holy Scripture is often as instructive as its revelations. Let us humbly, therefore, learn the lesson of this mysterious silence.

There were inmates of that Galilean home to whom was vouchsafed—what is denied to us—the privilege of watching the growth of Jesus all through those silent years. And to them it once occurred, as now to us, to wonder that Jesus did not seek to make Himself more widely known. “Show Thyself to the world,” they said. And what was Christ's reply?

“My time is not yet come; your time is always ready.”

And what is the Evangelist's own comment? “For neither did His brethren believe on Him.”

Here, then, we have a lesson and a warning.

The lesson: That God's ways are not as man's ways—that whatever is most divine is most secret in its growth; as with the seed that groweth secretly, we know not how; as with the hidden life of grace within each one of us, so with the Messiah in His silent home at Nazareth. “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing.” Such is the lesson.

And the warning: That the kind of knowledge we most crave after is not always the kind of knowledge that is best for us. To those “brethren of the Lord,” was their knowledge of Christ's daily life all through those years a blessing to them? No; “for neither did His brethren believe on Him.” Let Bible students, in their

curious antiquarian researches, ever remember this. To know all about Christ is one thing; to *know Christ* is quite another thing. Nay, the first kind of knowledge may, as in the case of those brethren, actually hinder the second. Let us beware, lest, by dwelling too minutely and exclusively on the earthly surroundings of our Lord, we dim to ourselves the glory of His divine Person. It was not flesh and blood which revealed to Peter, that in Jesus of Nazareth he beheld the Son of the living God.

52. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in **stature*, and in favor with God and man.
 *1 Sam. ii. 26; verse 40. *Or *Age*.

Increased in wisdom and stature. (See on verse 40.) It is not improbable that the extraordinary improvement made by Jesus in His childhood, was promoted by that Divine nature with which His human nature was united, though promoted in a manner which did not interfere with the plan, according to which His physical and intellectual abilities were, like those of other men, gradually to increase. Christ grew and improved, His body in stature, His soul in wisdom, and He became every

day a more eminent and illustrious person in the eyes of all, being highly in favor both with *God and man*. His entire being was in the favor of God, yet as that being increased in amount, the amount of *favor* increased proportionately. There is no ground for the inference which Socinians draw from this verse, that Christ could not be God, because God cannot increase in wisdom, as Christ is here said to do, inasmuch as God's perfections, being infinite, will admit of no increase, for it is plain that the increase here attributed to Christ respects His humanity. The wisdom and endowments of His human mind were capable of increase, though His Divine perfections were absolutely perfect. Nothing but what is recorded in this verse is bequeathed to us of the life of Jesus, from His twelfth to His twentieth year! God's ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts. Doubtless He has permitted all the incidents of Christ's history to be handed down to us which the necessities of the Church required, and we must await another day and another place for more.

1. What occurred in "those days?" 2. Where did Joseph go to be taxed? 3. What great event occurred during their visit to Bethlehem? 4. What is said about the shepherds? 5. Explain verse 14. 6. Where did the shepherds find Mary and Joseph and the babe? 7. What took place when eight days were accomplished? 8. What is said of Simeon? 9. What did Simeon say unto Mary? 10. What is said of Anna? 11. Explain verse 40. 12. What particulars are given of Joseph and Mary's visit to Jerusalem? 13. Where did Jesus go with His parents from Jerusalem? 14. How did He increase in wisdom?

CHAPTER III.

3 *The preaching and baptism of John: 15 his testimony of Christ. 20 Herod imprisoneth John. 21 Christ baptized, receiveth testimony from heaven. 23 The age and genealogy of Christ from Joseph upwards.*

NOW in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

Luke, as will be observed, gives us with great exactness and faithfulness the names and dates, which connect the sacred history with the history of the time. The particularity with which he refers to the

time when our Lord began His public ministry, evinces the accurate and well-informed historian. Christianity is a religion of *facts*. It stands in its place in history. It is neither theory, nor legend, nor myth. It is just as true that John the Baptist and Jesus Christ lived and preached, as that Tiberius Cæsar lived and reigned over the Roman Empire; and the Evangelist appeals to the history of that time in his record of these Gospel facts. There is thus every evidence that the

Gospels were not written by impostors, and that the narratives which they give are true. *Josephus*, a writer of that very age, who was a Jew, and an enemy of Christianity, most remarkably confirms these statements of the Evangelists.

Now in the fifteenth year, &c. Tiberius Caesar was the cruel, sensual, infamous successor of Augustus in the empire of Rome, to which Judea at this time sustained the relation of a province. Having been joint emperor two years with his predecessor Augustus (from the beginning of which time the Evangelist reckons), he had, after that, up to the time here assigned as the commencement of John's public ministry, exercised sole dominion for thirteen years, making in all, *fifteen years*. *Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea*. Pilate came to Judea as Procurator, and continued to fill that office to the year 38.

And Herod being tetrarch of Galilee. This was Herod Antipas, the second son of Herod the Great, and bearing the abbreviated name of his grandfather, Antipater. The title of *tetrarch* originally signified the ruler of a fourth part, or one of four associated rulers, as in ancient Galatia, but was afterward applied in a general sense to any ruler, and especially to tributary kings, immediately dependent on the Roman emperor. *And his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis*. This Philip was the half-brother of Herod the tetrarch, being the son of Herod the Great, by his wife Cleopatra. *Iturea*. This territory seems to have extended to the north-east of Palestine, forming a central district between the lake of Tiberias and the territory of Damascus. *Trachonitis* was the most eastern portion of Philip's territory, lying to the east and south-east of Iturea, and to the south of Damascus, being thus a frontier district toward the Arabian Desert. *And Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene*. This person is not historically known. He was probably the son or grandson of another Lysanias, whom Mark Antony put to death about sixty years before the point of time here designated by Luke, and gave part of his territory to Cleopatra of Egypt. The enemies of the Gospel have tried in vain to make him the same person, and thus convict

Luke of a chronological mistake. Traces of the Lysanias to whom Luke refers are found outside of history. A coin has been found belonging to a period later than Herod's death, bearing the inscription, "Lysanias, tetrarch and high priest". A Doric temple in Abila bears the inscription, "Lysanias, tetrarch of Abilene." This must have been Luke's Lysanias, for the first Lysanias was not a tetrarch, that title having been first adopted after Herod's death. *Abilene*. This territory took its name from the town of Abila or Abela. Its precise situation is not clearly known, but it appears to have been somewhere to the north or north-east of Palestine; bordering on Anti-Libanus, and adjoining Philip's territory.

2. *Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.—John ii. 49, 51, xviii. 13; Acts iv. 6.

The high priest (Lev. xi. 10) was at the head of the Jewish sacerdotal system, the sacred representative of the nation. Until the time of Herod, the dignity of the high priest's office descended with due regularity in the Aaronic line, but the Herodians and Roman rulers made changes at will, and appointed a new high priest so frequently that the office became almost annual, and a number of ex-high priests were living. The high priest is supposed to have had an assistant to occupy his place in case of incompetency from sickness, defilement, or otherwise. (2 Kings xxv. 18; Jer. lli. 24.) *Josephus* on one occasion mentions two high priests, Jonathan and Ananias. The name of the high priest, also, continued to be given to any one who *had been* in that office, and especially when he still possessed some civil office after he had left the high priesthood. These facts help to show, inasmuch as there could properly be only one high priest at the same time, and as *Caiaphas* held this office during the public ministry of Christ (Matt. xxvi. 3, 57; John xi. 49), why *Annas*, his father-in-law, who had been high priest, but afterward deposed by Valerius Grattus, is here mentioned. He was, in all probability, the coadjutor of Caiaphas, the actual high priest at this time, or was regarded by the Jews as still the legitimate high priest, and his age, rank and consequence, as a man of the first consideration and influence in

the state, easily explains his being named before Calaphas by the Evangelist.

The word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. It was about at the age of thirty that John received his formal commission from Heaven as a prophet. The probability is that, before he reached that time of life, both his parents were dead, and it is supposable that the demise of the survivor of them, by divesting him of earthly ties (for he had no brothers or sisters), and by breaking up his home, supplied the occasion for his withdrawal into the desert. The region to which he retired was doubtless that wild, mountainous region lying east toward the Dead Sea. There—in the deep solitudes, where he had, no doubt, for several years brooded over the iniquities of the times, over the prospect of the Messiah's kingdom, and over the precise nature of that mission to which he knew that he had been nominated, though not yet called to its actual duties, *the word of God came unto John*, doubtless as the Divine word or message was communicated to the prophets of the Old Testament by the Holy Ghost (Jer. i. 2, 4, 11; Ezra i. 3, 6), and made clear unto him all that he needed to know. It not only taught him what to do, and that the time was come for him to do it, but it inspired him with all the energies and powers needed for the fit discharge of the high and solemn office to which he was called.

3. ^bAnd he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance ^cfor the remission of sins:—^bMatt. iii. 1; Mark i. 4. ^cChap. i. 77.

Came is, in Greek, the graphic present, *comes*, arrives, or retaining the precise sense of the compound verb, *becomes near*, at hand, or present. *Into all the country about Jordan.* At God's command he left the wilderness, and came to more inhabited places. This region was contiguous to the desert, to which John had retired "until the day of his showing unto Israel." (Chap. i. 80.) Those that are best pleased with retirement must cheerfully exchange it when God calls them into places of concourse. *Preaching*: a verb so rendered more than fifty times in our version, but four times *publish* (Mark v. 20, vii. 36, xi. 10; Luke viii. 39), and twice *proclaim*. (Luke xii. 3; Rev. v.

2.) It properly denotes the act of a public crier, or a herald, announcing or proclaiming something by authority. This primary and strict sense of the term must not be superseded by the technical and modern usage of the word *preaching*, as applied to formal and official religious teaching. In this sense, it is probable that neither John nor the Apostles preached while Christ was with them.

The baptism of repentance. Not the baptism of faith in a Redeemer already crucified and atoning, but a baptism of repentance and reformation preparatory to His coming. *Repentance* properly denotes afterthought, reflection, and then change of mind, including both the judgment and the feelings, upon moral subjects, with particular reference to one's own character and conduct, with an implication of improvement or reform in both. Evangelical repentance is not mere amendment or mere sorrow for sin, but comprehends them both. *For the remission of sins.* This phrase depends on *repentance*. It is not *baptism for the remission of sins*, but *repentance*, in faith on an approaching Messiah, for such *remission*. The remission of sin was the object or purpose of the baptismal rite. John's preaching and baptism did not of itself procure the remission of sin, which could be effected only by the death of Christ. It, however, prepared the way for this result. Those who repented and reformed their lives under his ministry, received the pardon of their sins, although the great atoning sacrifice had not actually been offered. (See on Matt. iii. 1.)

4. As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, ^dThe voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

^dIsa. xl. 3; Matt. iii. 3; Mark i. 3; John i. 23.

Luke here proves, by a quotation from Isa. xl. 3, that there was nothing unforeseen and suddenly contrived in the coming of Jesus Christ. It was predicted in Gen. iii. 15, and this promise was brightened and expanded in all subsequent prophecy. The purpose in this quotation is to connect the ministry of Christ, through that of His forerunner, with the ancient Scriptures and the Church of the Old Testament, thus uniting the two canons in the closest manner, notwithstanding the

long interval of four hundred years between them.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. This is a plain allusion to the custom that prevailed in Eastern countries, of sending messengers and pioneers to make the ways level and straight before kings and princes and other great men, when they passed through the country with great pomp and magnificence. John was, in a spiritual sense, to go before the Lord—before the Saviour of the world, calling upon the people, to *prepare His way, to make His paths straight*—to remove out of their minds everything that opposed itself to the admission of Divine truth, all prejudice, blindness, pride, obstinacy, self-conceit, vanity, and vain philosophy, but, above all, to subdue and regulate those depraved affections, appetites, passions, and inveterate habits of wickedness, which are the grand obstacles to conversion and the reception of the Word of God.

John was a *voice* which conveys the mind of the speaker, and then vanishes: he declared the mind of God concerning His Son, and then was seen no more, for his ministry was of short continuance. His life, also, was vocal, no less than his lips, the whole man being as it were a sermon. *Crying* denotes the zeal and fervency of John's preaching. The whole phrase, *the voice of one crying*, might be more exactly rendered, *a voice crying*. It is a kind of exclamation, as if it had been said, "Hark! one cries" (or is crying), perhaps with the additional idea of long-continued previous silence. (Exod. iv. 15.) By *wilderness*, in Scripture, we are not always to understand what is commonly denominated so with us, an uninhabited region. Often, no more was denoted by it, than a country fitter for pasture rather than agriculture, mountainous, woody, thinly inhabited. No doubt John's singular habits of dress and diet (Mark i. 6), and his holy life, secured him a congregation in the wilderness. Men went there to see him, and these bringing back a wonderful report of him, at length crowds were collected to hear his sermons. (See on Matt. iii. 3.)

6. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth;

Every valley, &c. (See on verse 4.) By the import of the language that the prophet uses, it is plainly to be seen that the main work is God's, though men are called to concur with Him in it, which is everywhere the scheme of Scripture, as it certainly is of sound reason. (Phil. ii. 12, 13.) If ever we design to receive Christ into our hearts, we must first prepare and make ready our hearts for receiving Him. For though the *preparation of the heart be from the Lord*, yet He requires the exercise of our faculties, and the use of our efforts; He prepares our hearts, by enabling us to prepare our own hearts, by getting a sight of the evil of sin, and a sense of our misery without Christ, a hungering desire after Him, and a lively faith in Him.

6. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.
Ps. xcvi. 2; Isa. lii. 10; chap. ii. 10.

These words are cited from Isaiah lii. 10, in which chapter the ancient Jews admit that the prophet is speaking of the Messiah. Now is the time, when all persons, Jews and Gentiles, may see the Author of salvation, whom God has promised to the world, and by faith be interested in Him. This salvation shall be more fully discovered than ever, and the discovery of it shall spread further. All mankind shall see it, and some of all tribes and kindreds and nations enjoy it. The great end of Christ's coming into the world was to procure salvation for all flesh willing to be saved by him.

7. Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?
Matt. iii. 7.

This mode of address might seem strange to us, did we not know from Matt. iii. 7, that this *multitude* did not consist of persons who were anxious inquirers after salvation, but rather Pharisees and Sadducees, or at least such as were infected by their pernicious leaven. (See on Matt. iii. 7, xii. 34.) *To be baptized of him.* Passages like John i. 25, and Matt. xxi. 24-27, seem to indicate that John originated baptism proper by Divine appointment, but in accordance with a Jewish expectation that something of the sort would be established, suggested by passages like Isa. xii. 13; Ezek. xxxvi. 25; Zech. xiii. 1. This baptism was an appropriation and

concentration into a single rite of all the lustrations and washings of the Old Testament dispensation. Thereby it became the emblem of the out-poured Spirit of regeneration, and so of induction from the world into the kingdom of God. And thence being the rite of initiation into the Christian Church, it becomes the successor of circumcision.

O generation of vipers. Generation is in Greek a plural. The plural may have reference either to variety of species or to multitude of individuals. By the terms *generation of vipers*, or broods of vipers, the diabolical nature of hypocrisy is pointed out. John evidently knew their radical insincerity, notwithstanding their coming for baptism. Before we accuse John of harshness, we should do well to remember, first, that love itself can be severe, and that the meek Saviour himself was inexorably so, toward hypocrites; and, secondly, that the judgment here announced was not inevitable, but only impending over obstinate impenitence, while John earnestly desires that they may yet escape it, and points out the way of safety. Neither commentator nor preacher should effeminately shrink at the "mention of hell to ears polite." *Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?* rather, *who did warn you*, or *who warned you*, i. e., just now, or before you came out thither? The word rendered *warned*, denotes a slight as well as secret intimation or suggestion, as distinguished from a full and open disclosure. "Who has given you a hint of the impending danger?" "Who has shown you that you must flee?" *The wrath*, i. e., the manifestation of God's anger against sin, and His determination to punish it. *To come*, in Greek, an active participle, *coming*, or about to be, the verb denoting mere futurity, and having no equivalent in English.

8. Bring forth therefore fruits *worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

*Or, meet for.

The condition of proud Pharisees, pretending and false-hearted hypocrites, though very dangerous, yet was not hopeless, and therefore John, whilst reproving them for their sins, yet out of love to their souls, encourages their repentance. He

repelled their application to be baptized, until they should *produce* or *bear fruits worthy of repentance*, i. e., such effects as genuine repentance, may justly be expected to produce, answerable to amendment of life. (See on iii. 3.) Let it be observed that John addressed himself, in the first instance, not to the *understanding*, but to the *heart*. He did not attempt to convince his hearers, but to reform them. Thus it is that men everywhere, and at all times, must be prepared for the reception of Divine truth. They must first be *reformed*, and then *convinced*. It is not in general the want of evidence, but the want of virtue that makes men infidels; let them cease to be wicked, and they will soon cease to be unbelievers. "With the heart," says Paul (not with the head), "man believeth unto righteousness."

And begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father. John, knowing what the Pharisees would answer in their hearts to the severe, but doubtless deserved epithet he applied to them, proceeded to rebuke them for their reliance upon their Abrahamic descent, as the one essential qualification for salvation. He did not deny the fact of their descent from Abraham, which was notoriously true, but he condemned their reliance upon that fact, as securing the Divine favor, irrespective of their character and conduct. He gave them to understand that God was able from the very stones lying at their feet, to raise up children unto Abraham. By this he clearly meant to tell them, that if the Jews disgraced their high descent, God would remove His kingdom from them, and give it unto strangers.

9. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

§Matt. vii. 19.

And now also, at this very time: the axe is laid unto the roots of the trees. The *axe*, an instrument for felling trees, is here a figure for Divine judgments, possibly suggested by the reference to *fruit* in the preceding verse. The *trees* of this verse, corresponding to the *fruits* of that before it, must, of course, denote those from whom fruit was expected and required, namely, those to whom John was now speaking. The representation made in the

verse, thus far, is just what Christ did when He came into the flesh. By Him *the axe was laid unto the root of the trees*. By the very covenant of peace which He has introduced, He has at the same time brought judgment near to the sinner. He has made, for the last time, an effort, and that the greatest of all, to convince the sinner that He has a controversy with him which must now be settled, either by his unconditional and complete surrender, or by his speedy and terrible punishment. His dealing with the sinner will proceed upon the simple fact, "fruit," or "no fruit," "according to that done in the body, whether it be good or bad." The Gospel message is indeed one of grace, and it is by grace alone through faith that the sinner can be saved; but here, upon the very front of Christ's mission, is written clearly and indelibly that the *judgment* shall strictly proceed on works. Where these exist, where they are seen and manifest, they will prove that the sinner has believed and is saved; where they are not, they will equally prove that he has rejected the counsel of God against himself, and his condemnation will be just.

• *Every tree*. Each fruitless tree, each impenitent individual, *therefore*, because the axe is laid there for this very purpose, *bringeth not forth good fruit*, that is, right or acceptable to God, and salutary, useful to the doer and to others. Let it be observed that the sin here specified is a sin of *omission*. The tree is described, not as bringing forth *evil* fruit, but as *not* bringing forth *good* fruit. *Is hewn down*, means strictly, *cut out*, and is so translated in Rom. ii. 24. It is here used to denote, not the mere felling, but the complete excision of the tree, *i. e.*, the being cut up by the root. In Scripture language, that which is very sure and very near is spoken of as if it was *already done*. Thus Christ speaks of Himself, as if He was already in possession of His glory, while He was here on earth (John xvii. 14); sinners, too, are represented as *condemned already* (John iii. 18), and Christians are spoken of as *already glorified*. (Eph. ii. 6, and Heb. xii. 22, 23.) *And cast into the fire—into fire*, (not *the fire*): an indefinite descrip-

tion of the element made use of to consume the tree, and representing, as a figure, the wrath of God, already mentioned in verse 7, or its ruinous effect upon the unforgiven sinner. (Compare Heb. xii. 29.) If the tree serve not for fruit, to the honor of God's grace, it must serve for fuel, to the honor of His justice.

10. And the people asked him, saying, ¹What shall we do then?—²Acts ii. 37.

Though it is not said that the Pharisees and Sadducees took warning from John's preaching, yet there were some persons who did. *The people* (that is the common people, as they are called), said, *What shall we do then?* This question indicated a strong desire to be instructed as to duty. Some think it was not the question of the penitent jailor, "Sirs, what must I do to be *saved*?" else John would have answered it as did Paul and his friend Silas that which was proposed to them, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." There is, however, nothing so purely legal in John's reply as to produce embarrassment in regard to it. There is law in all Gospel, and there is Gospel in the law. Though the atonement had not been made in the Old Testament times, yet sin was forgiven through the forbearance of God, in view of the atonement. Thus the faith in the Messiah to come as the remitter of sin was mingled with the repentance of John's dispensation, and it had power to save, when genuine, in its time and kind. The genuineness was to be tested by the bringing forth appropriate fruits. Hence, in the verse which follows, the general principles of benevolence are inculcated, not as in themselves rendering the person who practices them worthy of salvation, but yet of necessary performance, in order to obtain the Divine forgiveness for sin.

11. He answereth and saith unto them, ¹He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

²Chap. ii. 41; 2 Cor. viii. 14; Jas. ii. 15, 16.

By this answer John shows us that covetousness was the *chief* sin of the people, and also explains why he specified benevolence, which is its opposite. It was the sin of the *poor* as well as the rich.

Coat, or, tunic worn next to the skin. *Meat*. Clothing and food are here representative of all the physical necessities of

men. It may not be proper to interpret such general rules as that in this verse, *strictly* and *literally*, but, however explained, unless they be supposed to mean nothing, they certainly require a far greater degree of liberality in the rich, and even in the poor, according to their present ability, toward their still more indigent neighbors, than is almost anywhere practiced among Christians. The Word of God tells us that we should be ready to give—that we should even *labor* that we *may* have something to give. (Eph. iv. 28; Acts xx. 34, 35.) Those who have *more* than enough for themselves, ought to give to those who have *less* than enough. An extensive liberality and a diffusive charity in distributing such things as we can well spare toward the relief of the necessities of others, is an excellent fruit of repentance, and a good evidence of its sincerity and genuineness.

¹² Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto Him, Master, what shall we do? ¹³ And he said unto them, ¹⁴Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

¹²Matt. xxi. 32; chap. vii. 29. ¹³Chap. xix. 8.

The Roman government had conquered Judea, and obliged the Jews to pay taxes and tribute to support its tyranny. The *publicans* were the officers who collected the Roman taxes. They were often characterized by rapacity and extortion. *Master*, means teacher, and as neither of the other classes here referred to used this term of respect, may be regarded as indicative of the humility and distress for sin with which these publicans approached John. *What shall we do?* (See on verse 10.) As extortion was their besetting sin, John therefore enjoins upon them integrity and justice—*exact no more than that which is appointed you*, that is, than the legal tax. Here note, 1. That acts of justice and righteousness, as well as of charity and mercy, are real fruits of sincere repentance. 2. John does not condemn the *office*, but *cautions the officer*. If magistrates may impose taxes, they may doubtless appoint officers to collect those taxes. Christian charity should teach us to distinguish between the *calling* and the *crime*. The maladministration of those who fill an office is not a sufficient reason for condemning it.

¹⁴ And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, ¹⁵Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.

¹⁵Or, put no man in fear. ¹⁶Exod. xxiii. 1; Lev. xix 11. ¹⁷Or, allowance.

Soldiers, or, as the original denotes, *men actually under arms*. They are supposed to have been a part of Herod's army *then* on their way from Galilee to Arabia Petraea, with Aretas, the king of which Herod, though his son-in-law, was at that time at war. *What shall we do?* (See on verse 10.) *Do violence to no man*. The original word properly signifies "to take a man by the collar and shake him," and seems to have been used proverbially for that violent manner in which persons of this station of life are often ready to bully those about them, whom they imagine their inferiors in strength and spirit. *Neither accuse any falsely*—not to the government, thereby to make themselves formidable, and obtain bribes; neither to superior officers, in order to be revenged on those they had a pique against, or to undermine those above them, and get into their places. *And be content with your wages*. The Greek word signifies not only the *money* which was allotted to a Roman soldier, which was *two oboli* (about three cents) per day, but also the necessary supply of *wheat, barley, &c.*, in other words, their *pay* and *rations*. "While you have what you agreed for, do not murmur that it is no more, especially do not make a mutinous demand for its increase, or seek to add pillage thereto."

It will be observed that the office and employment of a soldier is not condemned by John, but regulated. He did not bid them cast away their arms, abandon war, appear no more as military men in the field, but manage their employment inoffensively. The injunction to be content with their wages, implied their continuance in the military service for which the *wages* were received. War is, indeed, a terrible calamity, and earnestly should the prayer be offered that the soldier and his stern profession may become obsolete together. But, then, in the *present* state of society, war is often an unavoidable necessity, and the only means of defending the rights, the honor, and the very existence of a nation, and may thus prevent

still greater evil. Aggressive wars it is true, are always wrong; but defensive wars against foreign invasions and domestic rebellion are justifiable, yet they should be conducted without cruelty and oppression.

15. And as the people were in **expectation*, and all men *†mused* in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;

**Or, in suspense. †Or, reasoned or debated.*

So extraordinary was John's person, so earnest his preaching, so acceptable his doctrine, and so exemplary his conversation, that many people began to think that he, perhaps, was the Saviour so long expected—that is, the Christ, or the anointed One. But he did not wish them to think this, hence—

16. John answered, saying unto *them* all, *“I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:*

” Matt. iii. 11. *“*Joel ii. 28, 29; John vii. 38; 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13.

See on Matt. iii. 11.

John's popularity (iii. 7; Matt. iii. 5) did not fill him with conceit and vanity. So far from this, the most prominent feature of his character was an unexampled modesty and humility. Far from desiring or attempting to fix the admiration of the multitude on his own person, he gave notice, from his first appearance, of *another* immediately to follow him, for whom he was unworthy to perform the most servile offices. (John i. 28–31.) Conduct like this will always be the characteristic of the true “man of God.” He will, like the ancient priest, be hidden by the cloud of incense ascending from the altar at which he ministers. (See 2 Cor. iv. 5.)

And here is a criterion by which we may judge whether preaching is profitable to us. Does it exalt Christ in our esteem? Does it more and more endear Him to us as He is revealed in the Gospel? If this be its effect upon us, then, and only then, we may be sure that it is beneficial to our souls. John refers to Christ as *mightier than himself, the mightier than I*—more powerful, implying not only a diversity of rank, but also of efficiency and actual performance.

The latchet of whose shoes, &c. The comparison was founded on the office generally assigned to the lowest menial, of taking charge of his master's shoes. To understand the full import of the Baptist's simi-

litude, it is necessary to remark, that the shoes of the ancient Jews, as well as of the Greeks and Romans, and some modern people of the East, were not entire coverings for the feet, like those worn by us, but merely sandals of leather or wood, serving as a defense for the sole, and fastened by strings, twined in various ways round the ankle. On entering a temple to worship, or on paying a visit to a person of rank, these sandals were taken off, a servant being stationed at the door for the purpose of untying and taking charge of them till the owner's return; and this department was, from the earliest times, assigned to the youngest or the newest servant in a household, as the meanest and most disreputable part of the service. But, besides standing at the door to perform this office, it was usual for the menial to wait upon his master, as he went abroad, and to carry his shoes whenever he chose to walk without them, as, in those hot countries, is frequently the case. “A respectable man,” says *Roberts*, “*never goes out without an attendant to do anything he may require.*” Thus, when the ground is smooth, or where there is soft grass to walk on, the sandals are taken off, and the servant carries them in his hand. When the Baptist, therefore, declared that he was not worthy to untie the latchet, or to bear the shoes of the glorious Person of whom he was the forerunner, he meant, by that strong metaphor, to intimate that he was not worthy to render the meanest offices, to so exalted, so divine a Master.

I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. John depreciates not so much his baptism as himself. *He shall baptize, abundantly impart.* (Titus iii. 6; Acts ii. 3, 4, 17, and x. 44); and shall, therefore, show Himself *the mightier*. The Spirit and fire have the utmost power. The Holy Spirit, with which Christ baptizes, converts, purifies, and refines the heart; its fiery power, in the severer purgation, burning sin away by sharper agonies, and imparting a severer spiritual purity and energy, was manifested in the fiery tongues at Pentecost. (See Isa. iv. 4, lxiv. 2; Jer. v. 14; Mal. iii. 2 Acts ii. 3.) We must be care-

ful not to underrate the value of John's baptism. We have no proof that any of the Apostles received any other. The distinction between John's baptism and the baptism of Christ was not essential, but accidental, that is, not in its essence, but in its accidents or circumstances. The contrast drawn in this verse, therefore, is not between Christ's baptism, as attended by a spiritual influence, and that of John as unattended by this influence. The meaning is, "I baptize you with water, not without Divine authority or spiritual effect, an effect dependent, however, on a higher power, but He whose way I am preparing is so far superior, both in power and office, that, in the exercise of an inherent power, that of His own Spirit, He will in the same way baptize you with an effusion of the Holy Ghost." John exalted the Saviour. To *Him* we must go direct. Nothing will answer but union with Christ by faith. He is the appointed fountain of mercy, grace, life and peace. Man, when ordained, can, indeed, administer the outward ordinances of Christianity, with a prayerful hope that God may bless the means which He has Himself appointed, but here his power ends. Christ, the great Head of the Church, can alone make these ordinances savingly efficacious, and this He does by His Spirit.

17. Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

Jer. xv 7; Mal. iii. 3; Matt. iii. 12, on which see notes.

The Saviour would communicate to His disciples the Divine Sanctifier, as purifying water, to wash away internal pollutions, and as refining fire, to consume their dross, kindle a holy flame of love and zeal, illuminate with heavenly wisdom, and purify and sanctify them. At the same time, to use another emblem, He would come to His visible Church, then containing a few believers and many hypocrites, as the husbandman to his heap of threshed wheat, with his fan in his hand. *Whose fan*. A well-known agricultural implement, which was used by the Jews, as it is by husbandmen of the present day, to separate the chaff from the wheat when the wind is not sufficient. (Is) *in his hand*, in readiness for use. *Purge*, cleanse from the chaff. *His floor*, the area of flattened

and hardened *ground* in the field where the winnowing was done. *Gather*, collect, or bring together, first from its dispersion at the harvest, and then from its mixture with the chaff and other refuse at the winnowing or threshing.

The wheat, those who believe in Him, in Matt. iii. 12, "his wheat," or His own wheat, that belonging to Him, which implies its value, while the chaff belongs to no one, because worthless. *His garner*, granary or grain depository, representing heaven. The garner or granaries of the East are often excavations in the earth, in which the grain is buried, frequently for the sake of concealment, either from an enemy or an oppressive government. *But the chaff* (or whatever is not nutritive and therefore valueless), the disobedient and rebellious, who would not come to Christ that they might have life, *he will burn with fire unquenchable*. This may, in part, refer to the calamities to come on the Jewish nation for rejecting Christ, yet it seems to intend the final destruction of all sinners in hell, which alone is properly opposed to the *gathering the wheat into the garner*, a phrase representing the destination of the saved.

The words *unquenchable fire*, are absolutely inconsistent with all the views of the restoration of the wicked, and however the phrase of being *consumed like chaff* might seem to favor the doctrine of their *annihilation*, the epithet of *unquenchable* given to this *fire*, or more exactly *unquenched*, *i. e.*, never quenched or put out, is so far from proving this doctrine that it cannot, by any easy and just interpretation, be reconciled with it. Compare Mark ix. 43, 45, where the same Greek word is paraphrased, *that never shall be quenched*, and where Jesus repeats the expression with great solemnity, as if to show that the highest possible meaning was to be attributed to His word. Restorationism teaches that the wicked will be delivered from hell, but this supposes the word *unquenchable* to be an empty terror devoid of meaning. For to what amounts it that the fire is unquenchable if the sinner may be snatched from it at any moment? Destructionism is the doctrine that the sinner ceases, by the penalty, to exist.

But if this doctrine be true, then God still keeps an *empty hell* eternally burning!

18. And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.

From this statement we learn the following characteristics of John as a preacher: 1. He was *affectionate*, exhorting and beseeching. 2. He was *practical*, urging to duty, directing in it, and not amusing with matters of nice speculation. 3. He was *popular*, addressing himself to the people, and accommodating himself to their capacity. 4. He was *evangelical*, he preached the gospel, for so the word here often signifies. (Matt. xi. 5; chap. iv. 18, and Acts viii. 4, &c.) 5. He was a *copious* preacher. He preached a great deal, shunning not to declare the whole counsel of God, and he varied in his preaching, that those who were not influenced by one truth might be by another.

19. But Herod, the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, 20. Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

Mat. xiv. 3; Mark vi. 17.

Herod, the son of that Herod who slew the babes of Bethlehem, conceiving a violent passion for Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, first won her affections from her husband, then dismissed his own wife, and married Herodias, during the lifetime of his brother. It was impossible that such portentous wickedness as this could escape the observation or the reproof of the holy Baptist. He raised his voice against the incestuous match, and this, too, although he could not be ignorant of the danger he incurred by such a measure. It is probable that the sentiments which John expressed were those which were generally entertained; and as he had great influence with the people, Herod was probably not less actuated by alarm than by resentment in determining to silence the faithful prophet.

He added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison. Josephus says that the Baptist was imprisoned in the strong fortress of Machærus, in Perea, east of the Jordan. One sin leads to another, and generally to a greater. Shutting up John in prison was a greater sin on Herod's part than his marrying his brother's wife. It was an insult directly against God, for God considers His *children* as Himself.

Whoever injures one of *them*, injures Him, for they are as dear to Him as the apple of His eye. Besides, the incarceration of John hindered the preaching of the Gospel, and thus men's souls were murdered. It is a dreadful sin to prevent the spread of Divine truth. How difficult it is to imitate John's fidelity! A minister knows that he shall give offense to sinners, if he speaks to them plainly of their sins. As long as he speaks in *general* terms, he does not offend them, but as soon as he points out the peculiar sins of each class of persons, then he makes them enemies. But How wicked it is to be angry with a faithful minister for pointing out our sins! How much more is he to be admired, than one who says, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace!" (See on Matt. xiv. 3, 4.)

21. Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, — Matt. iii. 13; John i. 32.

We are not to suppose that all the people had been baptized before our Lord's baptism. We must attach to the word *all* the restricted sense, *great numbers*. The meaning is, that at the period when the greatest number of baptisms was taking place, the baptism of Jesus of Nazareth took place among others. Not one Evangelist communicates a complete account of what happened at our Lord's baptism, and it is only by collating their several contributions that we obtain a complete view of the occurrence. (Matt. iii. 13-17; Mark i. 9-11; John i. 32.)

Jesus also being baptized. The reason assigned by Christ (Matt. iii. 15) for His being baptized, was this: "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." It was God's will that *all men* should be baptized, and therefore it was necessary that Jesus, when He was a man, should be baptized, for He came to do *all* God's commands, that by His obedience many might be made righteous. Christ was now about to enter upon His great work, and it was proper that He should be set apart by His forerunner, and that He should manifest His connection with him, and give His sanction to what he had done. Besides, it was requisite that some public act should mark the commencement of His ministry, and afford occasion for God to declare by some manifest sign His approbation of

Him, and His solemn appointment to the office of the Messiah.

And praying. All the three voices from heaven, by which the Father bare witness to Christ, were pronounced while He was praying, or very soon after it. (Chap. ix. 28, 35; John xii. 27, 28.) It is our duty to sanctify every ordinance and every action with prayer. The inward and spiritual grace, of which sacraments are the outward and visible signs, must be obtained by prayer, and therefore prayer must always accompany them.

The heaven was opened, i. e., *cloven or rent*. This cannot possibly denote a flash of lightning, or the shining of the stars, or a sudden clearing of the sky, or anything whatever, but an apparent separation or division of the visible expanse, as if to afford passage to the form and voice which are mentioned in the next verse. He that by His power parted the waters, to make a way through them to Canaan, now by His power parted the air, to open a correspondence with the heavenly Canaan. Thus was it shown that heaven, which was closed and shut against us for our sins, is now opened to us by Christ's undertaking for us. Compare the similar expressions of Isaiah lxiv. 1; Ezek. i. 1; John i. 52; Acts vii. 56. In all these cases the essential idea suggested by the version, is that of renewed communication and extraordinary gifts from heaven to earth.

22. And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased."

*Chap. ix. 34, 35; Ps. ii. 7; Isa. xlii. 1; Matt. xii. 18, xvii. 5, xxvii. 43; Col. i. 13; 1 Peter ii. 4; 2 Peter i. 17, 18.

In every humiliation of Christ, provision is made to render what is due to His Divine glory. At His birth it was done by the heralding of an angel; in His circumcision by His name *Jesus*; in the presentation in the temple, by the testimony of Simeon; in His baptism, by the demurring of John (Matt. iii. 14), and the incidents here recorded; and in His passion, by various supernatural manifestations.

And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him. This was the first manifestation of the threefold miracle attending Christ's inauguration as Mediator. The Evangelist is explicit and tells us that the Spirit descended, was "in

a bodily shape," not merely alighting as a dove would alight, but in a visible form or shape, "like a dove." The most usual symbol of the Divine presence was fire, or light, or glory. We are entitled, then, to conclude, that after the baptism of Jesus, when it is said the Holy Spirit descended upon Him, a flame of fire, or a bright shining light, "in a bodily shape like a dove," rested upon Him. (Isa. lxi. 1.) The form of a *dove* would indicate the spirit of Christ's ministry, and, as the dove with an olive-branch flew to the ark, showing the waters of the flood to have abated, so this was the symbolical testimony of the Father, and the Spirit, at His baptism, which agreed with the angels' song at His birth, *Peace on earth*, &c. We must not doubt that the Holy Ghost dwelt in Jesus "without measure," from the very time of His incarnation. It was designed, on this occasion, that His receiving of the Spirit might be notified to others.

It is clear that the *Holy Ghost* cannot be an attribute or influence which could not be embodied or subjected to the senses, but denotes a Divine Person. We have here a striking illustration of the incarnation. As the Holy Spirit, the third Person in the Trinity, assumes the bodily form of a dove, by way of self-manifestation to the eyes of men, what difficulty is there in supposing that the second Person of the Trinity should become God manifest in the flesh in a human form? The descent of the Holy Spirit on Christ indicates Him as the medium or channel through whom this great blessing is to be obtained.

And a voice came from heaven. This was the second feature of the threefold miracle on the occasion. *From heaven*, or more exactly, *out of heaven*. Which said, *Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased*. This was the third part of the miracle at the baptism. We have here, 1. *The nearness of Christ's relation. Thou art my Son*. Christ is the Father's Son, first, in respect of His eternal generation. He is His Son, secondly, in respect of His miraculous conception, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost. He is His Son, again, by particular designation, to hold the office of Mediator, and to be the heir and Lord of all things, whom the Father hath

sanctified and sealed, and to whom He said, "I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth." And He is His Son, or proved to be so, in respect of His resurrection, being "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." 2. *The endearedness of Christ's person, Thou art my beloved Son.* The article recurs twice in the Greek, literally, *the Son of Me, the beloved.* This repetition of the article is exceedingly emphatic. Jesus is elsewhere called "God's dear Son." The Divine love here affirmed is not to be deemed as the ground or cause, but the effect or co-eternal adjunct of the Sonship here ascribed to Christ. The Father loves the Son on account of that independent absolute perfection, of which both are equally possessed; and He loves Him on the ground of that most intimate relation which subsists between them, as in some way distinct, though in essence one, and of which the relation of Sonship is the fittest analogy to be found among men. The Father loves the Son on account of the manner in which He unfolds the Divine character, in the creation and the government of the world. But this love is drawn forth by the still more illustrious manifestation of these excellences, on the part of the Son, in the accomplishment of the great and beneficent work assigned to Him as the Saviour of the lost, a work expressly committed to Him by the Father—a work performed by Him, in the exercise of adequate powers, in a manner absolutely perfect—and, therefore, the proper object of the entire approbation, the most complacental regard, of Him who appointed Him. (John x. 17, 18.)

In thee I am well pleased. The verb meaning *to be well pleased*, and the noun meaning *good pleasure*, are employed when one is pleased by what he or another has or does. The Father here proclaims that He accepts Christ as the Mediator between God and man. He publishes to the world that He is satisfied with Him, as the propitiation, the substitute, the ransom—payer, for the lost family of Adam, and the Head of a redeemed people. (John iii. 35.) There is a rich mine of comfort in these words,

for all Christ's believing people. In themselves, and in their own doings, they see nothing to please God. They are daily sensible of weakness, shortcoming and imperfection in their ways. But let them recollect that the Father regards them as members of His beloved Son Jesus Christ. They are clothed in Christ's righteousness, and invested with His merit.

The baptism of our Lord affords a demonstration of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. *Three distinct persons* are here represented: God the Holy Ghost made manifest "in a bodily shape like a dove;" God the Son ascending from the waters of Jordan in that body which had been prepared for Him; and God the Father, "whom no man hath seen or can see," manifesting Himself by the voice from heaven—the three Persons but one God of the Christian Trinity, co-essential co-equal, co-eternal. Until we receive this doctrine, Christianity has not even effected an entrance into our mind. It only has its perfect work within us, when we are enabled to have near access to God the Father, through the mediation of God the Son, and by the Grace of God the Holy Ghost.

^{23.} And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli.

^{24.} See Num. iv. 3, 35, 39, 43, 47. "Matt. xiii. 55: John vi. 42.

Jesus himself, or this same Jesus, the pronoun serving to distinguish Him from others. *Began to be about thirty years of age.* A better rendering of the original would be—and *Jesus was about thirty years of age*, when thus (see verses 21, 22, in which the Evangelist has been describing the dedication of Christ to His work as Messiah), *beginning* (or entering upon) His public ministry. Thirty years, however, was the legal age for entering on the priesthood. It was also the age at which the scribes entered upon professional duty as teachers. *Being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, i. e., being the reputed son of Joseph. Which was the son of Heli.* Matthew, who also gives a genealogy of the Messiah, says, chap. i. 2, that Joseph was the son of Jacob; here he is called the son of Heli. This apparent discrepancy is by most commentators explained by the fact, that two distinct pedigrees are given,

Matthew giving the genealogy of Joseph, Luke giving that of Mary. This explanation requires the word *son*, in the link between Joseph and Heli, to be taken in the sense of *son-in-law*, a meaning which it has in 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, xxvi. 21, 25. (Compare also Ruth i. 11, 12, 13.) If it be asked why Luke did not openly express this idea, by putting the name of Mary in place of Joseph, and writing, *which was the daughter of Heli*, the answer is, that as the Hebrews never permitted *women* to enter into their genealogical tables, whenever a family happened to end with a *daughter*, instead of naming *her* in the genealogy, they inserted her *husband* as the *son* of him who was in reality but his *father-in-law*. It is remarkable that the Jews in their Talmud call Mary *the daughter of Heli*, showing that either that is their own tradition, or that so they originally understood the genealogy as recorded. And on that passage in the Talmud, *Raschi* thus comments: "Jesus was connected with the blood royal by birth."

24. Which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi, which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Jaana, which was the son of Joseph. 25. Which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Amos, which was the son of Naum, which was the son of Esli, which was the son of Nagge. 26. Which was the son of Maath, which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Semei, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Judah. 27. Which was the son of Joanna, which was the son of Rhesa, which was the son of Zorobabel, which was the son of Salathiel, which was the son of Nerl. 28. Which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Addi, which was the son of Cosam, which was the son of Elmodam, which was the son of Er. 29. Which was the son of Jose, which was the son of Eliezer, which was the son of Jorim, which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi. 30. Which was the son of Simeon, which was the son of Judah, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Jonan, which was the son of Eliakim. 31. Which was the son of Melea, which was the son of Menan, which was the son of Mattatha, which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David. 32. Which was the son of Jesse, which was the son of Obed, which was the son of Booz, which was the son of Salmon, which was the son of Naasson. 33. Which was the son of Aminadab, which was the son of Aram, which was the son of Esrom, which was the son of Phares, which was the son of Judah. 34. Which was the son of Jacob, which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham, which was the son of Thara, which was the son of Nachor. 35. Which was the son of Saruch, which was the son of Ragau, which was the son of Phalez, which was the son of Heber, which was the son of Shala. 36. Which was the son of Cainan, which was the son of Arphaxad, which was the son of Sem, which was the son of Noah, which was the son of Lamech.

In regard to the catalogue of names, it is most likely that Luke took his account from family records. This will account for the introduction of Cainan the son of Arphaxad, which is omitted in Gen. ii. 12, 13, probably for a similar reason that the names of three kings are omitted in Matthew's genealogy.

37. Which was the son of Mathusala, which was the son of Enoch, which was the son of Jared, which was the son of Maleleel, which was the son of Cainan. 38. Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.

Which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God. "Who, being descended of no human parents, but formed by the immediate power of a Divine Creating Hand, might, with peculiar propriety, be called (*the son*) of God, in His original state, the heir of immortality and glory." The fact that Adam is here called the son of God, signifies that Christ, born of a virgin, was the second Adam, and that His production by the Holy Spirit was no less the peculiar work of the Divine Power, than was the creation of Adam. *Son of God*, therefore, in this passage, is one who, other than God, has no natural father. (Gen. v. 1, 2; comp. chap. i. 27.) Luke carried up the pedigree to Adam, the human, and to God, the Divine Father of ALL, that He might intimate the right of the Gentiles in the Messiah. Matthew, writing more particularly for the Jews, in pursuance of his purpose to demonstrate the Messiahship of Jesus, by showing the exact correspondence of His life to the prophecies and types of the Old Testament, traced His descent not only from David the first and greatest of the theocratic kings, but from Abraham, the Father of the Faithful, and the founder of the ancient church or chosen people.

"The genealogy of Matthew," says *Dr. Smith*, Classical Examiner in the University of London, "is Joseph's genealogy as legal successor to the throne of David; *i. e.*, it exhibits the successive heirs of the kingdom ending with Christ, as Joseph's reputed son. Luke's is Joseph's private genealogy, exhibiting his real birth, as David's son, and thus showing why He was heir to Solomon's crown. The simple principle that one Evangelist exhibits that genealogy which contained the successive heirs to David's and Solomon's throne, while the other exhibits the paternal stem of Him who was the heir, explains all the anomalies of the two pedigrees, their agreement as well as their discrepancies, and the circumstance of their being two at all."

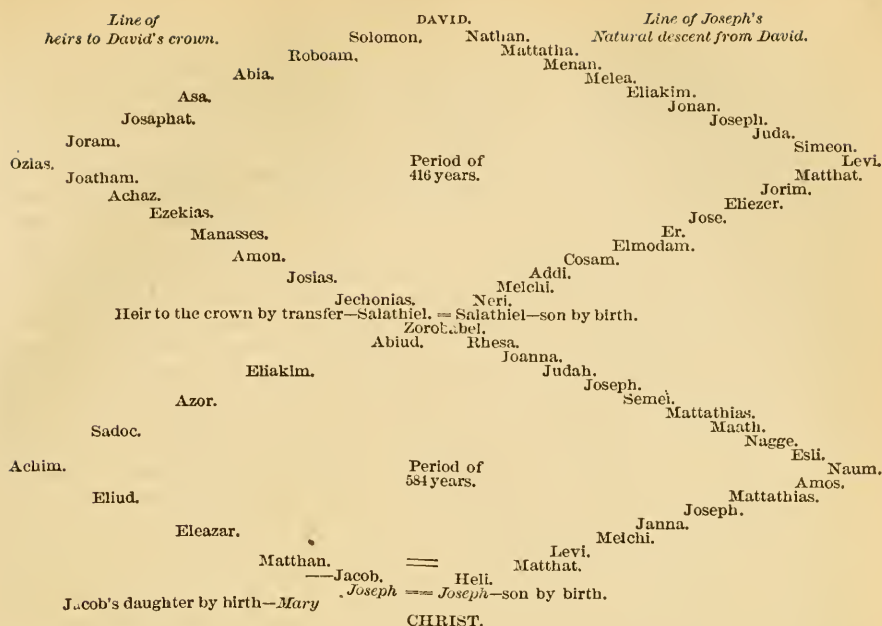
"We agree with those," says *Dr. Lange*, "who consider that, while Matthew gives

the genealogy of Joseph, Luke gives that of Mary. . . . Considered in itself, it was far more likely that Luke would give the genealogy of Mary than that of her husband. She is the principal figure throughout his early chapters, while Joseph occupies a far more subordinate position than in Matthew. He is very explicit in narrating that Mary became the mother of the Holy Child, through the miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit; why then, should he, who was not writing for Jews, give the descent of his foster-father, when he is intent upon asserting that the Lord was not related to Joseph according to the flesh? He is expressly contrasting His true descent from Eli, the father of Mary, with His supposed descent from Joseph, and Mary is simply passed over, because it was not customary among the Jews to insert the names of females in their genealogies. We find it then here stated, that Jesus was the descendant of Eli, viz.: through Mary His daughter." *Dr. Lange* also says: "On comparing the genealogies in Matthew and Luke, we are immediately struck with the difference between them. The former is written in the descending, the latter in the ascending line—the former extends to Abraham, the common ancestor of the Jewish nation, the latter to Adam, the common parent of mankind; the former is divided into three parts, each of fourteen generations, and thus exhibits a more artificial arrangement, while it wants the completeness which we discover in the latter. Both tables give fourteen names from Abraham to David, while from David to the Babylonian captivity, Matthew gives fourteen, and Luke twenty-one names. Symmetrical arrangement causes Matthew to omit certain names, while a desire for historical completeness is more strongly manifested in Luke, who, during his stay with Paul at Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 17), might easily have found opportunities

of obtaining important particulars concerning Mary and her genealogy. The universal character of his genealogy is explained by the fact that his Gospel was not written, as that of Matthew, for the Christians of Palestine."

Notwithstanding a few difficulties which some have perceived in relation to the genealogical tables of Matthew and Luke, it is certain that no difficulty was ever found, or alleged in regard to them, by any of the early enemies of Christianity. There is no evidence that they ever adduced them as containing a contradiction. Many of those enemies were acute, learned and able, and they show by their writings that they were not *indisposed* to detect all the errors that could possibly be found in the sacred narrative. It is to be remembered, also, that the *Jews* were fully competent to show that these tables were incorrect, if they were really so, and it is clear that they were fully disposed, if possible, to do it. The fact, therefore, that it is not done, is clear evidence that *they* thought them to be correct. The same may be said of the acute pagans who wrote against Christianity. None of them have called in question the correctness of these tables. This is full proof that, in a time when it was easy to understand these tables, they were believed to be correct.

"*The theory* of Lord Arthur Hervey," says *Dr. Whedon*, "lately published in England, founded in a great degree on the theory of Grotius, seems likely to be ultimately universally adopted. This theory, in its details, solves so many of the facts as not only to remove difficulties, but to furnish a sort of proof of the genuineness of the record. By this theory *Matthew gives the genealogy of Joseph* (including, in fact, that of Mary) in the line of *royal inheritance*; *Luke gives that of natural descent*. This is made clear by the following table:



"From David, Matthew traces the *royal line* through Solomon to Jechonias; Luke gives the *private line* through Nathan to Salathiel. But Jechonias was *childless* (Jer. xxii. 30), so that with him the Solomonic line ended. Consequently, Salathiel, of the Nathanic line, came into the royal heirship. By this transfer Salathiel stands in both, namely, the *line of natural descent* from David through Nathan, and the *line of political succession* to the crown. From Zorobabel's son, Abiud, Matthew furnishes a series of heirs; from his other son, Rhesa, Luke gives the natural line of Joseph down to Matthat. But this Mat-

that is the same as Matthew's Matthan. Of this Matthat Jacob and Heli are two sons; the former, being the elder, is crown-heir; the second stands in the private line. Heli's son is JOSEPH; Jacob, the crown-heir, has only a daughter, *Mary*. The royal line thus failing of a direct male heir, Joseph marries Mary, and is thus transferred to the royal line both by kin and by marriage. Both these views secure the true Davidic descent of Mary, which is indeed absolutely necessary to the fulfilment of a most explicit Divine promise (2 Sam. vii. 12), to which Peter refers. (Acts ii. 30)."

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1. At what time did the word of God come unto John? 2. Where did John preach? 3. What did he preach? 4. What did he say to the multitude that came to be baptized? 5. Who also came to John to be baptized? 6. What did he say of Jesus? 7. What did Herod do to John? 8. Why did he shut him up in prison? 9. What is said of the baptism of Jesus? 10. How was the heaven opened? 11. How did the Holy Ghost descend? 12. What did the voice say? 13. Why did Luke carry up our Lord's pedigree to Adam? 14. What is said about the genealogies of Matthew and Luke?

CHAPTER IV.

¹ *The temptation and fasting of Christ.* ¹³ *He overcometh the devil.* ¹⁴ *beginneth to preach.* ¹⁶ *The people of Nazareth admire his gracious works.* ³³ *He cureth one possessed of a devil.* ³⁸ *Peter's mother-in-law.* ⁴⁰ *and divers other sick persons.* ⁴¹ *The devils acknowledge Christ, and are reproved for it.* ⁴³ *He preacheth through the cities.*

AND Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.

^a Matt. iv. 1; Mark i. 12, on which see notes. ^b Chap. ii. 27; verse 14.

The remarkable transaction in our Lord's life we are now to consider, is one of the most, if not the most, difficult to interpret of all in the sacred history.

Some have undertaken to regard it as a *parabolic description of an actual event*, others, as a *train of thought*, others as a *vision or prophetic trance*, others still as a *myth*. But to all these views there are the following objections: 1. It is an established rule of interpretation, that in explaining the sacred writings we ought never, without the most apparent and indispensable necessity, allow ourselves the liberty of departing from the plain, obvious and literal meaning of the words. And, evidently, no such necessity can be alleged in the present instance. It is true there are in this narrative many difficulties, and many extraordinary, surprising and miraculous incidents; but the whole history of our Saviour is wonderful and miraculous from beginning to end, and if, whenever we meet with a difficulty or a miracle, we should have recourse to figure, metaphor, or vision, we should soon reduce a great part of the sacred writings to nothing else. 2. There is not, in any part of this narrative of the temptation, the slightest or most distant intimation that it is nothing more than a parable or a vision. And it is certain that if any one had meant to describe a real transaction, he could not have selected any expressions better adapted to that purpose than those actually made use of by the three Evangelists in the record they have made of the temptation. 3. The view that the temporal and earthly thoughts which constituted the temptations to which Christ was exposed, were the *result of His own reflections*, revolts us as an outrage against the Person of our Lord. Had Jesus cherished such thoughts in the faintest degree, He had been Christ no

longer. We dare not suppose in Him a choice which, presupposing within Him a tendency for evil, would involve the necessity of His comparing the evil with the good, and deciding between them. 4. It was in itself extremely probable that there should be a real and personal conflict between Christ and Satan. This chief of the fallen angels has ever been an irreconcilable enemy of the human race. From the very creation of man he has exercised toward him the most malignant art and subtilty, and, with what success, in leading to acts of folly, stupidity and weakness, we all too well know and feel. At the time of our Saviour's appearance, the tyranny of this diabolical spirit seems to have arrived at its utmost height, and to have extended to the bodies as well as the souls of men, of both of which he took absolute possession. It was, therefore, highly probable that our blessed Lord would think it a measure eminently proper, to begin His ministry with showing a decided superiority over the great adversary of man, whose empire He was going to abolish, with manifesting to mankind that the great Captain of their salvation was able to accomplish the important work He had undertaken, and with setting an example of virtuous firmness to His followers, which might encourage them to resist the most powerful temptations that the Prince of Darkness could throw in their way.

And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost. This is peculiar to Luke, and is to be referred to the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Him after His baptism. (Luke iii. 22.) Christ had now greater measures of the gifts, graces and comforts of the Holy Ghost than ever before. He was occupied, endowed and governed by Him, not merely as man, but as the God-man or Mediator. Immediately afterward, He was exposed to terrible sufferings and temptations. It is often God's method to prepare His people for great sufferings, by granting them great consolations beforehand. Such as are baptized with Christ, must expect to be assaulted by Satan. *Returned from Jordan*, probably a short distance toward Jerusalem.

And was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, &c. We must not understand an act of compulsion. There was some urgency, but this referred to the necessity of this for Christ's work, and not to any compulsion contrary to His will. Christ was led by a strong impulse distinct from His own will, though not opposed to it. (See on Matt. iv. 1.)

2. Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

Exod. xxxiv. 28; 1 Kings xix. 8; see on Matt. iv. 2.

The forty days spent by our Saviour in the wilderness bear a striking resemblance to the forty days' retirement of Moses on Mount Sinai, and the forty days spent by Elijah at Horeb; and this likeness between the Mediator of the New Covenant and the Mediator and Reformer of the Old becomes the more significant from the subsequent appearance of Moses and Elijah with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. And yet Christ's fast of forty days is not determined by theirs, but rather theirs and His are alike determined by the significance which this number, forty, in the Scriptures everywhere obtains. It is the signature of the punishment of sin. (Gen. vii. 4, 12; Num. xiv. 33; xxxii. 13, 14; Ps. xcv. 10; Dent. xxv. 3; 2 Cor. xi. 24; Ezek. xxix. 11.) *Tempted.* (See on Matt. iv. 1.) In reference to the nature of Christ's temptation, the learned commentator, *Joseph Addison Alexander*, says: "Our Lord's susceptibility of temptation was no more inconsistent with his sinlessness than that of Adam, and is insisted on in Scripture as essential to His office, and especially as necessary to a real sympathy between Him and His tempted people." (Heb. ii. 18.)

And in those days he did eat nothing. We are to understand this fasting in the strictest sense, forty days' and forty nights' entire privation. Jesus not only abstained from some kinds of food, or for a certain portion of each day, but He ate nothing all those days. This fasting was doubtless miraculous or superhuman. It is beyond the power of nature to endure such privations. There is no authenticated instance of any healthy person having remained for nearly so long a time without food. Our Lord here intended our admiration

rather than our imitation, or, if our imitation, of the action only, not of the time. In seasons of danger or general affliction, it was customary among the Jews to abstain from food as a religious duty (Josh. vii. 6; Judg. xx. 26); and the same practice prevailed among individuals when the occasion was personal. (Exod. xxiv. 18; 2 Sam. xii. 16; 1 Kings xix. 8.) Fasts are evidently of Divine authority, and fasting at the present day may be regarded as one of the outward means which may be profitably employed to humble and chasten the soul, and train it anew to the love and pursuit of holy and spiritual joys. There can be no doubt of its being sanctioned under the Gospel dispensation. (Matt. vi. 18; ix. 15; Acts xiii. 3; 1 Cor. vii. 5.) How far or how long a person should abstain from food depends on circumstances. The great end to be kept in view is, humiliation *for sin* and abstinence *from sin*. "If," says *Marshall*, "abstinence divert our minds, by reason of a gnawing appetite, then you had better eat sparingly, as Daniel in his greatest fast." (Dan. x. 2, 3.)

He afterward hungered. (See on Matt. iv. 2.) Immediately after such a fast, hunger must necessarily have made itself felt with unexampled power, and the more so, probably, from the combat with the Prince of Darkness. Satan, who doubtless had been heedfully watching an opportunity to assail Jesus at disadvantage, thought he perceived an opening for his insidious approaches, and sought to make the want of food the occasion of His sinning by the unlawful creation of food.

The three temptations which follow are by some compared to the threefold bait presented to Eve (Gen. iii. 6), in which the fruit being good for food, so appealed to the appetite, and being pleasant to the eye, so pleased the sense of beauty, and being represented as being able to make her as the gods, so awakened her ambition. Others see in them the threefold description of unholy lusts by the Apostle (1 John i. 16), "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." There is clearly one element common to all these temptations: they are attempts

to call up a willful and wayward spirit in contrast to a patient, self-denying one.

3. And the devil said unto him, *If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.*

See on Matt. iv. 3.

Said unto him. The devil now probably had a visible form, not terrifying, but as a friend, and perhaps as an "angel of light." (2 Cor. ii. 14.) At any rate it was such a form as would render him most likely to fascinate by his blandishments, or subdue by menace and terror. *If thou be the Son of God.* The voice of the evil one evidently links itself with the remembrance of the heavenly voice at the Jordan. (Luke iii. 22.)

The phrase, "*If thou be,*" &c., may be either understood as expressing a doubt (if thou art really the Son of God), or as admitting that the fact was so (since Thou art the Son of God.) *Command*, that is, order, *that this stone*, probably pointing to a loaf-like stone on the ground, before them, *be made*, changed into, *bread*. How artful the suggestion! There is no severer physical want than hunger (unless thirst be greater)—none that occasions severer pangs—none that more tempts to extreme resources for its gratification.

Under these circumstances, how perfectly natural might it seem, at the first view, to one conscious of possessing miraculous power, that He should exercise those powers for the satisfaction of His wants! But Jesus understood the nature of this insidious suggestion, and refused to yield to it, knowing that to satisfy the appetite by working a miracle would imply distrust in God, and a disposition to leave the path of duty, as well as to use improper means of relief.

4. And Jesus answered him, saying, *It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.*—*Deut. viii. 3; Isa. viii. 20; Eph. vi. 17.*

See on Matt. iv. 4.

The text which our Lord quoted is from Deut. viii. 3, and was addressed by Moses to the Israelites, when reminding them that though God had suffered them to hunger, He had fed them miraculously with manna, to show that he had other methods of sustaining man than by bread alone. The application of the passage intended by the Saviour to His own case was this: "He that brought me into this wilderness, and subjected me to these trials,

can support me under the pressure of hunger by a variety of means, besides the common one of bread, just as He fed the Israelites in the wilderness with manna, with food from heaven." *But by every word of God.* This does not mean that men must dispense with bread, and feed only on the study of the Divine word, but that our meat and drink, our food and raiment, are all the work of the creating hand of God, and that a sense of *dependence on God* is the duty of man. His word is to be the basis of our hope. Through it we are to have communion with Him, and on it, on *every word* of God, whether it be His instructive, consoling, or preceptive word, we are to rely and rest, giving Him our entire confidence.

Satan often tempts Christians, first to distrust God's Providential regard for them and then to supply improperly their own necessities. If they are in difficulty, so that it appears to the eye of sense as if their Heavenly Father, instead of bread, was giving them a stone, and if there seems a way of helping themselves by doing something not quite upright, not quite open or honest, not quite according to the commands of God, Satan recommends them to take that way, to turn the stones into bread, assuring them that if they are too conscientious, they will never get out of their difficulties. At such times they should remember that bread alone, without God's blessing, cannot nourish them, while with God's blessing, the want even of bread itself cannot starve them. "God will provide." (Gen. xxii. 8.) So, likewise, in things spiritual, Satan tempts Christians. When their mind is enfeebled by anxiety, or their body weakened by disease, their spiritual enemy urges the most distressing doubts of the love of their heavenly Father to them, or of their relationship to Him. In hours like these, the Christian should take refuge in the written Word, and lie down in peace on the many blessed promises which God has given.

5. And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

See on Matt. iv. 8.

Taking him up. *Taking him along with him*, is the exact English of the original Greek. But whether he did, or did not, *transport Him through the air*, cannot, we

think, be determined from this passage. This part of the transaction is supposed to have occurred in vision, even by some who understand what goes before as literally true. But such a difference is highly arbitrary and unnatural, nor is there any more necessity for such a supposition here than in the other cases. *Into an high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.* If we take the world to mean only the land of Judea, and some of the surrounding nations, as it appears sometimes to signify (Luke ii. 1), then Mount Quarantania, which is fifteen hundred or two thousand feet high, the highest mountain in Judea, and which is generally supposed to have been the scene of this transaction, could have afforded the prospect in question. Of it, *Maundrell* says: "It is, as Matthew calls it, 'an exceeding high mountain,' and in its ascent difficult and dangerous." The *Abbe Mariti*, also, in his travels through Cyprus, &c., speaking of this mountain, says: "Here we enjoyed the most beautiful prospect imaginable. This part of the mountain overlooks the mountains of Arabia, the country of Gilead, the country of the Ammonites, the plains of Moab, the plain of Jericho, the river Jordan, and the whole extent of the Dead Sea." These various domains the tempter might show to our Lord distinctly, and might also at the same time *point out* (for so the original word rendered *showed* sometimes signifies) and direct our Lord's eye toward several other regions that lay beyond them, which might comprehend all the principal kingdoms of the Eastern world.

6. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them : for that is delivered unto me ; and to whomsoever I will I give it. 7. If thou therefore wilt *worship me, all shall be thine. *John xii. 31 ; xiv. 30 ; Rev. xiii. 2, 7. *Or, *fall down before me.*

See on Matt. iv. 9.

Before time began, the world was made over in an everlasting covenant never to be forgotten, to the incarnate Son. "Thou shalt have the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." (Ps. ii. 8.) And, it is distinctly declared not only "That the Most High alone ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will" (Dan. iv. 17), but also that Christ "is

the Governor among the nations" (Ps. xxii. 28), and that "all power is given unto Him in heaven and on earth." It was therefore false for him whom Jesus denominated "the father of lies" (John viii. 44), to affirm that all the kingdoms of the world were committed to him, and were at his disposal. *If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.* "Thou art come to be great—to be a king on the earth, but I am strong, and will resist Thee. Thy followers shall be imprisoned and slain, some of them shall fall away through fear, others shall forsake Thy cause, loving this present world. Cast in Thy lot with me, let Thy kingdom be an earthly kingdom, only the greatest of all—a kingdom such as the Jews seek to be established on the throne of David. Worship me by living as the children of this world live, and so honoring me in Thy life ; then shall all be Thine." Such was the base proposition of Satan to Jesus. What words can describe the reckless audacity of that fallen and foul spirit ?

8. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan : for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. †Deut. vi. 13, and x. 20.

See on Matt. iv. 10.

Get thee hence, begone, avaunt, out of my sight! a strong expression of indignation and abhorrence. We are not to parley or to reason with temptations, to hesitate and deliberate whether we shall yield to them or not, but must at once repel them with firmness and vigor. Jesus did not dispute with the tempter, or tell him that the world was not his to bestow, or that it was a perishing portion, but He simply appealed to the command of God. The passage He referred to is found in Deut. vi. 13, and is here given in the words of the Septuagint version. We must oppose to the dictates of our passions the plain and positive precepts of God in His holy word. *Him only*—this was the key of all. There could not be two masters—no divided empire. The kingdom must either be wholly spiritual—that is, of God—or wholly temporal—that is, of the devil. And there could be no question *which* it should be—"Him only shalt thou serve." This verse, compared with other similar passages of Scripture, proves the Divinity

of Christ. The worship and service due to God cannot be given to a creature without the guilt of idolatry. Since then, God requires "that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father" (John v. 23), and "when He bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him" (Heb. i. 6), and since Christians "serve the Lord Christ" (Col. iii. 24), He cannot be a creature, but must be truly God.

9. ^aAnd he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:

^bMatt. iv. 5, on which see notes.

He brought Him, doubtless, by His own permission. They went together, but at Satan's instance, which is no more inconsistent with our Lord's Divine or human dignity, than His submitting to be scourged and crucified by Satan's agents. In either case it was a part of His voluntary humiliation as a Saviour and a substitute. *Set him on a pinnacle of the temple.* (See on Matt. iv. 5.) *Set Him*, literally, *made him stand*, but here again without implying force or authority. *If thou be the Son of God, &c.* How much artfulness was displayed in this proposition! "You were willing to trust God for your food, now show that you can equally trust Him for your safety; throw yourself boldly from this elevation, and proclaim by this act at once the strength of your faith, the completeness of your dependence, and the reality of your Sonship, and you shall be hailed with wonder and delight by the assembled worshipers!" thus tempting our Lord, as it were, by the very excess of that Christian grace, which He had before so beautifully exhibited. To a vain-glorious mind, nothing could have been more gratifying, more flattering, than such a proposal.

10. For hit is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: 11. And in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

¹Ps. xci. 11; 2 Cor. xi. 14; Heb. i. 14.

See on Matt. iv. 6.

It is written. The devil can quote Scripture for his purpose. Nothing makes wicked men so self-satisfied as to be able to bless their crime with a holy text. They can ridicule the Bible, and trample

upon it at any other time, but they are profoundly Biblical, and deep reverers of God's holy and inspired Word, if a text can be wrested to their purpose. The Bible, like every other good, can be misused for our own destruction. It is a part of our probation, that God has not given a revelation so unequivocal that perverse minds may not pervert it to the service of error and sin. Satan now combats our Lord with his own weapons. The passage (Ps. xci. 11, 12) is not Messianic, but speaks of the saints in general, and the devil leaves Christ to draw a conclusion *from the less to the greater*, from the safety of the saints to that of the Messiah. The cause of truth, and sometimes of common sense, has suffered a great deal by the quoting of Scripture merely by scraps. The devil did this on this occasion. In his quotation he left out, because they did not suit his purpose, the words to keep thee "in all thy ways," thus making the passage a general promise of safety in *all* ways, whether ways of duty, or ways of folly and of sin. God will command His angels to guard the Christian from harm *in all his ways*, that is, in all the ways in which he *ought* to walk. God has promised the protection of angels to encourage us to trust Him, not to tempt Him. *In their hands they shall bear thee up.* This denotes a tender care like that of nurses. (See Num. xi. 12; Deut. i. 31; Acts xiii. 18; 1 Thes. ii. 7.) *Lest at any time, or, lest haply or by chance, thou dash*, or strike thy foot in walking so as to stumble, *against a stone, i. e.*, the one which happens to be lying in the way. We are not, for the sake of appearing more abundantly to trust God, to incur danger where no duty calls, but in the assured path of Christian duty, we cannot trust Him too simply, or too exclusively, or too largely.

12. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

¹Deut. vi. 16; see on Matt. iv. 7.

Our Lord answers a third time in the language of Scripture, from Deut. vi. 16. The word of the Law which He quotes contains no contradiction of the devil's quotation from the Psalm, but a rectification of the misuse which the evil one had made of it. *Tempt*—to demand further evidence of what is already made suf-

ficiently plain. That this is the purport of the phrase, *tempting God*, is easy to be seen from comparing Ex. xvii. 2, 7; Num. xiv. 22; Ps. lxxviii. 18, and cvi. 14. If our Lord had cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple, He would have demanded a needless miracle, publicly to prove Himself "the Son of God," and would have put Himself in expectation of an interposition for which He had no warrant, and thus would have "tempted the Lord."

13. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him ^{for a season.}

^{John xiv. 30; Heb. iv. 15: James iv. 7.}

Ended all the temptation, the trial of forty days. Jesus gave the tempter opportunity to say and do all he could against Him. He let Him try all his force, and yet defeated him. God expects His people to pass through all their trials, to go through *the hour of temptation* assigned them. *He departed from him*—the idea here expressed is not that of mere locomotion or departure, but of cessation from disturbance and annoyance. *For a season*, literally, *until an opportune season, or a convenient time*. Such an occasion was furnished in the hour of darkness (chap. xxii. 53), when our Lord's "soul was sorrowful, even unto death." (See Matt. xxvi. 38; John xiv. 30.) In Matt. iv. 11, and Mark i. 13 (on which see notes), it is said, *angels came and ministered unto him*. As soon as the angel of darkness departed, the angels of light appeared upon the scene. It is a change from deep night to glorious morning. Probably the angels assumed a visible appearance, as the devil had done in the temptation. During the assault, they stood at a distance, that it might appear that Christ vanquished Satan in His own strength; but when the conflict was over, they came to congratulate Him on His success, and to give the glory due to His name. *Ministered unto him*—waited on Him, served Him, with particular reference to food. In our *war with devils*, we may have abundant comfort from our *communion with angels*. God will more than make up to us, even in *this life*, all we suffer or give up for His sake.

14. ¹ And Jesus returned ^{in the power of the Spirit} into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

¹ Matt. iv. 12; John iv. 43. ² Verse 1. ³ Acts x. 37.

Prepared by His baptism and temptation for His ministerial work, our Lord now enters on His public activity in Galilee. *The power of the Spirit*. Having conquered the grand adversary, He went forth, with the Spirit which had descended after His baptism not only not suppressed by the temptation in the wilderness, but, on the contrary, exhibiting Himself for the first time in full power in Him after the triumph there achieved. The phrase may refer either to the miracles He wrought in confirmation of His doctrine, or to the energy which attended His word to the hearts and consciences of the hearers. *Galilee* was the most northerly of the three general divisions of Palestine. A considerable interval elapsed between the time of the temptation and this visit to Galilee. *And there went out a fame, &c.* The mode of the Saviour's teaching, the spirituality of His doctrines, John's testimony of Him, His work at the temple in Jerusalem, all these things had a wonderful effect upon the people, and served to draw their attention to this new spiritual teacher who had come among them.

15. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

This helped to excite the attention of men concerning Him. We do not find that the persecuting Jews ever hindered Christ or His disciples from preaching in their synagogues. *Being glorified of all*, that is, with universal applause. The word *synagogue*, which means a "congregation," is used in the New Testament to signify a recognized place of worship.

16. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

¹ Matt. ii. 23, xiii. 54; Mark vi. 1. ² Acts xiii. 14, xvii. 2.

The account of this incident, verses 16-31, is found only in Luke, although it is doubtless alluded to in Matt. iv. 13-16. *Nazareth*—beautifully situated among the hills which constitute the south ridges of Lebanon. *Where he had been brought up*. The Holy Ghost has seen fit to communicate but little concerning the Saviour's life, until He entered upon His public ministry. Importance and usefulness are not confined to publicity; we must be willing to be hid as well as displayed; a great work requires much preparation—

before we teach we must learn. It was probably Christ's long residence at this place that caused Him to be called *Jesus of Nazareth*, though some regard this name as one of reproach. *As his custom was, i. e.,* according to His habit of attending the synagogue worship on the Sabbath. The synagogue was the place where His Father's day and word were publicly recognized, and, as such, He thought it good to do it honor. The example of Christ has the force of a law to His followers. *He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day.* Bad a place as Nazareth was, it was not so bad but that it had a synagogue. Here Jesus preached the opening sermon of His whole activity in Galilee. *And stood up for to read.* It was the custom in the synagogue for persons when reading to stand, and when they finished reading, and undertook to expound or to teach, to sit down and commence their address to the congregation. The reading of the Scriptures should always be attended to whenever an assembly convenes for the worship of God. It is a great advantage to the ignorant who cannot read for themselves. It honors the written word as the Supreme authority in our religion. It solemnizes the mind, and prepares the heart for devotion and instruction.

17. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

The shape of the ancient *book* was that of a roll or scroll. It was a cumbrous roll of linen, papyrus or parchment, with letters laboriously written, with a *calamus* or reed pen, or a *stilus* or iron pen. When rolled up, it was bound round with thongs, called in Latin *lora*. The scroll was read by unrolling the one end, and rolling up the other end, so as to glide the eye down the open page. *And there was delivered unto him the book.* There was a "minister" (verse 20), or servant of the synagogue, called the *chazan*, who attended to what may be called the keeping of the synagogue. One of his functions was to take charge of the sacred books, to produce them from the chest or ark near the pulpit or desk in which they were kept, deliver them to the reader, and to receive them back again. *Of the prophet Esaias.* Why this book in particular? The book of the

Old Testament, to be read, was selected by the ruler of the synagogue, but the particular portion was left to the choice of the reader. *And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written.* Whether Christ chose the particular passage quoted for the occasion, or whether it was the first passage that presented itself to His eye when He unfolded the roll, is uncertain. The latter would seem probable, yet, were this to be conceded, we must remember that He did nothing casually; accidental circumstances subserved His pleasure, and were parts of His plan.

18. ^aThe Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,
⁴Isa. lxi. 1, 2.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, &c. This passage is found in Isa. lxi. 1, 2, and is almost in the exact words of the original. In this prophecy Christ asserts His designation to the office of the Messiah, and His qualification for it. The reference is to His baptism, at which the Spirit was given to Him without measure. *Because he hath anointed me.* Not that He was literally anointed, as were the kings and priests who were the types of His office, but that He had the unction of the Holy Ghost to perform the very works here predicted. *To preach the Gospel.* Preaching is the great ordinance Christ Himself made use of, and enjoined upon His Apostles and ministers, for accomplishing His purpose of salvation. *Gospel*—the glad tidings of salvation. *To the poor*—the poor in spirit, and such also as are poor in outward condition, if meekened and humbled by the sight and sense of their sins. (Matt. xi. 5.) Though the Jewish doctors disdained the poor, such as are destitute of worldly riches, yet to them the Gospel is emphatically glad tidings.

He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted—to comfort those who are bowed down by a crushing sense of sin, or by heavy afflictions. (Ps. li. 17.) *To preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind.* There is no bondage like that of corruption, no vassalage like that of the soul under the dominion of sin, and when taken captive by the devil at his will.

There is here an allusion to the wretched state of those prisoners, who, according to the inhuman custom in some Eastern countries, had *their eyes put out*; and with regard to such as these, this great Deliverer is represented as *restoring them*—a work far beyond all human power. *To set at liberty them that are bruised*. These words seem to have been quoted from Isa. lviii. 6, to strengthen the idea in the preceding clauses. Our Lord may have turned to that passage as He read, or quoted it, in the hearing of His auditors, from memory. Some suppose there is here, also, a reference to the Jews, whom, as bruised in their consciences by the galling fetters of a religion of external ordinances, our Lord released by the promulgation of His perfect law of liberty.

19. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

There is here a manifest reference to the *Year of Jubilee*. It was celebrated every fiftieth year. For the manner of its celebration, see Lev. xxv. 8-18. It commenced on the great day of atonement, and was ushered in with the universal sound of trumpets throughout the land. It restored individuals, families and communities, as far as possible, to the same situation they occupied at the beginning of the fifty years. All servants of Hebrew origin were set free; there was a general release of debts and obligations, all pledges were given up, and the inheritances which had been alienated, no matter how often, nor for what cause, came back to the hands of the original proprietors. So the trumpet of the Gospel was to proclaim a restoration of all things to their primeval order and harmony. Our Saviour, by applying this text to Himself, plainly declares the typical design of the institution referred to. *The acceptable year of the Lord*, that is, the definite time in which the Lord is gracious. A present and full salvation is now proclaimed by the Gospel. This is the *time* in which God saves to the uttermost all who come unto Him in the name of His Son Jesus Christ. The whole continuance of this dispensation is represented as a *year*, and each of us has only a *day* of it. "Behold, now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation."

20. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

Closed the book, &c. (See notes on verses 16, 17.) *And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him*, that is, were *attentively fixed on Him*. There was something in His manner or tone of voice which riveted the attention of the people. That He should undertake to teach, excited surprise, as He was known there, not as one learned in the law, but rather as a carpenter's son, who had, perhaps, Himself worked at His father's trade. And yet strange and wonderful rumors had come home lately in regard to Him, as setting up high claims, and pretending abroad to do great works.

21. And he began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.

He began by explicitly declaring, that the words read to them were, at that very time, and on that very occasion, *fulfilled in their hearing*, thus declaring, in no ambiguous language, to His fellow-townsmen, that He was the promised Messiah of whom the prophet spake, and doubtless He explained the words at some length, as referring to the spiritual redemption which He came to effect in behalf of enslaved sinners, and earnestly exhorted His hearers to seek these important blessings. Had this explanation been necessary for our salvation, it would have been recorded. The custom of preaching from a text of Scripture, which prevails throughout all Christian churches, seems to have had its origin in the authority of this example.

22. And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

*Ps. xlv. 2; Matt. xiii. 54; Mark vi. 2; chap. ii. 47. *John vi. 42.

Bare him witness, gave a favorable testimony; and *wondered at the gracious words*, or, *the words of grace*. This phrase may refer to the agreeable manner of Christ's discourse, as well as to the matter of it. They *admired*, especially when they remembered His humble origin, which gave no warrant for such speaking. It cannot be doubted that our Lord's elocution was peculiarly becoming, majestic, solemn, impressive and persuasive. In every sense "He spake as never man spake." *Proceeded out of his mouth*—an Oriental expression for the utterance of a grave and earnest dis-

course. *And they said, is not this Joseph's son?* This question was asked in the strange conversational freedom, in which the Jews indulged at their religious meetings. One moment they were astonished, the next their pride rose. The impression made by Christ's sermon was only on the surface, for the audience were unconscious of their spiritual bondage, and felt no longings for deliverance. They wondered, but did not believe. Of how many, alas! is this true, in respect to the preaching of the Gospel!

23. And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.

¹Matt. iv. 13 and xi. 23. ²Matt. xiii. 54; Mark vi. 1.

Seeing the captiousness of prejudice rising against Him in the hearts of His hearers, as indicated by their contemptuous allusion to His low birth, Jesus now addressed them in the language of reproof. In doing so, He also gives them an intimation in respect to the blessed purpose of His appearance as Israel's physician. *Physician, heal thyself, &c.* From the latter part of the verse, this proverb would appear to be a demand upon Jesus to display His miraculous powers in the sight of His fellow-townsmen. *Whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, &c.* "Do for your own Nazareth what you have done for Capernaum (in which He had healed the nobleman's son (John iv. 46-54), and doubtless performed other cures not mentioned), and thus satisfy our craving for the marvelous, or, satisfy us of your claims to the Messiahship, before you seek to convince the nation of the truth of your pretensions."

24. And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.

¹Matt. xiii. 57; Mark vi. 4; John iv. 44.

He said, in answer to some response with which they interrupted Him. *Accepted, i. e.*, approved, acceptable. Ministers generally are least acceptable among those who are familiarly acquainted with their extraction, the follies of their childhood and youth, and their education. That which comes from afar, and has not been much known, gains the greatest reputation among a people. Ministers should avoid too much familiarity with their congregations, and by gravity of deportment keep up esteem and a certain measure of awe, always tem-

pering their gravity with courtesy and a condescending affability. (See on Matt. xiii. 57.)

25. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; 26. But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. 27. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.

¹1 Kings xvii. 9 and xviii. 1; James v. 17. ²2 Kings v. 14.

Our Lord now illustrates His proverb, as well as His line of conduct, by the examples of two of the greatest of Hebrew prophets. The first example was in the days of *Elias* (the Greek form of the Old Testament name *Elijah*), when, though there were many widows in Israel, His own nation, yet none of them were qualified to receive His miracles, but a stranger, a widow of *Sarepta*, a heathen city (known as *Sarafend* at the present time, and a large inland village half way between Tyre and Sidon), whom in time of great famine He had sustained with oil and meal. (1 Kings xvii. 8-24.) *The heaven was shut up three years and six months.* In James v. 17, the duration of the drought is stated to be of the same length as it is here, while from 1 Kings xviii., it appears to result that *Elijah* in the third year returned to Ahab, and very soon after his return the rain commenced. In explanation of the seeming difficulty, we may suppose that the third year (1 Kings xviii. 1) must be reckoned from the arrival of *Elijah* at *Sarepta* (1 Kings xvii. 9), which, however, had been already preceded by a year of drought, during which the prophet had abode at the brook *Cherith*. (Verse 7.)

The second example was in the days of *Eliseus* (Greek form for *Elisha*), when, though there were many lepers in and about the neighborhood, yet they, being His countrymen, despised Him, and none were qualified for a cure, but *Naaman*, the Syrian, a man of another and heathen country. (2 Kings v. 10.) *Lepers*. Leprosy, in its worst form, was one of the most terrible of diseases. It began with red spots upon the body, grouped in circles, and covered with a shiny scale or scab. It became, generally, incurable, and so corrupted the system that it became hereditary for generations. The body crumbled, the limbs fell apart, and the man literally

went to pieces. The argument of Christ here is: "The Israelites had as good ground to reproach these eminent prophets for passing them by, as you Nazarites have to reproach me in the manner you have done."

28. And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

Truth embitters those whom it does not enlighten and convert. The Gospel, when preached with soft words, wins the acquiescence of the godless, but, when it is applied to the conscience, it kindles indignation. The Nazarites could not bear the doctrine of the Divine sovereignty—that God has a right to do what He will with His own. They saw, at least the great majority of them, that the faithless widows and lepers were but types of themselves, and, instead of any longer wondering at the *gracious words*, they were exasperated to madness. Suddenly the church became a mob.

29. And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the ^bbrow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

^aOr, edge.

Perhaps their first intention was only to expel Him from the town. But one act of violence usually leads to another. Their rage waxed more and more fierce, as they dragged Him along, until they determined to take His life. The treatment He received remarkably resembles that with which afterward Stephen met. (Acts vii. 51.) *Rose up*, in tumultuous excitement, *thrust him out*, implying that He would have stayed. *The brow of the hill*. As Nazareth is a region of some fifteen hills, abounding in precipices, there are several which might have been suitable. *Dr. Robinson* says, that in the south-west part of the town is a hill, which breaks off in a perpendicular precipice, forty or fifty feet in height, and he suggests this, or some one of the several precipices in that vicinity, as the cliff down which they were intending to throw Jesus. *Precipitation* was a punishment rarely used, though we meet with it in the history of the kings, and in subsequent times. (2 Kings ix. 30, 33; 2 Chron. xxv. 12.)

30. But he passing through the midst of them went his way,—John viii. 59 and x. 39.

It has been maintained that Christ escaped by a miracle, either in rendering

Himself entirely invisible, or putting on some *other form*, or affecting their eyes or minds in such a manner that they should not *know Him*. But Christ and His Apostles seem never to have wrought miracles in the way of self-preservation. The probability is that Jesus beheld His enemies with a look of His hitherto unrestrained majesty, reserved for this last need, and they, receiving yet another sign of His spiritual might, as a parting token, were compelled on the right and left to make place reverently for His going forth.

Had Jesus been less faithful in proclaiming the truth, He might have avoided persecution, but He sought not to please *men*, but *God*. Persecution may be escaped by us by acting insincerely and unfaithfully. But what if we should, by so doing, lose our peace of mind, and the approbation of God! The first sermon of Jesus at Nazareth imparts pregnant suggestions to the minister of the Gospel at the beginning of his work. It shows, 1. The origin, matter and object of preaching (verses 18, 19). 2. That preaching is to be grounded on Scripture, adapted to the necessity of the hearers, and presented in an attractive manner. 3. That blossoms are as yet no certain signs of fruit, and that unhappy causes may blast fair promises and prospects of success. 4. That a new work is to be begun, with thankful recollections of the past (verse 16), with holy spiritual might for the present (verse 18), and with joyful hope of the future (verse 21).

31. And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath days.

^aMatt. iv. 13; Mark i. 21.

Capernaum is compounded of the words Kefr, village, and Nahum, refreshment, so called from the springs near which it stood. Christ's residence and preaching there were the subjects of prophecy. (Matt. iv. 13-15.) The place is not named in the Old Testament, which, probably, though not necessarily, implies a later origin. *Josephus* mentions the town once by the name of Cepharnome, but applies the form Capernaum (or Capharnaum) only to a fountain. It was situated upon the shore of the lake of Gennesaret. *Came down*. The way to Capernaum from Nazareth was descending. Capernaum was six

hundred feet lower than the Mediterranean sea, and much lower, therefore, than Nazareth. *And taught them on the Sabbath days.* What He preached there is given in Mark i. 15. Nothing moved by the treatment He had received at Nazareth (verses 28, 29), Jesus patiently worked on in another place. Christians should not give up any work they are called to do, for want of success. The day comes when every man shall be rewarded according to *his own labor*. The discouragements we meet with in trying to do good, enable us to show the world that there are such things as faith and patience, and that, at all events, we are persuaded that we have truth on our side.

32. And they were astonished at his doctrine; for his word was with power.—Matt. vii. 28, 29; Tit. ii. 15.

Astonished—they were struck, literally, *struck out*, driven from their normal or customary state of mind by something new and strange. *At his doctrine*, both the matter of His discourse, and the manner of His teaching. *For his word was with power*, with authority. He spoke as one not relying on rabbis, or elders, or prophets, or even upon Moses, but as one greater than they all, having authority, original and unappealable, in His own Divine person. Indeed it was *Emmanuel, God-man*, who thus addressed them, although they then knew it not. It is one thing to admire the preacher, but another and quite a different thing to believe the truth he proclaims. (See on Matt. vii. 28, 29.)

33. 4And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice.—Mark i. 23.

In the synagogue. See on verse 15. Synagogues were intimately connected with our Lord's life and ministry. In them He worshiped in His youth, and in His manhood. They were the scenes, too, of no small portion of His work. In them were wrought some of His mightiest works of healing. (Luke xiii. 11; Mark i. 23; Matt. xii. 9.) In them were spoken some of the most glorious of His recorded works, (chap. iv. 16; John vi. 59); and many more, beyond all reckoning, which are not recorded. (Matt. iv. 23; xiii. 54; John xviii. 20, &c.)

There was a man which had a spirit of an unclean devil. When God became incarnate,

Satan became incarnate also. It is undeniable that in the time of Christ there was such a thing as the possession of men's bodies by evil spirits, or devils, as they are usually called in the Scripture. Every expression that our Lord makes use of with respect to these demoniacs plainly supposes them to be really possessed. He treated them as such. Everywhere a plain distinction is made between common diseases and demoniacal possessions, which shows that they were totally different things. (Matt. iv. 24; Mark i. 32; Luke vi. 17, 18, vii. 21, viii. 2, xiii. 32.)

The evil spirit had permitted the man to go to the *synagogue*. The Jews were careful that a man thus afflicted should suffer as little as possible on account of his misfortune. He was allowed to go where he pleased, and no restraint was laid upon him, so long as his conduct was not dangerously violent. *Spirit of an unclean devil—spirit* probably referring to the influence, and *devil* to the personality of the possessing demon. *Unclean* not only indicates that wicked spirits are impure and filthy, and continually endeavor to pollute mankind, but it is probably intended to teach the awful truth, that works of uncleanness, in breach of the seventh commandment, are works which Satan especially labors to promote by lascivious thoughts, images and desires. It may also teach us that those who were given over to Satanic possession were often people who had been specially addicted to sins of uncleanness and impurity. *And cried out.* The term refers to a specific act, and not to one of common occurrence. The cry was under a *certain fearful looking for of judgment*. The unclean spirit felt at once that One was nigh who was stronger than all the kingdom to which he belonged; hitherto his goods had been at peace, but now there was come One who should divide the spoil.

34. Saying, *Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.

*Or away. †Verse 41. ‡Ps. xvi. 10; Dan. ix. 24; chap. i. 35.

Let us alone, disturb not our actual condition, a most miserable desire to have nothing to do with Jesus. (Comp. Rev.

vi. 15.) What *have we to do with thee?* what is there common to us or connecting us, *thou Jesus of Nazareth?* From the plural "we," "us," it is possible that the demon spoke in the name of the whole demon-world, or also in the name of the entire throng assembled in the synagogue, in the definite purpose of arousing a bitterness against Jesus and bringing His life into danger. *Art thou come to destroy us?* Here is a testimony of the decided opposition between the demon empire and Christ, and of His supremacy. From this it may be inferred that the demons live in fearful anticipation of the day when they shall be *destroyed* by being subjected to greater torment than they now suffer. They shall be cast into the bottomless pit. (Rev. xx. 10.) They are now reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day. *I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.* He does not say, *we* know, he speaks of himself, not the rest. The demons in the possessed seem to have perceived before the rest who Jesus was. Here, then, the powers of hell avouch Christ's character and mission ("to destroy the works of the devil"), to which Heaven had already borne its testimony. But earth gave no responsive recognition. Heaven had spoken—Hell had spoken—but Earth still was mute. In Matt. viii. 29, the two demons also recognize Christ in His Divine and adjudging character. So in Acts xvi. 16-18, the girl possessed with the spirit of Python or Apollo, proclaimed the Apostles to be the servants of the Most High. Let us beware of an unsanctified knowledge of Christianity. It is a dangerous possession, but a fearfully common one. We may know the Bible intellectually and familiarly, and yet it may have no influence over our hearts, will, consciences, lives—thus augmenting our guilt.

35. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, *Hold thy peace, and come out of him.* And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.

Rebuked him, not as Michael the archangel (Jude 9), but in His own name and in His own power. Christ passes over for a moment the sufferer Himself in order to direct at once His word of might against

the evil spirit controlling him. *Hold thy peace,* literally, *be muzzled.*

And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, that is, had thrown him into convulsions in the midst of the assembly. This was the decisive paroxysm with which the healing was declared; at the same time, a phenomenon exhibiting the knavish, spiteful and degraded nature of the demons. (Mark ix. 26; Luke ix. 42.) *And hurt him not.* Mark says (i. 26), *when the unclean spirit had torn him,* but there is no contradiction between *that* account and *this*; the meaning is, he did not inflict on him any serious or permanent injury. Every open sinner who scornfully rejects the Gospel for his rule of life, and the Lord Jesus for his Redeemer, even while he knows that he cannot disprove the one, or disbelieve the other, stands before God in almost as awful a state of danger, as the unclean spirit in the synagogue at Capernaum. But whilst, for that unclean spirit, not all the blood of Calvary could avail to purchase him a release from everlasting woe, yet to the sinner, however obstinate, hardened and impenitent, "Judah's cleansing fountain" still is open, and no sooner does he fall before the throne of God, a willing, earnest suppliant, than he may enter within the door of grace and mercy.

36. And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, *What a word is this!* for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

The miracle of casting out the demon—the first miracle of the kind—struck the people with amazement. No one doubted of the truth of the miracle; it was evident beyond contradiction. *What a word, &c.* What kind of teaching is this? The ground of their inquiry is contained in the clause, *for with authority and power, &c., i. e.,* as one having power, self-derived and independent. From the appearance of a new power of delivering, they inferred the appearance of a new revelation and deliverance; miracle and prophecy always, to the Israelites, were reciprocal in their influence.

37. And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.

The fame, literally, *the sound.* This is a very elegant metaphor. The people are

represented as *struck* with *astonishment*, and the *sound* goes out through all the coasts, in allusion to the propagation of sound, by a strong stroke upon any substance, by which the air is suddenly agitated, and conveys the *report* made by the stroke to distant places. So this miracle, just performed, was told to others by those who saw it, till it was heard through all the coasts of Galilee. (Mark i. 28.)

38. And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her.—Matt. viii. 14; Mark i. 29.

See on Matt. viii. 14.

How indefatigable was the good Physician—one hour removing spiritual ailments, and the next, bodily diseases, thus evincing far more clearly than words can speak, that there is nothing above His power or His willingness to heal. *And he arose out of the synagogue*, a concise expression for *he arose and went out. Simon's house* (in Mark i. 29), is *the house of Simon and Andrew*. These brothers were partners in the fishing business, and appear to have lived together in the same house. (Matt. iv. 18.) Peter is mentioned alone by Luke for his strong personal character. *And Simon's wife's mother*—whether his mother-in-law lived with him, or whether he received her into his house that she might be affectionately attended to during her sickness, is not known, but either shows the kindness of his heart. We should show piety at home. "Despise not thy mother when she is old." (Prov. xxiii. 22.) The Romish doctrine of the celibacy of the clergy, certainly finds no countenance in the fact that the chief of the Apostles, who is claimed by that Church as the first pope, was a married man. We find Paul speaking of him as such, many years after this. (1 Cor. ix. 5.) When writing to Timothy, also, he says: "A bishop must be the husband of one wife." (1 Tim. iii. 2.) Marriage is one of the first of Divine institutions, and a positive command of God, who declared the state of celibacy *not good*. (Gen. ii. 18.) "Marriage is honorable in all." (Heb. xiii. 4.) Neither the Prophets of the Old Testament, nor the Apostles of the New, judged themselves too pure for an institution of their Maker. Several of the earliest

ecclesiastical writers mention others of the Apostles, besides Peter, who were married men, and one of them asserts that they all were, "excepting John and Paul."

Was taken with a great fever. Strength of grace, and special regard even from Christ Himself, cannot prevail against diseases. Though Peter was a good man, and his mother-in-law probably a pious woman, this did not exclude sickness from his family. That her fever was of a serious nature, appears not only from the terms in which Luke, who was a physician, describes it, but also from the fact that it hindered her even from entertaining, in a manner somewhat befitting Him, the so greatly desired guest. Of Tabiga, the grand manufacturing suburb of Capernaum, Dr. Thomson says: "As there is considerable marshy land about this Tabiga, may not this account for the prevalence of fevers at Capernaum? for here it was, of course, that Peter's wife's mother lay sick of a fever. Fevers of a very malignant type are still prevalent, particularly in summer and autumn, owing, no doubt, to the extreme heat acting upon these marshy plains, such as the Butaiha, at the influx of the Jordan." *And they besought him for her*. Most probably she was too ill to ask His help herself. Doubtless Jesus loved Peter, and therefore could not be indifferent to the sufferings of his mother, yet He waited until He was *besought*. So truly does our Lord delight to hear the voice of His praying people, that He delays many a blessing until He has heard the voice of faithful, fervent supplication.

39. And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever: and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.

See on Matt. viii. 15.

Stood over her. Matthew says (viii. 15) *he touched her hand*; Mark (i. 31), *he took her by the hand*. The accounts taken together harmonize and complete the narrative. The Evangelists who add something more, do not contradict the other who says less. *And rebuked the fever*, as, just before, the demon, and, as at other times, He "rebuked" the winds and the waves. (Matt. viii. 26; Mark iv. 39; Luke viii. 24.) This is generally regarded as a mere personification; but may it not be regarded as a recognition of Satan, and

the powers of evil as the authors of the disharmony in the outward world, a tracing of all these disorders up to their source in a person? We speak of rebuking a child or a servant, but not a clod or a tree. *And it left her.* Not in that state of extreme weakness and exhaustion which fever usually leaves behind when in the ordinary course of things it has abated. There was not a gradual convalescence, but an instantaneous cure was effected. The suddenness of the cure showed the reality of the miracle. *And immediately she arose and ministered unto them.* The completeness of her recovery was shown by the fact that she at once girded herself for serving. She was restored to her original position, and resumed her ordinary household duties. *She ministered unto them,* or waited on them, served them, with specific reference to food.

Serving Christ in His ordinances and in His members, is the best proof we can give to others that we are restored to spiritual health. How few render to the Lord according to the benefits they have received! Let those who have been restored to bodily health, perhaps rescued from the sight of an opening grave, not forget the Divine goodness, but be found ministering to the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the wants of His people. "I will pay thee my vows, which my lips have uttered and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble." (Ps. lxxvi. 13, 14.)

40. ^bNow when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.—Matt. viii. 16; Mark i. 32.

See on Matt viii. 16.

The report of Christ's two astonishing miracles caused the light of a new hope for the sick in the town and vicinity to rise. *When the sun was setting.* As the Jewish Sabbath ended at the setting of the sun, the people felt no scruple in carrying the afflicted, and laying them at the feet of Jesus at this time. Then, again, it must be remembered, that the cool of the day was the best time for the sick to appear on the street, and that some time was necessary to spread the news of the great Physician, and bring the sick together. *All they that had any sick with divers diseases, &c., that is, ill, or being in*

an evil condition—disease in general is denoted. The sick, the lame, the blind, the paralytic, the possessed (Matt. viii. 16; Mark i. 32), walking, led, supported by crutches, or carried in their beds, attended by numerous friends, gathered at the door of the house in which Jesus was. The Saviour could not behold unmoved the diseased creatures that were brought to Him. His heart was full of compassion. Some persons turn away from the view of misery, because it gives them uneasiness, but such conduct is selfish. Jesus felt far more at the sight of suffering than we can feel, yet He was willing to bear the pangs of sympathy. "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." (Isa. lvi. 3.) *And he laid his hands on them,* following His usual custom of connecting the exercise of His power with some external act. Most probably He uttered some kind word of encouragement, as individual cases required. *And healed them.* What rejoicing was heard that night through all the place! No sinner need despair who comes to Christ, conscious of his spiritual malady, to be healed by His merciful hand. Jesus, as it was predicted (Isa. liii. 4-6), *Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.* (Matt. viii. 17.) His sympathy with the distressed was a part of His suffering, and His removal of diseases was the fruit of His bearing our sins, and the punishment of them.

41. ^aAnd devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to ^bspeak: for they knew that he was Christ.

^aMark i. 25, 34, iii. 11. ^bOr, to say that they knew Him to be Christ.

Came out of many, at His command. *Suffered them not to speak, i. e.,* declare His Messiahship. (See on verse 35.) Our Lord refused testimony from devils, *for the very reason why they were eager to give it,* because He and they would thus seem to have one interest. (Matt. xii. 24.) He wished to show His abhorrence of their malignant nature. He would not accept them as preachers. They so mingled falsehood with their truth, that he who listens to them for their truth's sake will be led away by their lies. Are we not here taught at this day not to found our faith on pretended spiritualistic manifestations from unknown supernatural sources or sorceries?

This is an appropriate place for noticing several peculiarities of our Lord's miracles.

1. They were public. Many of them, it is true, were wrought in private, thus indicating that there was no ostentation in the manner of performing them; yet as a *general* thing they were wrought in public—in the presence of His disciples, in the sight of multitudes in all parts of the country, in a great number of populous towns, in broad day, and, in fact, under the eye of a whole nation, for nearly four years. 2. They were of a beneficent character. They were not, like the wonders of the heathen magicians, either hurtful or trifling, or like those of Mohammed, frivolous, or like those recorded in the legends of the church of Rome, most of which are so grotesque that they make a rational man smile and a Christian man weep, nor were they a wild, arbitrary display of power; but they all looked to some benignant result, such as comforting the distressed, relieving the diseased, feeding the hungry, consoling the fearful, and demolishing the bulwarks of unbelief. 3. Christ's miracles were of such a character, that if *they* were not miracles, then miracles can have no existence, and it would be impossible for a Divine mission to be authenticated to mankind by this species of evidence. They are not of a nature to be referred to the possible effects of imagination, nor to occult laws of nature never till then developed, nor to fortunate coincidences. The universal experience of man up to that time, and since that time, proves that they were not only above nature, but in many instances contrary to all its fixed and uniform laws. They were, moreover, generally of such a character as to preclude all preconcerted action with a view to collusion and deception, being performed, not in circumstances previously arranged, or at places specially suggested, but just when and where exigencies arose, and necessities required.

¹² 1 And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place; and the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them.—Mark i. 35.

According to Mark i. 35, Jesus "prayed" during this retirement. There was an alternation of prayer and labor in His life, such as in truth might be called a *praying*

without ceasing. (Chap. iii. 21, vi. 12, ix. 29; Mark xiv. 23, xiv. 34.) We must make time for private meditation, and being alone with God. Constant excitement and engagement entail great peril on the soul. The morning is the best time for devotion. *Boerhave*, the celebrated physician, rose early in the morning, and, through life, his practice was to retire an hour for private prayer and meditation. This, he often told his friends, gave him firmness and vigor for the business of the day. Chief Justice Hale, too, rose early, and retired for prayer, and to read a portion of God's word, without which, he said, nothing prospered with him all the day. "Ministers," says an old divine, "should be much in prayer. They use to reckon how many hours they spend in reading and study. It were far better both for ourselves and the Church of God, if more time were spent in prayer."

A *desert place*, not a large desert, as when the desert of Judea or of Sinai is spoken of, but only a solitude near Capernaum. *And the people sought him*, inquired whither He went, and continued to ask until they ascertained, then *came unto him*, even in the solitary place to which He had retired. *And stayed him*, that he should not depart from them. There was growing up a dangerous popularity. The miracles Christ had performed were in danger of producing too secular and general excitement. He indicated a disposition to go away, but the people earnestly solicited and pressed Him to remain at Capernaum. (See on Mark i. 35-37.)

⁴³ And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.

I must preach—to other cities also. Not in the sense of an absolute necessity, but of a moral obligation which sprang from His very relation as the Messiah of Israel, and not of Capernaum alone. As it was Christ's great design to plant and propagate the Gospel, He must not confine His ministry to one particular place. *For therefore am I sent*, equivalent to "For that I have come out." In Mark i. 38, "for therefore came I forth." (Isa. lxi. 1; John xvi. 28, xvii. 4; John x. 36.) Preaching was Christ's *great work*. Hence those who regard preaching as a thing of less importance than some other religious observances, are in error. (See on Mark i. 38-9.)

44. *And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.
 *Mark i. 39.

From this it appears that their synagogues were scattered through the villages of Galilee, as churches are among us. *He preached*, the proper meaning of the word is, *He continued preaching*; He never slackened His pace—He continued proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation to all—there was no time to be lost—immortal souls were perishing for lack of knowledge, and

the grand adversary was prowling about, seeking whom he might devour. In the earlier part of our Lord's ministry, He preached mostly in the synagogues. Afterward, when the people followed Him from place to place by thousands, He was obliged to address them in the open air, from a ship anchored near the shore, or from some eminence, where He could be seen and heard by all. (See on Mark i. 39.)

1. Where did Jesus go after returning from Jordan? 2. What is meant by "led by the Spirit?" 3. How long was Christ tempted? 4. State the three temptations, with the particulars of each. 5. How did Jesus return into Galilee? 6. Where did He teach? 7. What did He do in Nazareth? 8. What portion of Scripture did He read? 9. What effect was produced by His teaching? 10. Why was the Saviour thrust out of the city? 11. Where did He meet the man with the spirit of an unclean devil? 12. State the particulars of his restoration. 13. What miracle is next recorded? 14. Where did Jesus go "when it was day?" 15. What did He say to those who sought Him?

CHAPTER V.

1 *Christ teacheth the people out of Peter's ship: 4 in a miraculous taking of fishes, sheweth how he will make him and his partners fishers of men: 12 cleanseth the leper: 16 prayeth in the wilderness: 18 healeth one sick of the palsy: 27. calleth Matthew the publican: 29 eateth with sinners, as being the physician of souls: 34 foretelleth the fastings and afflictions of the apostles after his ascension: 36 and denoth fainthearted and weak disciples to old bottles and worn garments.*

AND sit came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret.

*Matt. iv. 13; Mark i. 16, on which see notes.

Pressed upon him. A crowd rapidly gathered around One of whom so many strange things had been reported, and about whom local curiosity had been so intensely excited. Their wish was such as Jesus never repelled—to *hear the word of God*. It seems the sermons which He had preached in His last tour through the country, had made a great impression on the minds of the people who heard Him. There was a glorious prospect of a plentiful harvest, but how few of these *blades* came to *full corn in the ear*! To hear with diligence and affection is well, but a preacher of the Gospel may expect that, out of crowds of hearers, only a few, comparatively, will fully receive the truth, and hold out to the end. *He stood*. It is probable, from Matt. iv. 13; Mark i. 16,

that Jesus was in the habit of walking upon the broad beach of the lake. He now stopped in His course as He arrived at the boats of the future Apostles. *By the lake of Gennesaret*. This inland sea or lake is called by various names. 1. *The Sea of Galilee* (Matt. iv. 18); through it the Jordan flows, along the east side of the province so called. 2. *The Sea (or Lake) of Tiberias*, from a city built by Herod on the south-west shore, and named in honor of the Emperor Tiberius. (See John vi. 1, xxi. 1. 3. *The Lake of Gennesaret*, in Hebrew, *Cinnereth* (Deut. iii. 17), or *Cin-neroth* (1 Kings xv. 20), from a city and a district on the western shore. (Josh. xix. 35; Num. xxxiv. 11.) This lake is of an oval shape, about thirteen geographical miles long and six broad. The river Jordan enters it at its northern end, and passes out at its southern end.

2. And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.

Ships—two small vessels. They were a sort of large fishing-boats, of which *Josephus* says there were about 230 on the lake, and four or five men to each. *Standing by the lake*. Stationed, at anchor, near the

shore of the lake. *But the fishermen were gone out of them.* They were not only fishing on this occasion, but followed this business as their stated occupation and the means of their subsistence. This *lake* still abounds in a great variety of excellent fish. The *fishermen* mentioned in this verse were James and John (see verse 7, 10), who are not mentioned by name, and are therefore considered as strangers to the reader. *Were gone out of them.* Out of their boats, but were probably in sight. *Were washing their nets*, from the filth of the sea, before laying them out to dry, ere they went home to get such rest and refreshment as might fit them for the toils of another night. In Matt. iv 21, it is said "*mending their nets.*" Some of the company might be employed in "*mending their nets,*" after washing, and others in "*washing their nets,*" by casting them from the shore into the lake. The "*mending their nets*" is a trivial circumstance which it would never have occurred to the inventor of a fictitious tale to mention, and is one of those minute, latent, indirect proofs of the authenticity of the Gospel, which it is most agreeable to trace when opportunity offers, although not, perhaps, of great importance. "*Fishers of men,*" after they have cast in *their* nets for a draught, should seek carefully to purify and cleanse themselves from aught which, in that very act, they may have gathered of sin, impurities of vanity, of self-elation, or of any other kind, and this they must do if they would use their nets effectually for a future draught."

3. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people out of the ship.

Entered into, went on board, *one of the ships, which was Simon's.* The ship of James and John was at some distance, perhaps around at the farther point of the cove. Simon having descried Jesus approaching, followed by the multitude, forthwith returned to his boat. *And prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land*—requested him, for the sake of convenience, to *put out* a short distance upon the sea, just far enough for Him to be heard distinctly by those on shore. *And he sat down*, the usual position

of a teacher, and taught the people out of the ship, the knowledge of the Lord. The shore was the church, the ship the pulpit, the Saviour the preacher. Here, with the deep blue sky above, the high rocks or gently sloping hills around, and the placid waters beneath, with brow yet unfurrowed with the lineaments of predicted sadness, He proceeded to unfold the great revelation for which, during four thousand years, the world had waited in anxious expectancy. It was a momentous day in the history of the Church. It is holy work that makes holy ground. It is right that there should be places set apart for holy lessons and holy services, but we must never think for one moment that there is any spot of ground so holy, that there we must think right thoughts, and speak right words, and do good deeds, but that the moment we are outside, the rest of the ground is so profane that we may live just as we like.

4. Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, ^aLaunch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.—^bJohn xxi. 6.

When Christ had done preaching, and had probably dismissed the people to their homes, He directed Peter to resume his business. Time spent on week days in the public exercises of religion, may be but little hindrance to us *in time*, and a great advantage to us in *temper of mind*, in our worldly calling. *Launch out into the deep*, and let down your nets for a draught: as opposed to the shallow water near the shore, and where would be a larger shoal of fishes. The *nets*, including also those of the fishermen employed by Peter, were probably seines, although some suppose they were *bag-nets* or *basket-nets*, such as were used in deep water. This command to Peter, following the slight test to which his obedience had been already put, had its force also with reference to the rest of the crew of the boat, who must have been active therein. Christ commands *the use of means.*

5. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

Master. Peter familiarly addresses Jesus, not as a new acquaintance, but as an old disciple. He received the first blessed word from Him on the banks of the Jordan. *We have toiled all the night, and have*

taken nothing, a circumstance which one would have thought should have excused them from hearing the sermon, but such love had they to the word of God, that it was more reviving and refreshing to them than the softest slumbers. "Fishers of men," says an old divine, "may labor all night, and all day, too, and catch nothing. This is sometimes the fisherman's fault, but oftener the fishes, who are crafty and cunning, and will not come near the net, or are too slippery to be holden. It is the fisher's fault that nothing is taken if he doth only play upon the sand, and not launch out into the deep, deliver some superficial and less necessary truths, without opening to the people the great mysteries of godliness, and if he fish with a broken net, either deliver unsound doctrine or lead an exemplary life; also, if he doth not fish at Christ's command, but run a fishing unsent." Certain it is that all the labor of the ministry must be unsuccessful where the blessing of God is not. It is the presence and influence of Christ in a congregation that causes souls to be gathered unto Himself; without these, whatever the preacher's eloquence or abilities may be, all will be *night and fruitless effort*.

Nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. We are not to regard these as the words of one half despairing of the issue, yet merely complying with the request of One whom, out of regard to their former transient relation, he recognized as his "Master," and felt bound to obey. On the contrary, they were spoken more in the spirit of the Psalmist, when he exclaimed, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." (Ps. cxxvii. 1.) They were words of faith. "Though my own reason is against Thine, though my conclusions are the opposite of Thine, though I am a fisherman, and have the greater experience in my trade, and the knowledge of the best seasons for prosecuting it, and of all the likelihoods or unlikelihoods of success that may attend it—*nevertheless*, my reason shall be laid prostrate at Thy feet, my conclusions shall be dismissed, and because Thou biddest me, I will do it." What a

precedent for us! Let us not despond upon any unsuccessful trial in our Master's business, nor be dejected by any disappointment in the way of our ordinary calling, when we contemplate this eminent example of such a blessing upon a mind ready to labor at His word, and so large amends made at once for so many fruitless experiments before.

6. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. 7. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

Break, literally, *began to break* or, *was breaking*. Such an immense weight of fish was inclosed in the net, as it was impossible for the united strength of the two brothers to draw, or for the boat to manage. Perceiving this, the brothers *beckoned*, or made signal, to their partners in the other boat, who were probably not within call, to come to their aid. What a pity there should be such an envious separation among the different denominations that profess to believe in Christ Jesus! Did they *help each other* in the spirit of Christian fellowship, more souls would be brought to the knowledge of the truth. *And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink*. Perhaps miraculous power gathered in more than the nets. Probably the one-sided dip came near to swamping the boats, the *beginning* to be merged was arrested by the righting.

8. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me: for I am a sinful man, O Lord.—2 Sam. vi. 9; 1 Kings xvii. 18.

He fell down at Jesus' knees—a profound reverence, as to a Divine being. He had a full Divine impression that this was no prophet, or angel, but God incarnate, the Son of God, who had just shown His lordship over nature, animate and inanimate, and His knowledge of the secrets of the deep. *Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord*. He was not weary of Christ's presence, but acknowledged himself unworthy of it. He felt he was in the presence of Deity, a sense of his sins and unworthiness suddenly rushed on his mind, while, with mingled feelings of humility, gratitude and awe, he entreated Jesus to depart from one who was so guilty and undeserving.

Observe, 1. Peter's acknowledgment was very just, and one which it becomes us all to make; for even the best of men are sinful men, and should be ready upon all occasions to own it, and especially to own it to Jesus Christ; for to whom else but to Him, who came into the world to save sinners, should sinful men apply themselves? 2. His inference from it was not just: if we be sinful men, as indeed we are, we should rather say, "Lord, for that very reason, while we own ourselves most unworthy of Thy presence, we most importunately entreat it. Come unto me, O Lord, for *I am a sinful man*, and if Thou stand at a distance from me, I perish!" Prayer should not be too much controlled by emotion. When the *wicked* say to God, "Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways," He often takes them at their word, yet He does not deal thus with the trembling penitent, but receives him in His arms, and bids him live with Him forever.

9. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken :

The word *astonished* is far too weak for expressing the effect which we find this miracle produced upon Peter. The original literally means *amazement wrapt him round*. Terror was mingled with his astonishment. All that were in his boat were similarly affected. We learn, from Matthew iv. 18, that Andrew, Simon's brother, was with him.

10. And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not, ^afrom henceforth thou shalt catch men.

^aMatt. iv. 19; Mark i. 17, on which see notes.

James and John were affected with like astonishment. *The sons of Zebedee*. In respect to their relation to the Saviour, it is more than probable that Salome, the wife of Zebedee, was an own sister of Mary, the mother of the Lord, so that her children were own cousins of Jesus. The children and wife of Zebedee are often noticed in the New Testament, but it is in this transaction alone that we catch a glimpse of Zebedee himself. (Matt. iv. 21.) It is supposed that he died shortly after. *And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.* Though Peter was immediately addressed, the rest, Andrew, James and John, were included.

"Be not afraid, these discoveries tend to *life*, not *death*, and ye shall become the instruments of *life* and *salvation* to a lost world." This was properly the inauguration of the great work whereunto they were about to be sent.

Jesus intending to call Peter, James and John into His service, 1. *Taught* in their presence, that they might *know His doctrine*; 2. He performed a *miracle* before their eyes, that they might see and be convinced of His *power*; 3. He called them to go forth with *this doctrine*, and through *this power*, that they might *teach* the ignorant, and be *successful* in their work. *Thou shalt catch men*. Not only in His parables, but in His other discourses, Jesus draws His doctrines and instructions from the scenes of nature, from the objects that surround Him. The fishermen were to *catch* men, as David, the shepherd, was to *feed*. (Ps. lxxviii. 71, 72.) Julian the Apostate endeavored to turn the simile of fishing against Christianity, inasmuch as fish were caught from their living element for death; but the expression used singularly excludes such a turn, for it signifies to take alive, or for life, being compounded of the words *alive* and *capture*. The parallel word "fishers," used by the other Evangelists, is the oldest name by which the ministerial office is described in the New Testament.

"Here," says a commentator of the last century, "is the work of ministers set out, to gain souls to God. They are not to fish merely for a livelihood, much less for honor and applause to themselves, but to win souls to God, and are to bait their hooks and order their nets to this end, which they will never serve, if either by general discourses they make the meshes so wide that all will dart through them, or if by their wit and learning they make their discourses so fine and curious that few or none of their hearers can understand them. Nor will all our art make us fishers of men. *I will make you to become*, says Christ. Here we see His authority. Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, God must give the increase. But yet we must order our nets rationally and probably, in order to our end, and without that cannot expect God's blessing. Nor were

the Apostles presently to enter upon the work of the ministry, but first to *come after Christ*. And indeed such should all Gospel ministers be. In the choice of Matthias, Peter limited the people in their election to *those that had accompanied with them all the time the Lord Jesus went in and out amongst them.* (Acts i. 21.) Other fishers commonly prove fishers for something else, not for the souls of men.

11. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.
*Matt. iv. 20, xix. 27; Mark i. 18; chap. xviii. 28.

They—Simon or Peter, Andrew, James and John (see notes on chap. vi. 14), brought their ships to land, had drawn them up again on the shore for a final abandonment. *They forsook all and followed Him.* They renounced their boats, and nets, and fish, the habits of life to which they had been used, and the occupation in which alone they were skilled, and which furnished their subsistence. And this, not to attach themselves to one who was rich or great, or who could or did hold out to them any worldly advantages, but to One who was as poor as themselves, One with whom they were often to suffer peril, hunger and thirst, and who could not assure them of a place where to lay their heads. Whatever they left, it was their *all*, and was as valuable to them as may be the house or land, the library, the office, the shop, of any one who reads this.

*Forsaking consists not in the more or less that is forsaken, but in the spirit in which it is left. A man may be holden by love to a miserable hovel with as fast bands as to a sumptuous palace, for it is the worldly affection which holds him, and not the world. The sincere Christian, in every age, though he does not cast aside his worldly calling, is enabled to do, what is in every respect the same—follow his occupation with a single eye to God's glory, holding all his possessions in charge for God. The minister of the Gospel is to give himself up wholly to his great work, and not encumber himself, more than can be avoided, with secular affairs and worldly business. Churches should adequately provide for their ministers, so as to prevent necessity for their resorting to worldly business.

12. ¶ And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.
*Matt viii. 1-4; Mark i. 40-45, on which see notes.

A certain city. We cannot ascertain certainly where this miracle was wrought. The confines of the city are intended, for lepers were not suffered to live in towns. *A man full of leprosy.* His disease was deep-seated, virulent, and covered all his body.

Of all diseases to which the human frame is liable, the leprosy, perhaps, was the most astonishing and appalling. It was a poisoning of the springs of life, and was deemed one of the Lord's most fearful visitations of wrath. (Num. xii. 6, 10; 2 Chron. xxvi. 19.) It affected not merely the body of the sufferer, which it covered with deep bright spots, eating through the skin into the very flesh, and spreading like one great cancer over the whole frame, but in some supernatural manner it broke forth upon the garments, in green and reddish spots, fretting them away. It even contaminated the walls of the dwelling-houses, marking them with hollow streaks, greenish or reddish, which, in sight, were lower than the wall (Lev. xiv. 37), *i. e.*, corroding not merely the plaster, but eating even into the stones of which the houses were built.

Fell on his face. In Mark (i. 17), *kneeling down*; in Matthew (iv. 19), *worshiped*. There is no essential difference in the accounts. Either of the postures might have been assumed, according to the custom of the country, in token of civil respect, or as an act of religious homage.

And besought him. The leper expressed the profoundest reverence and most earnest importunity. *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.* The leper's faith had doubtless been aroused and strengthened by the report that had gone out concerning Jesus. (See Luke iv. 37.) There was here no questioning of Christ's *power*; nothing of *his* unbelief, who said, "If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." (Mark ix. 22.) *Wilt* and *canst* are not mere auxiliaries, but distinct and independent verbs. *If thou art willing thou art able to cleanse or purify me, i. e.*, to free me from the leprosy, considered not as a mere disease, but as a symbolical and actual

defilement. If the leper had known the compassion of the Saviour's heart, he would not have said, "*If thou wilt.*" Christ's *mercy* is as great as His *power*. It is true that by His *power* He stretched out the heavens, and laid the foundation of the earth. But it is also true, that "high as the heaven is above the earth, so great is His *mercy* toward them that fear Him." How agonizing must have been the leper's suspense after the utterance of his cry! But it was not protracted. A voice replied that went at once to his heart and filled it with rapture.

13. And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, *I will: be thou clean.* And immediately the leprosy departed from him.

See on Matt. viii. 1-4; Mark i. 40-45.

By the law of God (Lev. v. 3), he that touched a leper was unclean. By what Christ did, as He was God, He could not contract any ritual uncleanness. The sun casts his beams upon all that is polluted on the earth, but retains unscathed his own purity and splendor. The deed of stretching out the hand and touching the leper had no magical, intrinsic power, being frequently dispensed with, but it visibly connected the author with the subject of the miracle, and at the same time symbolized or typified the healing virtue which it did not of itself impart. *Saying, I will: be thou clean.* Christ ratified and approved his utterance of faith, by making the concession of his request in the very words wherein the request itself had been embodied. *I will.* This is the saying of God, and God only—the saying of Him whose Almighty will is the cause of all things. When His servants wrought miracles, far different were the phrases they used. *Their* cures were in the name of *another*, but Christ's were in *His own* name, and by *His own will*. Joseph says (Gen. xli. 16), "It is not in me, God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." (2 Kings v. 7; Acts iii. 6.) *And immediately the leprosy departed from him.* The effect, as usual, was instantaneous—the man was cleansed or purified, as he had asked, and Christ had promised, both in a physical and moral sense.

14. *And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.*

^aMatt. viii. 4; Mark i. 40, on which see notes. ^bLev. xiv. 4, 10, 21, 22.

Charged him to tell no man. Our Lord's purpose in the injunction to the man that he should not divulge the cure, as well as on similar occasions, was probably this, that His stiller ministry might not be hindered or disturbed, by the inopportune flowing to Him of multitudes, who should be drawn to Him merely by the hope of sharing the same worldly benefits, as we see was the case on this very occasion (Mark i. 45), nor yet by the premature violence of His enemies, roused to a more active and keener hate by the great things which were published of Him. (Luke ii. 46, 47.) The words, *tell no man*, are to be taken with this limitation, "till thou hast shown thyself to the priests, lest if a rumor of these things go before thee, the priests at Jerusalem, out of envy, out of a desire to depreciate my work, may deny either that thou wast a leper, or else that thou art now truly cleansed." This limitation is suggested by the order of the sentence, "*see thou tell no man . . . but go,*" &c. The man was ready to remain. Adversity transfers our affections from natural objects to Christ.

And show thyself to the priest, i. e., subject thyself to the inspection of a priest, and obtain an official recognition of the cure that has been wrought upon thee. The Saviour condescends to permit His miracle to be judged by the priest as to its genuineness and completeness. *And offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded.* The sacrifice here referred to is found prescribed in Lev. xiv. 10, 21, xli. 1-32. By this requisition Christ not only provided for the full authentication of the miracle, but, as it were, defined His own relation to the ceremonial law. He knew that the ceremonies of the Mosaic law, which were only shadows and figures of good things to come, and had in themselves no inherent power, were now drawing to a close, and were soon to be laid aside forever. But so long as they were not abrogated, He would have them respected. As they were ordained by God Himself, they were not to be lightly esteemed. There is a time to be silent about the work of Christ, as well as a time to speak. There are times when our Lord would have us work for Him quietly

and silently, rather than attract attention by a noisy zeal. There is a zeal which is "not according to knowledge," as well as a zeal which is righteous and praiseworthy. Often we can be more useful by quietness and patience, than in any other way. We are not to "give that which is holy to dogs," nor "cast pearls before swine." By forgetfulness of this, we may even do more harm than good, and retard the very cause we want to assist.

For a testimony unto them, i. e., as a proof that I reverence the law and comply with its requirements, or it may refer to the fact of the man's being cleansed, which could be fully ascertained by nothing but official scrutiny and attestation. "That they may know that a mighty cleanser is here." It was a most suitable case to present to the priesthood, because it came by law under their notice (Lev. xiv. 2, 10, 21), because of its peculiar symbolic significance, and because of its demonstrative character.

Leprosy is an emblem of sin. What are we all but lepers, spiritually, in the sight of God? Sin is the deadly sickness by which we are all affected. It is inherited from our parents. (Ps. li. 5.) It has eaten into our constitution. It has affected all our faculties—heart, conscience, mind and will, are all diseased by it. (Isa. i. 6.) It excludes from communion with God, and from heaven, and, at length, it will bring the body down to the grave (Rom. vi. 23), and if sin is unpardoned, it will ruin the soul forever. Who shall deliver us from this body of death? Let us thank God that Jesus Christ can. With Him nothing is impossible. Let us never despair of any one's salvation so long as he lives. No cases of spiritual leprosy could be worse than those of Manasseh, Saul and Zaccheus, yet they were all cured; Jesus Christ made them whole. "*I will.*" These two little words are a deep mine, rich in comfort and encouragement to all laboring and heavy-laden souls. They show us the mind of Christ toward sinners. They exhibit His infinite willingness to do good to the souls of men, and His readiness to show compassion, and impart salvation to all who, like this leper, approach Him, sensible of their misery,

feeling that they have no claim other than their misery gives them, realizing their guilt, and exercising faith in His power and mercy.

15. But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

¹Matt. iv. 23; Mark iii. 7, i. 45; John vi. 2.

The greater Christ's precaution against having His cure of the leper blazoned abroad, the more rapidly and extensively the news spread. We learn from Mark i. 45, that the delivered one forgot the injunction. (1 Sam. xv. 22.) Thankful joy made silence impossible. It is noticeable that in the Gospels we never find the behavior of those who transgressed such a command very severely censured. Yet certainly this man, by his disobedience, did the cause of Christ no service. The rumor he started raised a crowd and excitement, wholly unlike the gentle and spiritual movement it was the purpose of Jesus to create, and He was followed by such numbers, that had He entered into any city, He would have been in danger of attracting the suspicious notice of the authorities.

16. And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.—¹Matt. xiv. 23; Mark vi. 46.

He withdrew, literally, *He was withdrawing*, or separating Himself, implying a habit, and *prayed*. Christ frequently, doubtless, daily went aside from the multitude, into retired places, for those exercises of devotion in which His soul delighted. (Luke vi. 12; Prov. xviii. 1; Matt. xiv. 23; Mark vi. 46.) Often, when the labors of the day were so arduous and continuous as to give Him no time for this, He drew upon the hours of night, in order that the duty and privilege of prayer might not suffer interruption. It was not enough for Him to have the feeling of devotion in His soul; He uttered audible prayer to God, and retired and withdrew Himself from other engagements, and from His most intimate friends, for this purpose. Here we have an example for our imitation. If Jesus gave Himself to prayer, shall we venture to neglect doing so? The more various and important public labors are, the more evidently do we need to draw down succor by ardent prayer, that we may be strengthened and prospered in them. We should so order our affairs

that our public work and our secret devotions may not encroach upon, or interfere with each other. Ministers, especially, are here taught that they are to receive fresh supplies of light and power from God by prayer, that they may be the more successful in their work, and that they ought to seek frequent opportunities of being in private with God and their books.

17. [¶] And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

Active and indefatigable as our Lord was in preaching in their synagogue publicly on the Sabbath, He considered this as no sufficient reason for not instructing the people in the same blessed truths on every day, in private, and in the house in which He resided. Where the heart is full of the love of God, no time will appear inappropriate, no place unseemly, to speak of all His wondrous works of providence and grace.

There were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by. It being ascertained where Jesus might be found, persons of consideration repaired to Capernaum (Mark ii. 1), not only from other parts of Galilee, but even from Judea and Jerusalem, some, doubtless, in search of benefit to their souls, some from curiosity to see and hear One whose name was in every mouth, and others to watch whether any dangerous principles lurked in a doctrine so actively promulgated. Among these, and all, probably, belonging to the latter class, were Pharisees, and *doctors of the law*, who were the same as the scribes (verse 21), so often mentioned in connection with the Pharisees.

In the phrase, *and the power of the Lord was present to heal them all*, if we refer the pronoun *them* to the persons, implied in the words *he was teaching, i. e.*, to such persons in His audience as stood in need of His healing power, the passage may be interpreted, *the power of Jesus was* (operative) *to heal all who were diseased*; in other words, there was on this occasion an eminent display of His miraculous healing power, accompanying His presentation of the truth, and attesting to His Divine character and mission.

18. ¹And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him.

¹Matt. ix. 2; Mark ii. 3.

Out of the other miracles of healing which were performed at this time, this one is recorded in detail, on account of the remarkable circumstances which attended it. *Behold*, merely indicates something new and unexpected. *Men brought in a bed.* Mark says (ii. 3), he was brought by four men. According to Oriental usage, the *bed* was probably no solid framework like our bedsteads, but a simple pallet, rug or blanket. Even the most costly Oriental beds consist of cushions and light coverings, spread upon the floor or divan. *A man which was taken with a palsy.* *Palsy* seems to be a contraction of the word paralysis. It is the cessation of nervous activity and muscular motion—a disease that is found everywhere in various forms. It was not uncommon in the East, and was often caused by sleeping at night in the open air. Sometimes it attacks the whole body, sometimes only parts of it. Some think this man's disease had been of long standing. Others suppose it was the *universal palsy*, which is quickly fatal, and which may account for the earnestness and haste of the bearers in getting their friend to Christ. At all events his case was a very aggravated one. He was totally disabled. *And they sought means to bring him in, and lay him before Him.* When they reached the house, they implored, but in vain, that an opening might be made in the crowd, that they might present their sick friend to Jesus. The door-way was thronged, some were seeking a cure themselves, others were anxious to hear the Saviour preach, many were influenced by curiosity to see Him, and the envious scribes were not disposed to give way that He might again prove His almighty power.

19. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus.

To understand the scene here described, we must banish from our minds every form of American or European houses. In those Eastern countries houses were built very low, with flat roofs (Sam. ii. 2; Josh. ii. 6; Jer. xlviii. 38; Zeph. i. 5), and with a small square, or court-yard, in the midst of the building. Access was obtained to

the roof by a staircase outside, so that a person might ascend to the roof without entering the house. In the present case our Lord appears to have been preaching in the court-yard of the house. Those who carried the paralytic not being able to reach Him because of the crowd, ascended to the roof, removed so much of it as was necessary, and let down their patient through the aperture. This could be done by holding the corners of the couch, which was but a thickly-padded quilt, without any apparatus of ropes or cords.

What pains men will take about an object when they are in earnest! The friends of the paralytic were ingenious in finding out a way. If we are as anxious to obtain spiritual blessings as they were to benefit the sick man, we shall be ingenious too. We shall find time in almost any circumstances for prayer and for reading the Scriptures. Many have shown great ingenuity in contriving means to bring sinners to Jesus. The last day will reveal how abundantly their pious plans have been blessed.

20. And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

On verses 20-26 see on Matt. ix. 2-8; Mark ii. 1-12.

The Saviour was not annoyed by the interruption, so ready was He always to help the afflicted. Not a word appears to have been spoken by any one of the party. The sick man's friends who remained on the roof, and were, no doubt, looking down with deep anxiety, conceived, and conceived truly, that the silent misery of the sufferer would plead his cause far more effectually than their best eloquence, while the sick man himself, unable to speak from his malady, was content to lie at the feet of Jesus, and there to trust to His Divine compassion. *When he saw their faith*—that of the bearers of the paralytic, as well as of the paralytic himself, manifested by their making these extraordinary efforts to bring him to Jesus. *He said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.* Saving faith and healing were alike the gift of God, and often, if not commonly, bestowed together. Instead of healing the paralytic immediately, our Lord, who knew well the state

of his heart, and, as if regarding him with special tenderness, as one who mourned more for his sins than his sufferings, pronounced his sins forgiven. This absolution was not a declaration of what was, or a wish for what might be, but a judicial sentence of what took effect the moment the words were uttered. The poor paralytic's sins were now actually pardoned, and he must have experienced the blessedness of the "man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." The worth of the pardon which Jesus bestows is valued only by those who groan beneath the burden of sin.

Our Lord's procedure on this occasion, in pardoning the paralytic's sins before healing his bodily disease, though it does not show, as some maintain it does, that He regarded special suffering as punishment for special sins, nevertheless was calculated to remind him, and all who were present, and all who read the account of the transaction, that sin is the cause and root of all pains and diseases. Greatly may he rejoice, whose experience enables him to bless the Lord who hath first forgiven him all his iniquities, and then healed all his diseases.

21. "And the scribes and Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?"

"Matt. ix. 3; Mark ii. 6, 7. "Ps. xxxiii. 5; Isa. xliii. 25.

The scribes and Pharisees who surrounded Jesus now began to show their malice toward Him. They *began to reason*, to discuss or interchange views, secretly, (Matt. ix. 3.) Blasphemy is committed when, 1. unworthy things are attributed to God; 2. when worthy things are denied to God; 3. when that which is exclusively Divine is attributed to others than God. The charge of *speaking blasphemies*, brought by Christ's subtle and bitter foes against Him, was based upon an arrogation of the Divine prerogative. "What are this man's pretensions, that on his own authority he should pronounce forgiveness of sin, the sole prerogative of God? He is guilty of the rankest blasphemy." Had our Lord been a mere man, or the highest of created beings, their reasoning would have been correct, for no one but God has power to forgive sin.

But His language is becoming and appropriate, when regarded as spoken by a Being who was God incarnate. As it seems to have been then agreed on all hands, that forgiving of sins was the prerogative of God alone, and that for man to arrogate to himself such a power as belonged to God alone, was no less than blasphemy; how can man, without guilt, undertake to pronounce absolution?

22. But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, Why reason ye in your hearts?

Mark says (ii. 8), *they reasoned within themselves*. Our Lord, seeing their thoughts, addresses them with a question corresponding in form with theirs: *What reason ye in your hearts?* In Matt. (ix. 4), the question is, "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" "Why do ye secretly reckon and meditate evil?" The words refer to this process as going forward not merely in their minds, but in their inner parts, or secretly. In both cases the interrogation implies censure. To know the hearts of men was, with the Jews, a test of the true Messiah's claims. In telling them what the thoughts of their hearts were (for they had expressed nothing publicly), our Lord gave them the fullest proof of His power to forgive sins, because God only can forgive sins, and God only can search and know the heart.

23. Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

Whether is easier. This was a point which could be determined without trouble. Miracles had other prophets also performed, but really to bestow forgiveness, that belonged to the Searcher of hearts alone. Christ's enemies, however, as He knew, thought that to *say*, or *claim* that sin is forgiven, was undoubtedly the easier, particularly so long as inquiry was not made respecting the credentials of the speaker's authority. In order, therefore, that they might doubt no longer of His credentials (which seem to have been the great end of the miracle), the Saviour accomplished the miracle of healing, whereby the blessing of the forgiveness of sins was at once manifested and sealed.

24. But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thine house.

The phrase *Son of man* appears to have

been taken from Dan. vii. 13, which the Jews understood as referring to the Messiah. (Luke xxii. 69, 70; John xii. 34.) *That ye may know*, &c. "By doing that which is submitted to the eyes of men, I will attest my right and power to do that which, in its very nature, lies out of the region of ocular demonstration. From what you shall see, you may conclude that it is no 'robbery' (Phil. ii. 6), upon my part to claim also the power of forgiving men their sins." *Power upon earth*, the counterpart of *power in heaven*. It could be no superior scientific skill, it could be no mere earthly magnetic power, it could be no accidental coincidence of events. Earth is exclusively the place where sins are committed and remitted. The phrase implies a condition of heavenly glory, in which no one will call in question Christ's right to remit sins. *I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thine house.* This was added to show the paralytic's perfect cure from a state of absolute helplessness. Our Lord here places the miracle as *proof*, in close succession after His claim of forgiving power as *the thing to be proved*. No geometrician could ever bring proposition and demonstration into closer contact.

25. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

Christ's command was accompanied with Divine power, the helpless man instantly sprang to his feet, lifted upon his head the mattress upon which he had lain, and strode with vigorous limbs out of the court, through the crowd which now instinctively made way for him, hastening, under a command so pleasant to obey, first of all to his own home and family, to be a help where he had formerly been a burden, *glorifying God* for the wonderful cure which He had performed on his body, and for the still more wonderful grace He had bestowed on his soul.

26. And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day.

They were all amazed, or, literally, "amazement took them all." The word used for amazement is the same that is translated in three places as "a trance." (Acts x. 10, xi. 5, and xxii. 17.) The effect

was thrilling. *Filled with fear.* A natural awe and reverence pervaded the people, which led them to say, *We have seen strange things to-day*, literary, events beyond belief, marvelous, paradoxical, things contrary to opinion, expectation, or ordinary experience. *They glorified God*—an admirable antithesis, the enthusiasm of the people, over against the murmuring of the scribes. Matthew says, ix. 8, “The multitude glorified God, who had given such power unto men.” From this it would seem that their ideas of Christ were, as yet, very imperfect, and that they looked on Him in no higher light than that of a man acting with delegated authority, whereas they ought to have concluded that He was the Divine Messiah. Nevertheless *they glorified God*, saying, “We never saw it in this fashion.” “We never saw anything like this.”

In addition to the practical lessons already derived from the narrative explained, the following are worthy of serious consideration: 1. Affliction may prove a great blessing to a man's soul. Many a one would never think of Jesus, but for the sickness with which he is visited. 2. Whilst it is pleasant to see crowds flocking to the house of God, there is too much reason for the painful fear, that many go there, not as humble worshipers, but as censors and spies. 3. All who are themselves in health and strength and comfort, ought to be ready to perform the various offices of humanity to those who are in sickness, or in any trouble. Especially ought Christians who have friends and acquaintances under the disease of sin, to endeavor to bring them to the Saviour, in a spiritual sense. 4. It is a solemn truth that Jesus can perceive the thoughts of men. This should be a daily and habitual reflection with us. All our purposes or desires even, for good or evil, are known to Him. (Heb. iv. 13; see Ps. cxxxix. 5.) It is delightful to think that the Son of Man has still power to forgive sin. “Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” (Acts v. 31.)

27. And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me. 28. And he left all, rose up, and followed him.—Matt. ix. 9; Mark ii. 13, 14.

On verses 27–38 see on Matt. ix. 17; Mark ii. 14–22.

After these things, i. e., after He had healed the leper and restored the paralytic. He went forth, left the house. And saw a publican named Levi, that is, looked upon, attentively regarded. A publican was a gatherer of taxes imposed by the Romans on the subject provinces of the empire. These taxes being regarded with disgust and impatient abhorrence, as badges of the national dishonor, the Jews who accepted this office, and thus made themselves the instruments of this disgrace to their country, were regarded with great abhorrence.

Named Levi, or Matthew. The two were one and the same person. It was a common thing among the Jews for a person to have two names. Matthew, who was the first Evangelist, was originally called Levi, but later, as Simon was named by the Lord, Peter, received from Him the new name of Matthew, which signifies, *God's gift. Sitting at the receipt of custom, i. e., the place of such receipt. The publicans had tenements or booths erected for them at the foot of bridges, at the mouth of rivers, and by the sea-shore, where they took the toll of passengers.* (See preface to Matthew.)

Sitting. Dr. Thomson says, “The people of this country sit at all kinds of work. The carpenter saws, planes and hews with his hand-adze, sitting upon the ground or upon the plank that he is planing. The washerwoman sits by the tub; and, in a word, no one stands where it is possible to sit. Shop-keepers always sit, and Levi sitting at the receipt of custom, is the exact way to state the case. And he said unto him, Follow me. Doubtless this was not Levi's first knowledge of the Saviour. The analogy of the class described (Matt. iv. 18–22), makes it not improbable that this man, like his predecessors, already belonged, for a shorter or longer time, to the most attentive hearers of the Saviour. But now he is called to accompany Him continually as an Apostle, and to leave all for His sake. And he left all, rose up and followed Him. We are not to understand that he departed without settling up and arranging his affairs, so that his employers might receive detriment from his change of pursuit, and yet it is plain that unhesi-

tatingly, without the reply of a word, or the least unnecessary delay, he left all in which he had just before been immersed, and obeyed the summons which was to change the whole tenor of his life.

1. Such is the freeness of Divine grace that it calls and converts when, where and whomsoever it will. 2. Conversion is as much a supernatural work now, as it was eighteen hundred years ago. (Ps. xxvii. 8.) 3. We must never despair of any one's salvation so long as he lives, after reading of Levi's case. 4. Conversion now is as equally decisive a work as it ever was. Where the inward call of the Holy Spirit accompanies the outward call of the Word, the soul promptly yields obedience to the call of Christ, Satan cannot hold us down, the world shall not keep us back. It is admitted that Matthew's resigning his worldly calling, and worldly gains, was peculiar, but this only as regards the act, and not as regards the state of mind which produced the act, and which is required of all. 5. Instant obedience to what Christ says is duty. God says, "Believe—do." We are not to discuss the metaphysics of the question, but just believe as God says, and do as God prescribes, and in the effort we will find the strength that is adequate to the occasion.

29. And Levi made him a great feast in his own house; and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.

¶Matt. ix. 10. Mark ii. 15. Luke xv. 1.

Levi regarded the change in himself as occasion of rejoicing and gratitude. There are many who, if they hear of a relation being converted, consider it rather a misfortune. What an error! Nothing can happen to a man which ought to be such an occasion of joy as his being made a subject of Divine grace. *Made him a great feast.* When Christ was invited to any table, He never refused to go, even if a publican or Pharisee invited Him, He went mainly for an opportunity of conversing and doing good. *A great feast.* The words refer more properly to the number of the guests, and the manner in which they were received, than to the quantity or quality of the fare. The *great company of publicans* consisted, in all probability, of Levi's old friends and companions, whom he desired to be convinced of the change

he had experienced, and to have the opportunity of seeing and hearing his heavenly Teacher. Having been graciously delivered from the bondage of sin, he wished others also to be set free. This feeling of Levi will always be the feeling of a true Christian.

30. But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

Their scribes and Pharisees, i. e., those belonging to Capernaum, where this entertainment was given. They were outraged, not only by our Lord's going to a publican's house to eat with him and his guests, but also by His choosing such a man for one of His most honored servants and closest companions. We are not to suppose that the scribes and Pharisees were among the company at table, for they would then, undoubtedly, according to their own opinion, have defiled themselves. We are rather to believe that the feast was so far of a public character, that access to the house was forbidden to no one, and that the desire of Christ's enemies to observe the Saviour was stronger than their disinclination to enter into the house of a publican. *Why do ye eat and drink, &c.* This fault-finding question was not directly addressed to the Saviour Himself. The defeat suffered by them shortly before at the healing of the paralytic, had probably deterred them from coming too frequently in contact with Christ. But though the cavil was addressed to *His disciples*, as it was aimed at our Lord, *He* answered, not merely to shame the scribes and Pharisees and to maintain His own cause, but also and especially in order to come to the help of His perplexed disciples, who were not yet in a condition suitable to defend themselves and Him.

31. And Jesus answering said unto them, they that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

As if our Lord had said, "Why should a physician be censured for conversing with sick patients? I came into the world to perform the office of a kind physician unto men; surely then I should take all opportunities of conversing with them, that I may help and heal them, for *they that are sick need the physician*, but as for you, scribes and Pharisees, who are strong and sound in your own opinion and

conceit, I have no hope of doing you good, for such as *think themselves whole* desire not the physician's aid." Very striking is this image of sickness to mark the prostrate condition of man in his sin. The drooping, the disgust with the very sights and sounds which gladdened him before, the feverish restlessness, the parched tongue, the weary limbs, the acute pain, the dull, deep gnawing of mortal disease, the disarrangement of all the functions of the body, the sleeplessness, the delirium, the helplessness and the hopelessness of the poor stricken one, and his death, if his sickness is not removed—surely all this supplies a wonderful picture of sin in the soul of man, the spiritual disease under which he is suffering, and his melancholy doom, if that disease is not healed by the Great Physician.

32. *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*—Matt. ix. 13; 1 Tim. i. 15.

Here, as elsewhere, we see that our Lord's call to sinners is not a bare call to become His disciples, but a call to *repentance*. Repentance, or godly sorrow for sin, is for the just-named sick, the restoration of the health of the soul. We are not to understand that Christ found some who were "whole," and "righteous;" for an Apostle has declared that "all have sinned." Jesus called those scribes and Pharisees "righteous" and "whole," not because they were really so, but only because they, with a holy mockery, esteemed themselves so. The language in relation to them is entirely ironical. (See on Matt. ix. 13.)

33. And they said unto him, "Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?"

*Matt. ix. 14; Mark ii. 18.

The objection here made, that the disciples of our Saviour did not fast so often and so much, and "make prayers" so frequently as the disciples of John the Baptist, seems, according to the fuller account of Matthew and Mark, to have come from the disciples of John themselves, in union with the Pharisees, the Pharisees having, perhaps, incited these disciples to make common cause with them, which they could the more easily do, as now Jesus was at a feast and John in prison. The *prayers* do not refer to the common and usual prayers of devout men,

but to those which accompanied a life of austere devotion, such as John and his disciples practiced, of whom many may have been from among the Essenes, whose previous asceticisms would lead them to regard with surprise the departure of Jesus and His disciples from the stern habits of self-denial practiced by their Master.

34. And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?

Can ye make, by your ordinances, precepts and practices, *the children of the bridegroom*, &c.—an evident allusion to the last testimony of John the Baptist (John iii. 29), given with a look at his murmuring disciples. It will be noticed that there is an antithesis between this and the following verse. In the one case fasting would be performed, if at all, by compulsion; in the other case, it would be spontaneous and genuine. Now that the Bridegroom was with the children of the bride-chamber, and it was a day of joy and rejoicing with the disciples, mourning and fasting would be very inappropriate for them. Christ would not discourage His disciples by over-rigorous institutions, and it is unfit that His religion should be burthened with them. He suits the duties of His people to their circumstances, and kindly proportions their work to their strength, with a tender regard to their weakness, till by degrees they may be fitted for the more difficult and humbling services. (See on Matt. ix. 15.)

35. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

"*The days will come*, in which a much greater sorrow will befall my disciples than even that which has now smitten the sorrowing disciples of John—I am not only to be separated from them, but to be *taken away*—an evident allusion to the violent death He should die, *and then shall they fast in those days.*" The words, *those days*, are not to be regarded as an unnecessary pleonasm of *the days will come*, but as an emphatic repetition. Though the expression—*then shall they fast*—does not seem to warrant the inference drawn by many from it, that when the Saviour left the world, literal fasting from meats and drinks, at

certain seasons, was to be the duty of all Christians, yet it may not be doubted that fasting and abstinence were occasionally practiced by believers after our Lord's ascension. (See on iv. 2.) The words in this verse appear to have a deeper meaning than any mere abstinence from food. They describe the state of mind in which all true Christians should live until their Lord returns. It is time for daily and hourly self-denial and mortification. The time of fullness and satisfaction cannot be until we see the Bridegroom amongst us again.

36. And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old.—Matt. ix. 16, 17; Mark ii. 21, 22.

Our Lord now introduces a *parable*, which here means a proverbial expression, or simile, illustrative of some truth, to explain and enforce the principle of congruity and fitness which would be violated, should His disciples adopt the ascetic habits of John's disciples, or those of the Pharisees. The special fitness of a parable taken from wine and clothing while He sat at a feast, strikes the eye of itself. *If otherwise*; if he does, he both rends the new garment and the patch from the new garment, and the patch from the new garment will not agree with the old. This is meant to show how the attempt to patch up the old with the new, spoils both systems. The new loses its completeness, and the old its consistency. The Saviour gave the murmuring scribes and Pharisees to understand that that which He was bringing in, was not a mere addition to, or complement of that which had gone by. The whole Jewish dispensation was passing away. The dispensation of the Gospel was at hand. But the latter was not to be thrust into the midst of the former, in order to make it last longer, or wear better. The old dispensation was not the more important of the two, and so the new ought not to be used to renovate and help on the old. The garment of law righteousness was old. The garment of Christ's righteousness was new. The first was waxing feeble,

and ready to perish altogether. The latter was not to be pieced into it, in order that it might be preserved. The "agreement" spoken of in the parable as not existing between the new and the old, simply has reference to any effort to bring them together, to unite them, to save the one from perishing by the help of the other. The old and new Covenants are both originally from God, and both, as such, are *good*, but they must not be blended together, or mixed up with each other, as if to make but *one*.

37. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. 38. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.

This parable has nearly the same meaning with the one preceding it. There is, however, this distinction, that in the former, the new (the cloth) is represented as something added with the intent of mending the old, while, on the other hand, in the second, the new (the wine) is now the principal thing, and comes into prominence in its peculiar force and working. The first parable tells us that the improvement must not be begun externally, leaving the state of the inner man untouched; the other shows inversely, that the internal renovation must reach to what is outward, and give to this a suitable direction.

39. No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new; for he saith, The old is better.

It seems very likely that in this concluding verse, which is peculiar to Luke, our Lord refers especially to the disciples of John the Baptist. They had drunk of the "old wine" of John's teaching, and could hardly be expected to become attached to the "new wine" of our Lord's kingdom. Or, it may be that the reference is to the Pharisees. The gracious Redeemer apologizes for those hearts which had grown accustomed to the nature of the old, regarding it as not unnatural that they should feel it difficult to depart from the regular and wonted course, and venture into a new and fermenting element of life. The old, though in itself less pleasant, is yet, through custom, more acceptable. "Use forms the taste."

1. From what place did Christ teach the people? 2. What did He say to Simon? 3. What did Simon reply? 4. What was the result of his obedience? 5. What did Simon Peter say at Jesus' knees? 6. Explain Christ's reply to him. 7. State the particulars of the cure of the leper. 8. Where did Jesus withdraw Himself? 9. For what purpose? 10. Explain the narrative of the healing of the paralytic. 11. What did Jesus say to Levi? 12. At what did the scribes and Pharisees murmur? 13. How did Jesus vindicate His course? 14. Explain the parables in verses 36 and 37.

CHAPTER VI.

1 *Christ reproveth the Pharisees' blindness about the observance of the Sabbath, by scripture, reason, and miracle: 13 chooseth twelve apostles: 17 healeth the diseased: 20 preacheth to his disciples before the people of blessings and curses: 27 how we must love our enemies: 46 and join the obedience of good works to the hearing of the word: test in the evil day of temptation we fall like an house built upon the face of the earth, without any foundation.*

In this chapter we have Christ's exposition of the Moral Law, which He came not to destroy, but to fulfill, and to fill up by His Gospel.

AND it came to pass on the second Sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn-fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands. —Matt. xii. 1; Mark ii. 23.

Second Sabbath after the first. From Passover to Pentecost was seven weeks. The customary reckoning of these seven weeks was from the *second day* after the Passover, and the *first Sabbath* after this *second day* was called the *second-first Sabbath*. The Passover was in April, a time not too early for the ripening of the barley-fields in the better parts of Palestine. *He went through the corn-fields*, attended by His disciples and some of the Pharisees, whose curiosity, it is probable, prompted them to follow on this occasion, in expectation of seeing more miracles. The fields were sown with corn, in the proper English sense of grain or breadstuffs, with particular reference to wheat and barley. Rabbinic authority shows that there were paths leading through the fields of corn. *And his disciples*, who had eaten nothing during the day, *plucked the ears of corn*, wheat or barley, and as it was ripe, *rubbed them in their hands*, so as to separate the kernels from the chaff, *and did eat*. This is a customary way of appeasing hunger in Palestine at this day.

2. And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath-days? —^bEx. xx. 10.

Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath-days? This could not refer to

walking in the fields, for, according to Jewish tradition, one might travel beyond the limits of a town, "a Sabbath-day's journey," which was about seven-eighths of a mile. (Ex. xvi. 20; Acts i. 12.) The plucking of ears of corn by passengers in a corn-field through which a path lay, was allowed by the law. (Deut. xxiii. 25.) *Dr. Robinson* says it is the custom still. Indeed, the Pharisees only say that it was *unlawful on the sabbath-days*. This was more than the law of the Sabbath said or implied. The law forbade servile work on that day, but the act of the disciples was no servile work. Hypocrites expend their zeal about the lesser things of the law, whilst they neglect the greater. (Matt. xxiii. 24.) They place all holiness in the observance of outward ceremonies, whilst they neglect moral duties. An intolerant and censorious spirit in religion is greatly to be deprecated.

3. And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungered, and they which were with him? 4. How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shew-bread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone? —1 Sam. xxi. 6. ^aLev. xxiv. 9.

In the answer of our Lord there was a reference to 1 Sam. 21. *The house of God*, in which He dwelt among His people, an expression no less applicable to the tabernacle than the temple. As the ancient sanctuary, under both its forms, was meant to symbolize the doctrine of Divine inhabitation and peculiar presence with the chosen people, it was movable as long as they were wandering and unsettled, but as soon as they had taken full possession of the promised land, which was not till the reign of David, the portable tent was exchanged for a permanent, substantial dwelling. At the time here mentioned, the tabernacle was at Nob. (1 Sam. xxi. 1.) *The shew-bread*, in Hebrew, "bread of

the presence," or faces, because this bread was to be set continually "*before the face of Jehovah.*" (See Ex. xxv. 23 and 30.) Twelve loaves were every Sabbath placed on a table in the Holy Place, first in the tabernacle, and afterward in the temple of Solomon, and when they were removed, they were eaten only by the priests. The argument of Jesus was this: "If David, when he was fleeing from Saul, and was overtaken with hunger, took and ate that holy bread, and did this, not because he was called of God to a peculiar work and office in which he might lawfully do things forbidden to others, for *he gave also to them that were with him*, why might not my disciples pluck barley on a holy day, when they were hungry? If God permitted the rules of His own house to be infringed in cases of necessity, would He not allow work to be done on His own Sabbath days, when it was work for which there was really a need?" Our Lord did not argue for a proper breaking of the law, but for its true construction. The example adduced by Him not only indicated His purpose to remain in all things spiritual faithful to the standard of His illustrious ancestor, but was also admirably fitted to show that under such a pressure a ceremonial precept must give place to a moral duty.

5. And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

The Sabbath is an ordinance for man's rest, both actually and typically, as setting forth the rest that remains for God's people. (Heb. iv. 9.) But He who is now speaking has taken on Himself manhood—the whole nature of man—and is rightful Lord over creation, as granted to man, and of all that is made for man, and therefore of the Sabbath. The whole dispensation of time is created for man—for Christ, as He is man—and is in His absolute power. Hence the Sabbath having been ordained for man, not for any individual, but for the whole race, it must needs be subject to the Son of man, who is its Head and Representative, its Sovereign and Redeemer. This implies that though the Sabbath, in its essence, is perpetual, the right of modifying and controlling it belongs to Christ, and can be exercised only under His authority.

The Sabbath is of Divine institution. It was established on the day of the holy rest of God, at the end of the creative week. It formed a part of the Patriarchal religion. It was woven into the moral code given to Moses. It was not given as a part of the *ceremonial* law, but of the *moral*. The injunction in the fourth commandment, to "*remember*" it, implies that it was an institution with which the Israelites were already acquainted. We meet with directions concerning it in the Prophets, and then passing on we find it hallowed by Christ's holy example. (iv. 16.)

After the resurrection of Christ, the Jewish Sabbath, which was laid upon the primitive Sabbath, was abolished, and "*the Lord's day*" (Rev. i. 10), or Christian Sabbath, was superimposed upon another day—the *first day of the week*—thus making the day of universal and perpetual obligation. On this day, when His disciples were assembled, Jesus appeared to them. The appearance was repeated by Him on the same day a week afterward. On this day, in all probability, the Holy Ghost was given, for the day of Pentecost signifies the fiftieth day from the first day of the feast of the Passover, and always happened on the first day of the week. On the first day of the week the disciples assembled for worship. (Acts xx. 7.) On it contributions were made for charitable purposes. (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.) John refers to it as "*the Lord's day*" (Rev. i. 10), meaning that it was that day which was consecrated to the worship and service especially of the Lord Jesus Christ. *Ignatius*, Bishop of Antioch, A. D. 101, says: "Let us (Christians) no more sabbatize," that is, keep the seventh day, as the Jews did, "but let us keep the Lord's day." *Theophilus*, Bishop of Antioch, about A. D. 162, says: "Both custom and reason challenge from us that we should honor *the Lord's day*, seeing on that day it was that our Lord Jesus completed His resurrection from the dead." *Irenæus*, Bishop of Lyons, A. D. 167, who had been a disciple of Polycarp, the companion of the Apostles, says: "On the Lord's day every one of us Christians keeps the Sabbath, meditating on the law, and rejoicing in the works of God." *Clement*, of Alex-

andria, A. D. 192, says: "A Christian, according to the command of the Gospel, observes the *Lord's day*, thereby glorifying the resurrection of the Lord." The words of *Tertullian*, about the same time, are: "The Lord's day is the holy day of the Christian Church." *Constantine*, in the fourth century, issued an edict, obliging all the Roman empire to "observe the *Lord's day*, in memory of those things which were done by the common Saviour of men;" and *Chrysostom* says: "The first day of the week is to be observed by Christians as the *Lord's day*."

The Sabbath is absolutely essential, not only to the animal creation in the service of man, but to man's welfare, physically, intellectually, socially, morally. Hence nearly all nations have observed a day of rest periodically, and generally the seventh day. The infidel actors in the French Revolution abolished the Christian Sabbath. They voted "No God," instead of the God of Abraham, and they voted "No Sabbath," but substituted what they called the Decades, or every tenth day. But what was the result? After the desperate experiment had been made, Robespierre was constrained to say, "The world will go to pieces if we cannot find a God;" and, in the course of a few years, as if the Sabbath was made for man, the world fell back into the olden ruts, and seized the Sabbath again as too precious to be let go.

We live in days when anything like strict observance of the Sabbath is loudly denounced by some as a remnant of Jewish superstition. Vague talk like this has no confirmation in the word of God. Let us settle it in our mind that the fourth commandment has never been repealed by Christ, and that we have no more right to break the Sabbath, under the Gospel, than we have to murder and to steal. The architect who repairs a building, and restores it to its proper use, is not the destroyer of it, but the preserver. The Saviour who redeemed the Sabbath from Jewish traditions, and so frequently explained its true meaning, ought never to be regarded as the enemy of the fourth commandment. On the contrary, He has "magnified it, and made it honorable."

¶ And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that

he entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered.
 *Matt. xii. 9; Mark iii. 1; see chap. xiii. 14 and xiv. 3; John ix. 6.

Another Sabbath, probably the next after the incident in the corn-field. *The synagogue*, of those with whom He had thus disputed (Matt. xii. 9), *taught*, according to His usual custom. *And there was a man whose right hand was withered*. An atrophy (of the limb), and an inability to move the nerves and muscles, which would cause the limb to be *rigid*, was what the Jews understood by a "withered limb." It was occasioned by a deficient absorption of nutriment in the limb. It was attended with great danger, and often proved fatal. When once thoroughly established, it was incurable by any art of man. *Right hand*. The mention of the right hand is important, not only as it is a definiteness of expression which attests the independence of Luke's narrative, but also as showing the great mercy of restoring to a man the use of the hand (or arm) with which he labored.

7. And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him.

Christ's enemies were present, for they observed the *forms* of religion, though they knew not its *power*. They *watched him*, and, as the original verb denotes, with evil intent. It is thus that some minds place themselves when they come to view religion. They scan it, not to know the true will of God, and their duty in His sight, but to see if some ground of perversion cannot be found.

8. But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand. Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth.

But he knew their thoughts. This assertion of Christ's omniscience is not the less valuable and convincing a proof of His Divinity, because introduced with so little apparent design on the part of the Evangelist. *And said to the man with the withered hand*. Notwithstanding the men were present who had just charged His disciples with breaking the Sabbath, Jesus here proceeded with His work. The unjust censures and malicious cavils of wicked men must not discourage us from doing our duty either toward God or our neighbor. *Rise up, and stand forth in the midst*, literally, "up! into the midst." It may

have been the design of this command, to stand forth and show himself to the congregation, that the sight of his distress might move them to pity him, and that they might be the more sensibly struck with the miracle when they observed the wasted hand restored to perfect soundness in an instant.

9. Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?

To expose the malice and superstition of His foes, our Lord appealed to the dictates of their own minds, whether it was not more lawful to *do good on the Sabbath days than to do evil, to save life than to kill*. He meant, more lawful for Him to save men's lives than for them to plot His death without the least provocation. In Scripture, the mere negation of anything is often expressed by the affirmation of the contrary. Thus (chap. xiv. 26), *not to love*, or even *to love less*, is called *to hate* (Matt. xi. 25); *not to reveal* is *to hide*, and here, *not to do good*, when we can, is *to do evil*, *not to save* is *to kill*. From this, and many other passages of the New Testament, it may be justly deduced, as a standing principle of Christian ethics, that not to do the good which we have the opportunity and power to do, is, in a certain degree, the same as to do the contrary evil, and not to prevent mischief when we can, the same as to commit it.

10. And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

See on Matt. xii. 13; Mark iii. 5.

The *manner* in which Christ performed this miracle is very remarkable. First, He made a full pause, gazing upon His adversaries as they stood with the obdurate silence of hatred in a circle before Him. He *could* have healed the poor man by a word, but He desired him to *stretch forth his hand*. Was not this a strange command? The man might have replied, "I have often endeavored to stretch forth my hand, and have not been able. Why should I try again?" But he made no such unbelieving answer; he confided in the power of Jesus, and his attempt was successful—*his hand was restored whole as the other*. In this simple history we have the best answer to those doubts, hesitations and questionings by which anxious inquirers

often perplex themselves in relation to repenting and returning to Christ. Let them do as *he* did who had the withered hand. Let them not stand still, reasoning, but act. Depraved man is withered in every limb of his soul, impotent by fallen nature. Yet just as this man was commanded to put forth his strengthless hand, so is the strengthless soul commanded to commit itself to the Redeemer, and in the effort to do so it will find that power accompanies the precept.

11. And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

They felt they could not stand before His arguments, sustained as they were by such signs and wonders. Their credit was in danger; they saw that if Jesus was allowed to go on, their influence and gains would be lost. What then would be done? It was an affair of so much importance that they called a council. (Mark iii. 6.) The enemies of Christ and His cause, when arguments fail, fall to violence. It is a certain sign of a weak cause, that it must be supported by passion, which is all tongue and no ear. (See Mark i. 21; Mark i. 29; John v. 9; John ix. 14; Luke xiii. 14, xiv. 1.)

12. And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.—Matt. xiv. 23.

It would appear, from a comparison with Matthew (x. 2-4) and Mark (iii. 13-19), that what is here related took place soon after Jesus returned from the sea of Tiberias (Mark iii. 7), to avoid the murderous designs of the Pharisees and Herodians. (Mark iii. 6.) *Went out*. Out of synagogue and city, from the crowded haunts of men. Solemn was the exchange from town to mountain. Hattin was the mountain-summit to which our Lord ascended. *To pray*. What a sublime and striking picture is here presented—the incarnate Son withdrawn from the noise and tumult of the world, to hold converse with the ineffable Jehovah! The Christian should be much alone with God. Shut out from life's distracting cares and business, he should hold communion with his "Father who seeth in secret," and place his soul under the beams, and breezes, and blessed visions of heaven.

If the sinless Saviour found retirement necessary for His spiritual strength, how much more do we need it who are polluted with sin!

And continued all night. What ardor of love must have filled His bosom to have driven sleep from His eyelids, and sustained Him in prayer during the watches of the night! This perseverance furnishes a high and holy lesson for imitation. It is not by the short and transient applications to a throne of grace, which we are too apt to dignify with the name of prayer, that we can hope to be qualified for seasons of peculiar trial, temptation or labor. This can alone be done by dwelling near the mercy-seat; by sitting, as it were, upon the footstool of the throne (1 Chron. xxviii. 2); by daily, hourly, constantly sending forth our petitions to Him whose grace alone can be sufficient for us. *In prayer to God*, literally, *in prayer of God*. This expression is a Hebraism, meaning "fervent and earnest prayer," just as "mountains of God," and "cedars of God," in the Old Testament, mean "lofty" mountains, and "high" cedars. (Ps. xxxvi. 6; lxxx. 10.) We must not only *ask*, but *seek*, and *knock*. It is not difficult to determine what was the subject of our Saviour's prayer that night, when we observe that the next morning He chose twelve from among His disciples to be Apostles. Was He not praying in the night for them, and for their followers through all time?

Here, then, we learn the great importance of prayer and intercession in behalf of ministers, and particularly at the time of their ordination, that they may enter upon the great work before them with a becoming caution and fear—with a proper sense of responsibility, not with aspiring, but humble thoughts, *for who is sufficient for these things?* Those to whom the responsible office of ordaining is committed, should pray that they may "lay hands suddenly on no man." Those who offer themselves for ordination should pray that they may not undertake work for which they are unfit, and not run without being sent. The lay-members of the Church, not least, should pray that none may be ordained, but men who are in-

wardly moved by the Holy Ghost. Happy are those ordinations, in which all concerned have the mind that was in Christ, and come together in a prayerful spirit.

13. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples; and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;—Matt. x. 1.

When it was day, probably early in the morning, *he called unto him his disciples*. The persons commissioned were disciples before they were Apostles, to teach us that Christ will have such as preach the Gospel to be His disciples before they are ministers—trained up in the faith and doctrine of the Gospel, before they undertake a public charge. The successive stages of apostolic induction are, *First*, the admitting to a more intimate association of one and another as *disciples*. (John i. 35–52.) *Second*, a choice of one or several at a time to be strictly His intimate *followers* in order to be His future *preachers*. (Luke v. 1–11.) *Third*, the formation of the whole into an organism of *twelve*, under the title of *Apostles*, as specified here, in verse 13. *Fourth*, a sending of them forth on a trial mission. (Matt. x. 1–42.) *Fifth*, the apostolic keys. (Matt. xvi. 13–20.) *Sixth*, their qualifications for the exercise of their inspired and miraculous apostolic authority by the Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit. (Acts ii. 4.) It will be remembered, also, that Christ called them at first servants (Matt. x. 24), afterward friends and children (John xiii. 33; xv. 15), finally, even brethren. (John xx. 17.)

And out of them he chose twelve. The Saviour caused a great number of His disciples to come to Him, and now out of this number *chose* the twelve Apostles. He chose them, not they Him, yet He chose with discerning power, knowing their character and state of heart. Though the call of all proceeded alike from their Master's grace, we cannot fail to notice those personal qualifications which He Himself condescended to own and use in His service—the firm faith of Peter (*the rock*); the energy of the sons of Zebedee, whom He surnamed Boanerges (*sons of thunder*), united in John with that spirit of love, which made him the *beloved disciple*; the fraternal and friendly affection of Andrew and Philip; the devotion and guileless sincerity of Nathanael; the self-

sacrifice of Matthew; the practical godliness of James, and the firm resolve of his brother Judas, to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," and, at the opposite extremity of the moral scale, that love of the world which made Judas Iscariot an awful example, that even one of those chosen by Christ to live with Him and bear His word, could yet betray his Master, and prove to have been all along "a son of perdition," for "He knew from the beginning who should betray Him."

Why Christ chose *twelve* it is difficult to say. Perhaps, if He had taken fewer, it would have been too limited a testimony. By taking twelve he took a competent number who could be witnesses of the facts they saw, and of the truths they heard, and thus go forth as eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses, to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ. Or, perhaps, He selected twelve, because that was the number of the tribes of Israel. (See Matt. xix. 28.) That there was a Divine *idea* in the selec-

tion of *twelve* Apostles, is evident from the symbolical usages in the Apocalypse. In Rev. xii. 1, the woman that symbolizes the Church has upon her head a crown of twelve stars. And the tree of life, emblem of Gospel grace, has twelve manner of fruits, that is, a monthly harvest, thus combining therein a Mosaical and Apostolic allusion. *Whom also he named Apostles.* *Apostle* means *one sent forth*. By this name, thenceforth, were those to be known, whom Jesus now commissioned to be His more intimate friends and followers, and to be the founders, under Him as their Great Head, of the Church which He was about to establish. Judas by his betrayal of Christ forfeited his apostleship. The place thus left vacant was filled by Matthias, although some, who look upon his appointment as not being in accordance with the mind of the Spirit, number Paul with the twelve, in the place of Judas.

The following are the names of the Apostles, and the order in which they are given:

(ON THE HISTORY OF THE APOSTLES SEE APPENDIX A.)

<i>Matthew</i> x. 2, 3, 4.	<i>Mark</i> iii. 16, 19.	<i>Luke</i> .	<i>Acts</i> i. 13.
1. Simon Peter, and	1. Simon Peter.	1. Simon Peter, and	1. Peter, and
2. Andrew, his brother.	2. James, and	2. Andrew, his brother.	2. James, and
3. James and	3. John, surnamed Boanerges.	3. James, and	3. John, and
4. John, Sons of Zebedee.	4. Andrew.	4. John.	4. Andrew.
5. Philip, and	5. Philip.	5. Philip, and	5. Philip, and
6. Bartholomew.	6. Bartholomew.	6. Bartholomew.	6. Thomas.
7. Thomas, and	7. Matthew.	7. Matthew, and	7. Bartholomew and
8. Matthew, the publican.	8. Thomas.	8. Thomas.	8. Matthew.
9. James, the son of Alphaeus.	9. James, the son of Alphaeus.	9. James, the son of Alphaeus.	9. James, the son of Alphaeus, and
10. Lebbeus, surnamed Thaddeus.	10. Thaddeus.	10. Simon Zelotes.	10. Simon Zelotes, and
11. Simon, the Canaanite.	11. Simon, the Canaanite.	11. Judas, the brother of James.	11. Judas, the brother of James.
12. Judas Iscariot, "Who also betrayed Him."	12. Judas Iscariot, "Who also betrayed Him."	12. Judas Iscariot, "Which was also the traitor."	

It will be observed that in Luke's catalogue their names are given by couples, doubtless to indicate how they were assorted in sending them forth two by two. It will be noticed also that although the arrangement of the names is so unlike in these four lists, the variation is confined to certain limits, as the twelve may be divided into three quaternions, which are never interchanged, and the leading names of which are the same in all. Thus Peter is invariably the first, Philip the fifth,

James the ninth, and Iscariot the last, except in Acts, where his name is omitted on account of his apostasy and death.

14. Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, — *b* John i. 42.

Simon, (whom he also named Peter.) Simon was the son of Jonas, or Jona. This was his original name, and signifies *hearing*. He was born at Bethsaida, a town situated on the western shore of the lake of Genesareth, but in what particular year we

are not informed. (John i. 42, 43.) He was a married man, and had his house, his mother-in-law, and his wife, at Capernaum, on the lake of Gennesareth. (Matt. viii. 14; Mark i. 29, Luke iv. 38.) He was by occupation a fisherman, and seems to have been associated with his brother Andrew in this business.

And Andrew his brother. Andrew was a native of Bethsaida, and brother of Peter. Whether he was Peter's elder or younger brother is uncertain. He, too, was called from his fishing-net to be a fisher of men. The name Andrew was Greek, and is found in Herodotus. He probably had a Hebrew name besides, which had been gradually superseded by the Greek one.

James and John. These two Apostles in most passages of the Gospels are named together, and from the prevailing order it is inferred that John was the younger. Their father was Zebedee, their mother Salome, whom some recent critics identify with the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus, in John xix. 25. Zebedee, whose occupation the two sons followed, was a fisherman of Bethsaida, on the lake of Tiberias, who, as he had a vessel of his own and hired servants (Mark i. 20), appears to have been in good circumstances for his station in life. We know nothing of him beyond his interposing no refusal when his sons were called to leave him (Matt. iv. 21), and his disappearance from the Gospel narrative leads to the inference that his death set Salome free to join her children in ministering to the Lord. (Luke viii. 3.)

Philip. The name is an old Greek one, and is found everywhere in ancient history. Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter (John i. 44), and apparently was among the Galilean peasants of that district who flocked to hear the preaching of the Baptist. He was a firm believer in the Messiahship of Christ. (John i. 25.) The statement that Jesus found him (John i. 43), implies a previous seeking. To him, in the whole circle of the disciples, were spoken the words so full of meaning, "Follow me."

Bartholomew is a patronymic, *the son of Tholmai*. His own name nowhere appears in the three first Gospels. He is supposed

to be the same person who is elsewhere called Nathanael.

15. Matthew and Thomas, the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes.

Matthew is the same as Levi. (Luke v. 27, 29.) He was the son of a certain Alphaeus. (Mark ii. 14.) The only certain information which we possess concerning Matthew is contained in the Gospels, as his name occurs but once in the Acts of the Apostles, and never in the Epistles. Although a Jew, he was in the employment of the Romans as a publican, or tax-gatherer, and persons thus employed were odious to their countrymen, even to a proverb. The office was, however, one of some trust, and the means of worldly comfort which it offered were in proportion to its responsibilities, and this the more enhances the devoted self-denial of Matthew, in so readily leaving all to follow ONE who had "nowhere to lay his head." (See Preface to Gospel of Matthew.)

Thomas was also called *Didymus*, the two names being Aramaic and Greek synonymes, both meaning a *twin*. He was probably a Galilean, as well as the other Apostles, but the place of his birth and the circumstances of his calling are unknown. Besides the lists of the Apostles, he is named eight times in the Gospel of John: xi. 16, xiv. 5, xx. 24-29, xxi. 2.

James the son of Alphaeus. The words *the son*, are not in the original, but the ellipsis is no doubt to be supplied with them. He is called by Mark, James the Less (xv. 40), and appears to be that James whom Paul calls "the Lord's brother." (Gal. i. 19.) *Alphaeus* seems to be a Greek modification of an Aramaic name, of which *Clopas* (John xix. 25), is supposed to be another form. Now as Clopas was the husband of the Virgin Mary's sister (John xix. 25), his son would be the cousin of our Lord, and might, according to a common Hebrew idiom, be called brother. (See Gen. xiii. 8; 2 Sam. i. 26; Acts vii. 25, 26, ix. 17.)

Simon called Zelotes, in Matt. x. 4, *the Canaanite*. The two epithets attached to his name have the same signification, the former being the Greek translation of the latter, which is Chaldee. Both seem to

point him out as belonging to the Jewish faction called *Zealots*, which was animated by a most bitter and uncompromising zeal against the Roman rule, as a thing accused, unlawful, and by every means to be put down, and which played so conspicuous a part in the last defense of Jerusalem. Simon is not mentioned in the New Testament out of the catalogue of the Apostles.

16. And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which was also the traitor.—¹Jude 1.

Judas the brother of James. The place here occupied by the name of *Jude* is filled by that of *Lebbæus* in Matthew x. 3, and that of *Thaddeus* in Mark iii. 18. It is generally accepted that these were three names for one and the same person, who is therefore said by Jerome to have been *trionymus*. He is the "Judas, not Iscariot," mentioned by John, xiv. 22.

Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor, i. e., who became, or turned out to be the traitor. Judas is uniformly mentioned last on the lists, with a brand of infamy. Many conjectures have been made as to the meaning of the appellative *Iscariot*. Some suppose it to signify, "The zealot;" others, that it is derived from a word signifying *suspension*, and refers to the manner of his death (Matt. xxvii. 5); others still, that it means "the man of Carioth," or Kerioth, a city of Judah. (Josh. xv. 25.) The last explanation is now generally accepted; and if it be right, Judas is the only one of the Apostles whom we have any reason to regard as not a Galilean. Also, *i. e.*, besides being an Apostle, or although he was one, which was a fearful aggravation of his guilt, he became a *betrayed*. Judas came to an awful end. (Matt. xxvi. 34; John xvii. 2; Acts i. 25.)

17. ¹ And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases;
²Matt. iv. 25; Mark iii. 7.

After choosing His twelve Apostles, our Lord descended with them, and stood in the plain. As the place where the following discourse was delivered, is said, by Matthew (v. 1), to have been a mountain or eminence, we must interpret the words here of an elevated plain or table-land at the foot of the mountain. *Robinson* and

Stanley both describe the Tell Hattin, lying a little west of the sea of Galilee, and so called from the village at its base, which the Latin, though not the Greek tradition, connects with the delivery of the sermon on the Mount, and which is now called the "Mount of Beatitudes," as consisting of a ridge, from which rise two horns or peaks, known as the Horns of Hattin. If the tradition is correct, as *Stanley* is disposed to regard it (and even *Robinson* finds nothing contradictory to it in the situation of the hill), our Lord ascending the ridge into one of the peaks, would have gone up into the mountain (Matt. v. 1), and coming down afterward, for greater convenience, upon the ridge, would have been upon a level place, without having left the mountain.

The company of his disciples—no longer including in their class the Twelve who had just been chosen as His immediate attendants. And a great multitude of people, &c. Some had come to hear the new Teacher, whose fame had spread abroad in every direction; others, and perhaps the large majority, to be healed of their diseases.

18. And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.

Persons demoniacally possessed were among the gathered crowd. *Were healed.* Those who were possessed with demons were afflicted to a greater or less extent with physical maladies.

19. And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for where he went virtue out of him, and healed them all.
¹Matt. iii. 14, 33. ²Mark v. 30; Luke viii. 46.

There was such eagerness to be healed, that they pressed forward in a body to touch Jesus. *Virtue* means power. The word is the same as that used by our Lord (Mark v. 30), when "He perceived that virtue had gone out of Him." Christ's inherent, underived power went forth from Him, so that all who had approached Him, desiring a cure, were healed. Happy are they who, treading in the steps of Jesus, delight in relieving the miserable! What a scene of suffering must have been witnessed on this occasion! Then what a scene of joy! Yet these changes were but faint emblems of the glorious works which are now wrought where the Gospel is preached in power; for virtue, a Divine

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power, still goes out of Jesus, so that tongues that were dumb in His praise are loosed, feet that could not walk in His ways are strengthened, and parents behold their wandering children returning to their forsaken God.

20. ¶ And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, "Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God."—Matt. v. 3 and xi. 5; James ii. 5.

See on Matt. v. 1.

Without entering into any thorough discussion of the question, about which some difference of opinion exists, whether the sermon here given and that recorded in the 5th, 6th and 7th chapters of Matthew are two relations of the same discourse, or distinct discourses, delivered at different times, we shall assume, as most harmonists and interpreters maintain, that they are identical. The very variations in them tend to establish an essential sameness. Both begin with the same blessings and end with the same striking parable concerning the difference between hearing and doing, and it is inherently improbable that Christ, at different periods in His life, should have made use of the same commencement and the same conclusion of His discourse. Between this common beginning and ending, it is true, there is much in Matthew which Luke does not give, and some passages in Luke which do not appear in Matthew, yet it is also true that the passages common to the two Evangelists are perfectly identical in substance, follow in the same order, and contain those truths which are of universal concern to the disciples of Christ in every age. Should it be asked why Luke omitted such extended and important parts of the discourse, this question might be answered, first, by replying that he repeats the like sentiments in other passages of his Gospel, and, secondly, by asking why Mark omitted the whole discourse, or why Matthew passed over all that is contained in chapters 1 and 2 of Luke? It is well that the Evangelists did not follow servilely each in the steps of his predecessor, else what need would there have existed for four Gospels? In what respect would the second, third and fourth have added to the amount of information given in the first?

In order to harmonize the arrangement of Luke's report of the sermon with that of Matthew, we must read the verses in the following order: 20-26, 29-30, 27, 28, 32-42. Verses 34 and 35 in Luke are additional matter.

And he lifted up his eyes, a form of expression representing the solemnity and importance of the discourse about to be pronounced; *on his disciples*, to whom, until verse 27, His discourse is addressed, but in the hearing of the people. *Blessed be ye poor*. This is explained by the terms in Matthew, "poor in spirit." The reference is not to external situation, but to disposition and character. A bare outward poverty, or an avowed voluntary poverty, will entitle none to the blessing. Many poor persons are proud, ungodly, dishonest and profligate, while some of the rich are humble, pious and holy. Poverty, indeed, has advantages in respect of religion, but none are here pronounced *blessed*, except such as have "poverty of spirit," that is, are of a true, humble, lowly spirit. *For yours is the kingdom of God*. Such persons are blessed, because their humility rendering them teachable, submissive, contented and obedient, and leading them to rest their hope entirely on something out of themselves, prepares them to be members of the kingdom of grace, and heirs of the kingdom of glory, particularly as this humility is connected with the other dispositions represented in this sermon; for all of them, though no doubt with a great variety of degree, are to be found in every man, who, being born again, has entered into the kingdom of God.

21. ¶ Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. ¶ Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.

¶ Isa. lv. 1, lxxv. 13; Matt. v. 6. ¶ Isa. lxi. 3; Matt. v. 4.

Hunger is used in all languages to express vehement desire. *Filled* is a figure taken from cattle in good pasture, fed till they are satisfied, and graze no longer. Probably, many persons present were kept at a great distance from their necessary food by attention to our Lord's instructions, and thus would be the better prepared to appreciate the declaration that hungering after righteousness they should be satisfied in due time with Divine consolations and a holy felicity. In the knowledge and

faith of the truth respecting the Saviour, they would obtain the gratification of their desires, and, in the fullness of their grateful and happy hearts, would be able to exclaim, "Surely, in the Lord have we righteousness," we "are complete in Him," "who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (Isa. xiv. 24; Col. ii. 10; 1 Cor. i. 30.) *Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.* It is as if Christ had said, "Ye disciples that are now in a sad, mournful, afflicted state are blessed, for there will come a time when ye shall be comforted, a time when God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes." Happy are they who now sorrow after a godly sort for their sins, "When they behold transgressors are grieved" (Ps. cix. 158), and mourn under that wholesome discipline of affliction by which God reduces His wandering children, and trains them up to higher holiness, for all their sorrow shall pass away like a dream, and they shall ere long rejoice in a complete deliverance from it.

22. *Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.
 *Matt. v. 11; 1 Peter ii. 19 and iii. 14, iv. 14. *John xvi. 2.

When men shall hate you. Hatred of Christ's disciples is the bitter root from which persecution grows. The wicked hate the holy image of God, and those who bear it; His holy truth, and those who profess and preach it; His holy law, and those who obey and stand up for its obligation and authority; His holy ordinances, and those that attend on them. *And when they shall separate you from their company.* These words designate all kinds of expulsion from society, in consequence of the odium attached to faith in Christ, and an open profession of His name. *And shall reproach you*—shall cover you with opprobrious epithets, as they eject you forth from society. *And cast out your name as evil.* It will be noticed that there is a climax in the verse: 1. hatred; 2. severance from general and special intercourse; 3. reproach, and 4. formal excommunication from the synagogue, or church fellowship. (John ix. 34; xvi. 2.) Christ's disciples were abhorred for their name. As such, they were sometimes called

Nazarenes, and sometimes *Christians*, and both these names were matters of reproach in the mouths of their enemies. *For the Son of man's sake*, because (or on account) of me; i. e., as being my disciples, or believers in my claims to the Messiahship, and therefore avowed subjects of my kingdom. Such is the treatment which He warns them to expect, as His professed followers, and such the consolation which He gives them. They must have tribulation in His service, but for that very reason He pronounces them *blessed*. "All who live godly must suffer persecution." The particular form of the opposition which wicked and worldly men make to the cause of Christ, will depend on circumstances; but in all countries and in all ages it exists, and the followers of Christ should count on being exposed to derision, reproach, slander, and it may be evils of a more formidable kind, from ungodly men.

23. *Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.
 *Matt. v. 12; Acts v. 41; Col. i. 24; James i. 2. *Acts vii. 51.

The defamed and persecuted are not only pronounced "blessed," but are called on to *rejoice*. It seems a strange exhortation for such, not merely to be patient and resigned, but joyful and glad. But when the whole of the case is taken into view, the command appears in the highest degree reasonable, and the duty not only practicable, but easy. "This is the victory which overcometh the world"—all difficulties, "even our faith." (1 John v. 45.) Let a man but believe what Jesus reveals to him, and he will not feel it difficult to do what Jesus commands, or endure what Jesus appoints. The man who believes that his reward shall be great in heaven, will have no difficulty in rejoicing and leaping for joy amid those afflictions, which, however heavy, he will in this case feel light, and which, however long continued, he will regard as but for a moment, and which he knows are "working out for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (2 Cor. iv. 17.) For the persecutions which *the prophets* referred to endured, (see 1 Kings xiii. 4; 2 Chron. xxiv. 21, xxxvi. 16; Neh. ix. 26; Heb. xi. 32-38.)

24. "But wo unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.

"Amos vi. 1; James v. 1. "Luke xii. 21. "Matt. vi. 2, 5, 16; Luke xvi. 25.

Wo unto you. This is the expression of one lamenting (or bewailing the unhappy condition of another), not of one inflamed with anger. We are not to understand our Lord here as denouncing riches as necessarily evil, or rich men as necessarily wicked. He would not thus have spoken of the rich Chuza with his wife (Luke viii. 2, 3), or the family of Bethany. (Luke x. 38-42.) His intention obviously was to show His disciples the danger of riches, worldly indulgences, and all those ruinous advantages which men so eagerly pursue, and of that pride and self-sufficiency which are commonly increased by outward prosperity. *For ye have received your consolation, i. e.,* ye who love the good things of this world supremely, and trust in them, having chosen them for your happiness, shall not receive Divine comfort, or the heavenly reward.

25. "Wo unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. "Wo unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.—Isa. lxxv. 13. "Prov. xiv. 13.

Full. Ye that abound in worldly goods, and take up with these things as your portion, *ye shall hunger*—ye shall fall into a state of great indigence and misery, aggravated by all the plenty which ye enjoyed and abused. The retribution which, in the verse preceding, is described only as a coming short of the expected consolation, is here represented as a direct feeling of hunger, pain and sadness. Miserable are *you that laugh now*, that spend your lives in mirth and gaiety, or are of a light, trifling spirit, for *ye shall mourn and weep*. You have reason to expect a portion in those doleful regions where, without intermission and without end, ye shall be abandoned to weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Our Lord's declaration is to be understood of that turbulent, carnal mirth, that levity and vanity of spirit, which arises, not from any solid foundation, but from sensual pleasure, or those vain amusements of life by which the giddy and the gay contrive to fill up their time—that sort of mirth which dissipates thought, leaves no time for consideration, and gives them an utter aversion to all serious reflections.

26. "Wo unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets. "John xv. 19; 1 John iv. 5.

The phrase *all men* (like the term *world*) is used to distinguish the great ungodly mass, as opposed to the righteous few. The sentiment is not that it is a positive mark of evil to be spoken well of by a bad man; for Timothy "had a good report from those that were without." To be universally praised, however, is a most unsatisfactory symptom, and one of which a minister of Christ should always be afraid. Plutarch tells us that when Phocion in his orations had particularly pleased the multitudes, he used to ask his friends whether anything wrong had been uttered in his address. So, the minister who is universally applauded, may well doubt whether he is faithfully doing his duty, and honestly declaring all the counsel of God; for, according to the old adage, "a compliant temper makes friends, truth excites odium." *For so did their fathers to the false prophets.* The false prophets and teachers, whom the Jews commended, accommodated their sentiments and doctrines to the wishes and passions of their auditors. They spake to them smooth things, and prophesied lies, because *the people loved to have it so*; they prophesied of peace, when war was at hand; they strengthened the hands of evil-doers (Jer. xxiii. 14), and daubed the ruinous wall with untempered mortar. (Ezek. xiii. 10, 11.)

27. "But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, "Exod. xxiii. 4; Prov. xxv. 21; Matt. v. 44; verse 35; Rom. xii. 20.

But I say unto you which hear. The words were not addressed by the Saviour, as in verse 26, exclusively to His disciples, but to all within His hearing, and, of course, to all who in future ages should hear His Gospel.

This is the most sublime piece of morality ever given to man. The thought of requiting acts of enmity with acts of kindness could only arise in the heart of Him who has Himself prayed for the evil-doers. Such sayings of the Saviour, particularly, may well have elicited from even a godly man, on reading the sermon on the Mount, the exclamation, "Either this is not true, or we are no Christians." The

precept is equivalent to a prohibition of malignant feeling toward any human being, a command to cherish kind wishes toward all mankind. Instead of warranting us to confine our benevolent regards to those whom we may consider our neighbors—our kindred or countrymen—our benefactors or friends—men of our own sect, or even religion—our Lawgiver commands us to embrace, in the widespread arms of our benevolence, all mankind—strangers, foreigners, heathens, even enemies. Every human being is to be regarded with good will, and, as we have opportunity, to be treated with kindness. It is quite obvious that we are not required to regard with precisely the same kind of feeling a Christian brother and an openly profane and profligate person—a generous benefactor and a malignant, inveterate enemy. It is not possible, and, if it were, it would not be proper, to cherish the same tender regard for strangers as for “our own, those of our own household,” the same gratitude to enemies as to benefactors, the same esteem for the bad as for the good. But we are to regard all men, even our enemies, with love; that is, we are sincerely to wish them well, we are to desire their good, we are, as we have opportunity, to promote their happiness.

²⁸ Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

²⁹ Luke xxiii. 34; Acts vii. 60.

The word *bless* does not mean, according to a common use of it in Scripture, to implore blessings from God upon them who are imprecating evils upon us, for then it would be synonymous with *pray* for them. It is quite parallel to the Apostle's injunction, not to “render railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing.” Be civil and kind to those who are rude to you, and be ready, when you can do so with truth, to speak to the advantage of those who have, by malignant and untrue statements, endeavored to injure your reputation. *And pray for them which despitefully use you*, who are making continual war upon you, and constantly harassing and calumniating you. “Knowing that you can do but little to make them happy, call in the aid of Omnipotence. Instead of imprecating vengeance, pray for forgiveness and for all

heavenly and spiritual blessings to them, and do this for your most inveterate foes.”

²⁹ And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also. ³⁰ Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.

³¹ Matt. v. 39. ³² 1 Cor. vi. 7. ³³ Deut. xv. 7, 8, 10; Prov. xxi. 36; Matt. v. 42.

That smiteth thee, &c. Christianity obliges us to bear many injuries patiently rather than revenge one privately: we must leave the matter to God and the magistrate. The *coat* here mentioned was a tunic, generally made of linen, worn next to the skin, with armholes or sleeves, reaching down, like a shirt, to the knees, and bound round the waist by a girdle. The *cloak*, called in modern times the “aba,” was a large square piece, several feet in length and breadth, and worn very much as an American Indian wears his blanket. *Taketh away*. In the parallel passage (Matt. v. 40), the words are, *sue thee at the law, and take away, &c.* Manifestly the precepts in these two verses are not to be taken strictly, but restrainedly. They must not be so expounded as to contradict other portions of God's word. A literal interpretation of them would break up all the foundations of society, and destroy all control of personal property. The command of our Lord (verse 29), does not forbid the repression of crime, or declare the office of the magistrate and policeman unlawful. Nor does it declare all war unlawful, or prohibit the punishment of evil-doers, and disturbers of the peace and order of society. (See Luke xxii. 36; Rom. xiii. 4.) Neither does our Lord's command forbid us to defend ourselves when we are in danger, for this is one of the strongest instincts of our nature, the law of God written on our heart; or to avail ourselves of the protection which the law gives to property, for justice to our creditors, to the public, to our families, may require us to defend our estate. At the same time, this command condemns anything like a pugnacious, revengeful, litigious, or selfish spirit. If a man give a disciple of Christ a contemptuous or painful blow on the cheek, it is his duty and wisdom to imitate his Master, and take it patiently, nay, to turn the other, and expose himself to a repetition of the insult or injury, rather than to begin a contest, by returning the blow,

sending a challenge, or commencing a process at law—even though he should be ridiculed for his want of manly spirit, in consequence of his obedience to the laws of his Lord. If a man be sued at law, and be unjustly deprived of his “coat,” which, though not of great value, he might be ill able to spare, he had better suffer himself to be defrauded of his “cloak,” than be involved in the temptations and evils of seeking legal redress. He ought, also, to have resort to the tribunals of justice only when the cause is important and the call urgent—to prosecute his claims with humanity, moderation, and a spirit of peace, to be content with reasonable satisfaction, and to embrace every opportunity of terminating the contest.*

31. ^bAnd as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.—^bMatt. vii. 12.

We are not to do to others as they do to us, but *as we would that they should do to us*. In interpreting this rule we are to have regard to the following limitations: 1. We are not to overlook the difference which exists between ourselves and others in regard to the circumstances in which we are severally placed. For example, all that a father may expect from a child, or a master from his servant, or a magistrate from his subjects, is not, for this reason, to be done by such superiors in rank or relation to their inferiors. 2. What we would that others should do to us, is not to determine our duty to them, unless the thing we would they should do to us is right in itself. If a judge and a criminal should exchange situations, it does not follow that because the judge in the character of a culprit would desire not to be condemned, therefore he must not condemn the criminal before him in the judicial capacity in which he is now called to act, for then would offenders go unpunished, and society be unlinged and ruined. 3. We are not obliged to do all that to others, which we might probably be glad they would do to us; that is, the rule does not apply to everything that is lawful, but to what is reasonable. A poor man may desire that one who is wealthy should give him enough to make him rich, and it is likely that if the rich man were poor, he also might desire the same kindness; but he is

not, for this reason, even though he might lawfully do it, required to make the poor man rich. *As ye would*, the rule embraces all things, small and great, seen and unseen whether done when absent or present, and whether involving much sacrifice or little. This rule has the following, among other points of excellence: 1. It is plain and concise. 2. It is admirably adapted to sudden emergencies, when there is not time for long deliberation as to what duty demands. 3. It is susceptible of universal application—to all persons, places and things. 4. It meets those cases in which self-interest and private feelings are likely to dim our perceptions of right and wrong. 5. Being founded in the reason of things, it is such a precept as approves itself to the mind of a reasonable creature, as soon as he hears and understands it, so as not to need any labored proof. It should be noticed that this rule holds negatively as well as positively. Though it wears only the positive form, we are as much bound not to do to others what we would not have others do to us, as to do to them what we would have them do to us. To neglect to do what we would expect from others, is equally wrong in nature, though it may not be equally wrong in degree, as to do to them what we would not wish them to do to us.

32. ^bFor if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. 33. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. 34. ^kAnd if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

ⁱMatt. v. 46. ^kMatt. v. 42.

In these verses our Lord beautifully shows that it is the duty of the Christian to be better than anybody else. “A Christian,” says *Cecil*, “if he be a shoemaker, should be the best shoemaker in the town.” The disciples of Christ are to exercise charity in giving, charity in forgiving, charity in lending. It is sometimes their duty (if they have ability) to lend such poor persons as they cannot expect will ever be in a capacity either to pay or requite them. Love for love is justice, love for no love is favor and kindness, but love and charity to all persons, even the undeserving and the ill-deserving, is a Christ-like temper. A man ought to tremble with fear, if, beside the external part of

his religion, he finds nothing in his life but what may be found in a Turk or a heathen.

35. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and *lend*, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

Verse 27. =Ps. xxxvii. 23; verse 30. =Matt. v. 45.

Love ye your enemies. This precept of our Lord cannot be understood, in its full force, without a reference to the low and narrow doctrines which were about this time inculcated by the Jewish teachers, and acted upon by the people. A limit was fixed, beyond which it was lawful to *hate* an offending brother, though he might be at first forgiven. Apostatizing or heretical Israelites it was lawful and meritorious to slay, openly, if opportunity served, and legally if expedient, but at all events to slay them, even if by subtilty and craft. As to the Gentiles, even those with whom they had no war or contention, there was no instruction to *plot* their death, but it was *not lawful* to deliver them from death. In the face of such facts, how noble does Christ's precept appear! (See notes on verse 27.) *Do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your reward shall be great.* Confer acts of kindness, lend cheerfully, without fearing the loss of what shall be thus bestowed. It often happens that, even contrary to appearances, the loan is thankfully returned by the borrower, but should it not be, remember (and let this silence all your doubts) that God chargeth Himself with what you give from love to Him, and love to your neighbor. He is the poor man's surety. *And ye shall be the children of the Highest*, rather, *dear and acceptable to God*, or, *you will be like unto God*, for *He is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil*, bestows the gifts of common Providence on the worst of men, who are every day provoking Him, rebelling against Him, and using those very gifts to His dishonor.

36. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. =Matt. v. 48.

Be not satisfied with the low standard of publicans and other ordinary men, but make God your model. Follow not the example of unregenerated persons, but aim at an imitation of your Father. *Be*, literally, *become merciful*. In Matthew (v. 48), this is denoted by *perfect*. There is

no difference in sense. Whoever has the grace of compassion and mercy, flowing from pure love to God and man, will be in possession of all the kindred graces, though destined to a higher development, which constitute the perfection of moral character. Let us not presume to call God our Father, if we do not labor to resemble Him, nor dare to claim the peculiar honor and privileges of Christ's disciples, if we do not distinguish ourselves from others, by the charity of our tempers, and the usefulness of our lives, as well as by the articles of our faith, and the forms of our worship.

37. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: =Matt. vii. 1.

The judging here forbidden is not self-judging, which is a great and necessary duty, or judging by civil magistrates in their spheres, or judging by ecclesiastical officers of applicants for admission to the communion, or that judgment which cannot but be formed of the state and character of men from their avowed principles and visible conduct, for Christ directs His disciples to judge by this rule. The judging referred to obviously respects personal actions and characters. We are not to be officious in our judgments—intermeddling with what we have no concern with; or rash, not deciding, even when called to judge, till we have carefully examined the subject; or presumptuous, pronouncing on things beyond our reach—such as the views and motives of another, and acting as if our conjectures were infallible truths; or severe, but putting the best construction on doubtful actions; or partial, condemning in one what we approve, or at least pass by, in another, condemning in our neighbor what we overlook in ourselves; or hasty in pronouncing our judgment, because it is very difficult to obtain possession of all the materials that in any case are necessary to form a correct judgment, and to pronounce judgment without this, is to run the hazard, at least, of doing cruel injustice.

And ye shall not be judged. It is not probable that these words refer to what a man may expect in the ordinary intercourse of life. Their *main* reference, at least, is to the judgment of God, and of eternity. Nor

is their meaning, "if you are lenient, or severe, in your judgments of your fellow-men, God will be lenient, or severe, in His judgment concerning you;" but, "beware of wrong judgments, for all your judgments are to be reviewed, and by these judgments ye are to be yourselves then judged." *Condemn not*, &c., expands and enforces the preceding command. It denotes a censorious, fault-finding spirit. *Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven*, not that a bare forgiving of others is all that God requires in order to our forgiveness, but it is one part of that obedience which we owe to God, without which it is in vain to expect forgiveness from Him.

33. 'Give, and it shall be given unto you: good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.'

'Prov. xix. 17. 'Ps. lxxix. 12. 'Matt. vii. 2; Mark iv. 21; James ii. 13.

Give liberally to those that need your assistance, not out of mere human generosity, nor out of vanity, but for the sake of God, *and it shall be given unto you*, for your kindness and liberality will naturally gain you love and respect, and God also, by His grace, will influence men's hearts in your favor. (Prov. xix. 17.) *Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over*. The figure is taken from a full measure of dry commodities, such as corn, fruits, &c. The whole appears to have been a proverbial expression among the Jews, to denote, metaphorically, abundant and exuberant liberality. There were, among the Jews, measures of various sorts, *overflowing, abraded, heaped up, pressed, shaken, covered*, &c. The representation here of a measure secured by *pressing down*, such articles as lie light and loose in the vessel, *shaking it up*, and filling it to *overflowing*, brings into relief in a vivid manner, the riches of the Divine liberality. *Shall men give*. As the verb has no expressed nominative in the original, the Saviour does not say *whom* He uses for the impartation of such a recompense to His disciples, and hence it is not necessary to restrict the matter to the future life, and to understand it, as some do, of the angels, as almoners of God's bounty and love toward such as exercise the spirit here spoken of. *Into your bosom*. Almost all the ancient nations, and particularly those

of the East, wore long, wide and loose garments, and when about to carry anything away that their hands could not contain, they used a fold in the bosom of their robe, nearly in the same way that women in this country use their aprons. The word "bosom" or "lap" frequently occurs in this sense in the best and purest Greek writers. *For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again*. Amazing goodness! We ourselves are, as it were, permitted to tell God *how much* benignity He shall show us! Charities done in faith, in obedience to God, and with an eye to His glory, will produce a certain and plentiful increase. Liberality is the way to riches, giving is the best and surest way of thriving. A little charity from us, if we have but little, is looked upon by God as a great deal, but to do little when we have the ability to do much, is the greatest imprudence as well as impiety, for *he that soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully*.

39. And he spake a parable unto them, 'Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?'
'Matt. xv. 14.

This *parable*, or figurative saying, was spoken by our Lord to His disciples. It was introduced by Him as showing how they who are leaders, especially, should be examples of all that is good. It teaches us that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," that each individual of the human race has his foolish heart so darkened by sin as to be unable by any means to find his own way out of the labyrinth into which he has unhappily wandered. It is not a difficult thing, generally, to convince men that they need guidance regarding the things of God and eternity; yet, when thus convinced, they readily, alas, fall an easy prey to the first plausible guide that presents himself. *Both fall into the ditch*. Ignorant and unskillful instructors destroy themselves and others. "The candle of the wicked shall be put out." It is our duty to "beware of false prophets" (Matt. vii. 15), to "prove all things" (1 Thes. v. 21), to "try the spirits whether they are of God." (1 John iv. 1.) With the Bible in our hands, and the promise of the Holy Ghost to all who seek, we shall be without excuse if our souls are led astray.

40. "The disciple is not above his master : but every one that is perfect shall be as his master."
 *Matt. x. 24; John xiii. 16, xv. 20. *Or, *shall be perfected as his master.*

It cannot be expected that the scholar will excel his teacher, but the complete disciple will be as his teacher. If, therefore, men follow blind guides in their religious inquiries, they must continue in ignorance, or be deluded into error, so that it is of the greatest importance for us to take care on what teachers we attend, lest our greatest diligence and highest attainment should leave us short of the saving knowledge of God and of ourselves. It must not be overlooked that an indirect intimation is here given to the Twelve to fashion themselves in all things after the character of their new Master.

41. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 42. Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.
 *See Prov. xviii. 17; Matt. vii. 3-5.

Mote means a small bit of straw, or grass, or dry wood. *Beam* means a large piece of timber, such as is used for the rafter of a roof. A contrast is intended between the little faults and great ones. The epithet *hypocrite*, so frequently applied by our Lord to the scribes and Pharisees, does not always mean that they were always deceiving those about them by a profession which they *knew* to be hollow. The offer of the man to *pull out the mote* from his *brother's eye*, supposed him to have considered himself perfectly clear-sighted. The censorious are here condemned, and those, also, who, though never perhaps designated censorious, yet are lynx-eyed for all the blemishes and faults which disfigure their neighbors, and set themselves to the removal of what is wrong in others, without due consideration as to their own fitness for such duty. We are here taught the lesson of the true *relative* magnitude which our own faults, and those of our brother, ought to hold in our estimation. What is a "mote" to one looking on another, is to that other himself "a beam," just the reverse of the ordinary estimate. We are not to close our eyes to the defects of others, but, first, to be jealously anxious to obtain clear visions

ourselves. *Cast out first, &c.* The reason of this requirement is obvious. Only the man who has learned to deal with his own heart unreservedly in the way of tracing out and bringing into the light of day all that would hide itself there, who has experimentally learned how deceitful as well as wicked that heart is, is prepared to deal wisely with others. Then only will he *see clearly to pull out the mote which is in his brother's eye*. Besides, the very process through which he has himself passed, will give a gentleness and tenderness to all that he may be called to do with others, which he never otherwise could have possessed.

43. *For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit ; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.
 *Matt. vii. 16, 17.

The word *for* indicates that this parabolic saying is connected with what immediately precedes. Here, as frequently elsewhere, the Saviour compares persons to trees. The law that like produces like, so immutable in the natural world, is applied to the law of moral likeness which exists between the state of the heart and the external acts of men. "Every teacher, who really knows and believes the truth himself, cannot but, in his teaching, declare that truth, and, in his character and conduct, exemplify its influence. On the other hand, a false teacher cannot but, in his teachings and conduct, exhibit what, to a careful observer, will be found a sufficient proof of his true character."

44. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.—Matt. xii. 33. *Gr., *a grape.*

As men can always determine the nature of the tree, not by its appearance, leaves or blossoms, but by its fruits, so the claims which religious teachers have to our attention, faith and obedience can and are to be decided, not by their profession, but by their doctrine and their conduct. What is true of public teachers is equally so of private individuals. The habitual conduct of a truly pious man *must* be good, and the tendency of his example, conversation and instructions, must be beneficial. But the habitual tenor of an unconverted man's actions must be evil, and the effect of his example

and doctrine pernicious, however it may be disguised. The only satisfactory test of any man's religious character is his conduct and conversation.

45. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil; for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh."—Matt. xii. 35. "Matt. xii. 34.

A good man. The Saviour regards no man as naturally good, in the Pelagian sense of the word, but speaks of the sinner who has become good through grace. Both the *good* and the *evil* man He sets forth as they commonly reveal themselves outwardly, without, however, denying that even the good has his weak and the evil man his better side. The heart of the one and of the other, is the magazine or storehouse, out of which perpetually proceeds what therein was in no small measure hidden. *For of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.* Out of the abundance of the thoughts and desires of the good man's heart he will bring forth whatever can conduce to the glory of God and the good of mankind; but wicked men have within them a treasury of pride, malice, impiety and selfishness, from which they naturally educe evil things. A man's conversation is one indication of the state of his heart. It is not true, as some allege, that no one can know anything of the state of another's heart, and that, although men are living wickedly, they have *good hearts*. If a man's conversation is carnal, worldly, irreligious or profane, his heart is of a corresponding character.

46. "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

^aMal. i. 6; Matt. vii. 21 and xxv. 11; Luke xiii. 25.

In Matthew (vii. 21) it is: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord." To call a person lord, is equivalent to acknowledging him as master. If there be any emphasis in the repetition of the word *Lord*, it is intended to express, not merely profession, but a decided, open, habitual profession. A profession of discipleship, an acknowledgment of our submission in mind and heart to Christ Jesus, is a solemn duty. But such profession, however necessary in connection with faith and obedience, is not enough for the purpose of salvation. *And do not the things which I say?* The meaning of

Christ is: "Why are ye so inconsistent in your profession and practice, as to call me Lord, and yet persist in disobedience to my commands?" A few pious and devotional forms of speech are not enough for salvation, if our practice conform not to the Divine will. God judges of the heart, not by *words*, but by *works*. A good servant never disputes, speaks little, and always follows his work. Such a servant a real Christian is; such is a faithful minister, always intent either on the work of his own salvation, or that of his neighbor. The inquiry in this verse constitutes the transition to the parable which follows.

47. "Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: 48. He is like a man which built a house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock."—Matt. vii. 24.

The great purpose of this parable is to show that we must "not be forgetful hearers, but *doers* of the word," or, the folly of Christian profession, unaccompanied by Christian practice, and the certain ruin to which such profession must lead if persisted in. The reason why Christ thus concluded His sermon, lies in the corruption of the human heart, which finds it easy to hear, but difficult to do. *Whosoever cometh to me*—as a scholar. These words are omitted in Matthew, but without impairing the sense. *And heareth my sayings.* By these we are to understand everything contained in this sermon; yet this is equally true of all Christ's words, whether spoken by Himself personally, or made known through the medium of His inspired servants. To *hear* our Lord's sayings, is just to have them addressed to us, to have an opportunity of becoming acquainted with them. *And doeth them.* The man of whom this is true is the man who not only listens to Christ's sayings, and understands their meaning, but who, believing them (Rom. iii. 27), learns to think, feel and act according to them, and who, through these sayings, understood and believed, repents, changes his mind, is "converted," is radically changed, is "born again," becomes "a new creature," being "transformed by this renewing of his mind."

He is like a man which built an house. (In

Matt. vii. 24, called "a wise man.") This man has wisely thought over the plan beforehand—seen the amount of expenditure it would require, and now he is *doing* his work. He is *building an house*—the image of desired felicity—that he may dwell in it quietly, comfortably and securely, in the midst of tempestuous weather. By the building, we are to understand, 1. The character which He cultivates—the whole frame of his sentiments, affections and active habits. He is moulded according to "the form of doctrine into which he has been delivered." (Rom. vi. 17.) 2. The hope he cherishes. He has a "hope of eternal life," a "good hope through grace," but that hope rests entirely on what Christ has said to him. *And digged deep.* He was not satisfied to begin his building "on the earth," just as he found it, or with lifting a spadeful here and there, but toiled and labored, and descended deeper and deeper through the soil. The lesson here taught is, that the study of piety should not be superficial, but a principle well founded and deeply rooted in the heart. *And laid the foundation on a rock.* This indicates the solidity of the work, and under it hearing and doing are to be understood. It is of essential importance to have a firm foundation. The man built, not on his own conjectures or reasonings, nor the conjectures or reasonings of other men, but on "the true and faithful sayings of God," in which Christ is represented as "the Lord, our strength and righteousness." It will be noticed that what our Lord contrasts is not believing and doing, but hearing and doing; yet in the doing of Christ's sayings, believing them is of course necessarily implied. In this representation of the only foundation on which a character and conduct pleasing to God can be reared, we have a refutation of the opinion which some entertain, "that it matters but very little what doctrines we believe, if we have a good life."

And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it. In Judea, as in other Oriental countries, the rains are periodical. When they descend, they often descend in torrents, and continue to do so, with unabated

violence, for a number of days. In consequence of this, the most trifling mountain brook becomes a mighty river—a deluge rushes down with dreadful impetuosity from the high grounds to the plains, converting them into one wide waste of waters. The huts of the inhabitants, generally formed of clay hardened in the sun, are exposed to great danger, and, when not founded on the solid rock, are often undermined and swept away by the resistless torrent. The Christian's edifice of faith and hope may be subjected to many trials, from Divine judgments expressed in various tribulations, persecutions from men, accusations of conscience, terrors of death and retribution and false teachers (Eph. iv. 14), who seek to draw him away from Christ, and overwhelm him in sadness and despair, but they cannot succeed. (Rom. viii. 33–39; John vi. 68, 69.) Neither will the building be overthrown by the final trial at the general judgment, which, we suppose, is here mainly intended by *the flood*.

For it was founded upon a rock. In "the day of the Lord Jesus," the floods shall be let loose, "the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed," the tempest of Divine wrath against sin shall sweep resistlessly along, the streams of all-searching judgment shall beat vehemently on all that must be tested; but they shall not even *shake* a single stone in the building of the true believer, because it is founded on the Rock of Ages which can never be moved. There will then be found much wanting and much wrong, and that will be freely forgiven for Christ's sake, but the frame of character, of thought, feeling and action, formed by the faith of the truth, will meet with the unqualified approbation of God, and the hope founded on these sayings will prove to be a "hope that maketh not ashamed."

49. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built a house upon the earth: against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell: and the ruin of that house was great.

Notice the points of similarity between these men. Each was a builder, and set to work. The object of both was the same—shelter, pleasure, comfort. Both had time given them to build. Both had the choice of situation. Both took possession

of their buildings. Both were tried. *Hear-eth, and doeth not.* The man heard what might have secured real, lasting work at his hands, if he had attended to it, but he did not. Many who hear Christ's words make light of them; others listen to them with some degree of attention, and profess to inquire, but refuse to believe and obey them; others, still, profess to believe Christ's words, and declare their determination to obey them, but fail to do so. To this last class there is here a special reference.

Without a foundation built a house upon the earth, in Matt. vii. 26, "upon the sand." Here is an image of deficient steadfastness. The man began on the surface, and perhaps prided himself on the skill with which he nicely adjusted his building to the ground just as it was. The building which he erected was not based upon Christ—the true and faithful sayings of the Saviour—though he heard them, he did not conform his mind to them—he did not believe them. His foundation consisted of false principles, and the edifice he built was just that character, that mode of thinking, feeling and acting which such false principles naturally produce. *Against*

which the stream beat vehemently, &c. This "foolish" man's building was tested as well as that of the "wise" man, and though specious in appearance it proved baseless, and unable to endure the trial. "The fishermen of Bengal," says Mr. Ward, in his View of the Hindoos, "build their huts in the dry season on the bed of sand from which the river has retired. When the rains set in, which they often do very suddenly, accompanied with violent north-west winds, the water pours down in torrents from the mountains. In one night multitudes of these huts are frequently swept away, and the place where they stood is the next morning undiscoverable."

And immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great. The self-delusion vanishes, the man feels it is too late to correct his error, his past life is forever fled, his misery is boundless, the more so as he flatters himself with vain hopes. Character and hopes must be subjected to the test of the Divine judgment. Then "that which was highly esteemed among men" will be found to be "abomination in the sight of God" (Luke xvi. 15), and no character will stand but that which is formed in accordance with the sayings of Christ.

1. What is meant by the "second Sabbath after the first?" 2. How did Jesus answer the objection to the plucking of the ears of corn by His disciples on the Sabbath? 3. Who was cured by Him in the synagogue? 4. What lessons does this miracle teach? 5. How many Apostles did Christ choose? 6. What are their names? 7. What did the "great multitude of people" come to Jesus for? 8. Explain verse 20. 9. Why are Christians to rejoice when persecuted for the Son of man's sake? 10. Is it desirable that all men shall speak well of us? 11. How are we to treat our enemies? 12. Explain verses 23-30. 13. Also verse 31. 14. What is said about a "good" and a "corrupt" "tree?" 15. Explain the parable of the two builders.

CHAPTER VII.

1 *Christ findeth a greater faith in the centurion, a Gentile, than in any of the Jews: 10 healeth his servant being absent: 11 raiseth from death the widow's son at Nain: 19 answereth John's messengers with the declaration of his miracles: 21 testifieth to the people what opinion he held of John: 30 inveigheth against the Jews, who with neither the manners of John nor of Jesus could be won: 35 and sheweth by occasion of Mary Magdalene, how he is a friend to sinners, not to maintain them in sins, but to forgive them their sins, upon their faith and repentance.*

Jesus proceeded continually from instruction to action, and from action to instruction. Words speak only to the understanding, works speak to the heart.

This chapter opens with a memorable instance of His Divine power and compassion.

NOW when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum. *Matt. viii. 5.

All his sayings. His sermon in the hearing of the people of Capernaum, the center of His operations, to which He frequently returned after His itinerant missions. Christ's doctrines assert their own intuitive truth, but it is the miracles

of the preacher that attest that it is with a true Divine mission that He utters them.

2. And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

^{b2} Kings v. 1, &c.; Job xxxi. 15; Acts x. 7; Col. iv. 1.

A centurion, or captain in the army of Herod, who was at that time king of Galilee, but under subjection to the Romans. He was stationed with a hundred men under his command in the barracks at Capernaum. Herod, to support himself in his authority and to enforce the payment of tribute, which he had to render to the emperor of Rome, had stationed large bodies of soldiers in various parts of the land. Like many other heathens of that age, this centurion, unsatisfied with the old and worn-out popular religion in which he had been brought up, and his situation having brought him into such approximation to Judaism as enabled him to observe the great superiority of its moral and religious spirit, and the refreshing contrast which the simple purity of belief in one God offered, to the perplexing crowd of divinities which idolatry presented, he was led to believe in Jehovah, and to render to Him his worship. He was one of the proselytes, whom the providence of God had so wonderfully prepared in all the great cities of the Greek and Roman world as a link of communication between Gentile and Jew, in contact with both—holding to the first by their race, and to the last by their religion, and who must have greatly helped to the ultimate fusion of both into one Christian church. *Servant*; the original word means, literally, *boy*, but still a *servant* is denoted, otherwise the statements that he was very dear to the centurion, and was sick in his house, would have been superfluous. *Who was dear unto him*—literally, *whom he held in honor or esteem, or highly valued*. The centurion's feeling such a deep interest in the well-being of his servant, is a beautiful trait in his character, and highly creditable to him, especially when the temptations of military life are remembered. *Was sick, and ready to die*, of a paralysis. (Matt. viii. 6.) This is not contradicted by the fact that he is said to have been "grievously tormented," for paralysis or palsy, with the contraction of the joints, is accompanied with severe

pain. United with tetanus, as it sometimes is in Eastern countries, extreme suffering and rapid dissolution are often the result.

3. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.—John iv. 47.

The report of Christ's miraculous powers was now in the mouth of men, and had reached the ear of this Roman centurion. *Elders of the Jews*, doubtless elders of the synagogue which the centurion had built for the Jews. (Verse 5.) As he was a Gentile, and Christ a prophet, he thought Christ would not care to converse with him, hence he sent persons in authority, that by the dignity of the messengers he might honor Him to whom they were sent. *Beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant*. Beseeching, here, is a participle, agreeing with the centurion, so that even according to Luke's language, the words were those of the centurion. The request was earnestly urged, and this furnishes another evidence of the master's regard for the servant.

4. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: 5. For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

⁴¹ Kings v. 1; Gal. v. 6; 1 John iii. 14.

Instantly, that is, with much earnestness. Saying, that he was worthy, &c. We see here the force of real goodness to conquer the most inveterate prejudices, the elders of the Jews at Capernaum petitioners for a Gentile, for a Roman centurion. So may we disarm the violence of a party spirit, and conciliate the friendship of those who otherwise might have their eyes upon us for evil. The erection of a house of worship for the Jews by the centurion had won the regard of these messengers. *For he loveth our nation, &c.* Here was an instance of marked generosity. Many a man is indifferent to the wants of others. He is in the midst of those who have no great claim upon him. He is too glad of the excuse or apology for steering clear of what would touch his means, invade his time, or burden him with new cares and responsibilities. Not so the centurion. Those acquainted with the Roman history know well with what cruelty, rapacity and oppression, the governors and commanding officers in the conquered provinces too commonly behaved toward the people

whom they were sent to keep in awe. So far were they from building them temples or synagogues, that they frequently invaded those sacred retreats, and laid their sacrilegious hands on everything that was valuable in them. In the midst of this brutality and insolence of power, this gallant soldier stood up to patronize and assist a distressed and an injured people, and it is a glorious testimony to his memory, that, after consecrating his own soul as a living temple of faith, love and grateful obedience, he upreared a sanctuary, wherein his poorer fellow-citizens might serve the God of their fathers. There cannot be a stronger indication, both of love to mankind, and love toward God, than erecting places of worship where they were wanted.

6. Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; 7. Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee; but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. 8. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto *one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. *Prov. xxix. 23. †Ps. cxvii. 20. *Or, *this man*.

Far from being puffed up with a conceit of his own merit, in having built a synagogue, the centurion thought himself unworthy to come to the Saviour, or to receive Him beneath his roof; he even counted it a presumption to have asked, through the intervention of others, the presence in his house of so exalted and holy a personage. Humility, in the Gospel sense of the word, is a virtue with which the ancients, and more particularly the Romans, were totally unacquainted. They had not even a word in their language to describe it by, their only word that seemed to express it signifying baseness, servility, and meanness of spirit. When, therefore, we see this centurion differing so widely from his countrymen in this respect, we may certainly conclude that his notions of morality were of a much higher standard than theirs. The best men have always the lowest thoughts of themselves; when we esteem ourselves unworthy of any favors, Christ accounts us worthy of all. While God "resisteth the proud," He "giveth grace to the humble." "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." "Learn of me," says Jesus, "for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

But say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. He had faith in Christ's Divine power, he believed that He was able, at a distance, and by a single word, to command this disease from his servant; that it required neither machinery, nor effort, but the briefest, slightest forth-putting of His will. He thought that Christ's power was equal to that of God, who said, "Let there be light, and there was light."

For I also am a man set under authority, &c. His profession as a soldier served him with arguments as a Christian. He argued from the less to the greater. "I am a subaltern, an under-officer, have such power that I can say to this soldier, 'Take up that position,' and to that soldier, 'Be sentinel there,' and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he doeth it—much more, surely, Thou, who art the Commander of all the armies of the skies, and the Ruler of all the inhabitants of the earth, hast but to speak the word, and my servant then will be instantly healed." One's profession may often be made serviceable to one's Christianity, and lessons may be gathered from domestic, private and professional life, which will cast new lustre on the truths, and inspire with new force the precepts of the Gospel. Humility is the concomitant grace of faith. As a tree sends its branches upward in proportion as it strikes its roots downward, so in proportion as a man is deep in humility, he is "strong in faith, giving glory to God."

9. When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turned him about and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

What can be more wonderful than to see Christ wonder? The expression, *he marveled*, is one of those which show the reality of our Lord's human nature. He was made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted. As man, He grew in wisdom and stature, hungered, thirsted, was weary, ate, drank, slept, wept, sorrowed, rejoiced, groaned, agonized, bled, suffered, died, and so also as man He wondered. Yet all this time He was very and eternal God, one with the Father, and the Saviour of the world. This is a great mystery, and one which we cannot fathom. The union of two natures in one person is

a thing passing our weak comprehension. We must believe, admire and adore, without attempting to define or explain.

I say unto you I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. It is worthy of remark, that our Lord unites with the elders in praising the centurion, but for qualities wholly unnoticed by them, viz.: his faith and humility. The faith of the centurion was great, because he had to ascend from paganism to attain it; great, because not purely physical, but spiritual, realizing his own unworthiness and the superiority of Jesus as the Holy One; great, because it realized the Divine mission of Christ from Jehovah, and expressed a sense of profound submission to His absolute word. It was a faith enabling him to accept all that Jesus should teach, and prompting him to aim at obedience to all that He should command. The unbelief of the entire chosen people of God was rebuked by the faith of this *stranger to the commonwealth of Israel*.

10. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

Whole, restored to perfect health and vigor. There was not merely a remission of the strength of the disease, but it had altogether left him. This cure was the effect of the faith, prayer and humility of the centurion, through which the almighty energy of Christ was conveyed to the sick man. But these very graces in the centurion were the products of grace. It is God Himself who, by the gift of His mercy, disposes the soul to receive its cure, and nothing can contribute to the reception of His grace but what is the fruit of grace itself.

On this history, note, 1. Our Lord's miracles had the fullest credit given to them, by men of rank and character, who were perfectly competent to ascertain the truth of any facts presented to their observation, and not likely to be imposed upon by false pretenses. 2. The profession of a soldier is not an unlawful one. It is never condemned in the Scriptures. On the contrary, it is placed by the sacred writers in a favorable and honorable light. (Matt. xxvii. 54; Acts x. 2, xxvii. 43.) 3. There is no situation in life that exempts

us from the obligation to be Christians. Those who are not Christians because of their circumstances, will find the difficulty in their hearts, rather than in their circumstances. 4. We are to admire more the least measure of grace in a good man, than all the grandeur and glory of a great man. 5. Christ is most pleased with us when we put the most confidence in Him. We are not guilty of presumption on the one, hand, or of rash and daring intrusion on the other, when we lay much upon the shoulder of Jesus to bear and endure for us. The more we trust Him, the more He feels He is honored by that trust.

11. ¶ And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain: and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.

The day after—the day succeeding the healing of the centurion's servant. *Nain*, which is now only a little hamlet, inhabited by a few families, was then a small town in the tribe of Issachar, hard by the source of the brook Kishon, not far from Endor. The name signifies the "Lovely," perhaps on account of the pleasant situation in the plain of Esdraelon. It does not appear that our Lord ever went to Nain, except on this occasion. *Many of his disciples*. Among these, doubtless, were the Twelve appointed to be Apostles, for it cannot be supposed that He would suffer the chosen witnesses of His miracles to be absent, when so great a miracle was to be performed as the raising of a person from the dead, and to be performed so publicly, in the presence of all who were attending the funeral. Luke is the only Evangelist who records this miracle. *Much people*, consisting, doubtless, in part, at least, of hearers of the sermon on the Mount.

12. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

Gate of the city. Most towns and villages were walled for the sake of protection. *Behold, there was a dead man carried out*. The place of burial was outside the city, according to the universal custom of the East, both in ancient and modern times. Yet, though for this reason our Lord's meeting the funeral at the gate was a natural circumstance, and apparently accidental, still it is to be regarded as one of

the wonder-works of God's grace, one of those marvelous coincidences which, though seemingly casual, are yet deep laid in the councils of His wisdom and of His love. *The only son of his mother.* The object of her fondest affections, and perhaps the support of her declining years. There is no one loss referred to in Scripture which is spoken of as so deep, severe and painful, as the loss of an only son. "Make thee mourning as for an only son, most bitter lamentations." (Jer. vi. 26.) "They shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son." (Zech. xii. 10.) That the gracious Redeemer appreciated the bitterness of such grief is evident from the fact that of the three memorable instances in which He exerted His power over death and the grave, and released their captives, one was the case of an only brother, another an only daughter, and this an only son.

And she was a widow. This adds a still darker shade to the desolation of the scene. She had no one to help her, to bear her loss. She had already followed her husband to the grave. Perhaps she had often thought that her son would supply the loss of his father, and at length he had arrived at an age to be her prop and comfort, but now he was dead, and with him had died her fondest wishes and dearest hopes—the name of the family would now perish out of Israel. Well might this mother say, in the bitterness of her soul, "Is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow?" *And much people of the city was with her.* Doubtless the large attendance was an expression of the respect and sympathy felt for the bereaved and deeply distressed mother. We should show sympathy with those around us in their losses and calamities.

13. And when the Lord saw her, ^{he} had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.
^aHeb. ii. 17 and iv. 15.

Jesus, whose tenderness made Him susceptible of the strongest impressions from occurrences of this kind, was greatly moved with pity at the sorrowful scene. *Weep not.* As with Jairus, his fear, so with this widow, her grief is first allayed, before the Lord displayed His miraculous power. What tenderness He showed in His manner of performing the miracle!

He undertook the work of our redemption and salvation *in his love and in his pity.* (Isa. lxiii. 9.) We should but mock the afflicted, if we were to say, "Weep not." We can only weep *with* those that weep. But Jesus could remove the cause of grief, hence the words "weep not," which would have been inappropriate in others, were perfectly becoming in Him. Though Himself a man of sorrows, He tasted the pure joy of comforting mourners. Though others may despise our grief, He does not. We are not to understand that Jesus intended here to condemn proper sensibility in our trials and sorrows. He shed tears Himself. We are not to forbid weeping on the part of those who are afflicted, but to "weep with them that weep," showing them that we have a fellow-feeling. Yet there is no reason for inordinate and excessive grief for those *that sleep in Jesus.* As they will rise again, rise in glory, we must not *sorrow as those that have no hope.* (1 Thess. iv. 13.)

14. And he came and touched the bier;* and they that bare ^{him} stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, ^bArise.
*Or, ^ccoffin. ^bChap. viii. 54; John xi. 43; Acts ix. 40; Rom. iv. 17.

The people of the East bury their adult dead without coffins, but they carry them to the grave on a bier that is shaped like one. On this the corpse is laid, wrapped in folds of linen, and the bier is borne on the shoulders of four, sometimes six persons. Jesus *touched the bier*, as if to arrest it, and the bearers, obedient to that intimation, though they knew not why, *stood still.* Then came the majestic command—*Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.* Strange, mysterious address to the body lying cold, stiff and silent, in the rigors of death! *I say unto thee—I, that am the Resurrection and the Life, quickening the dead,* and calling those things which be not, as though they were.

15. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak: and he delivered him to his mother.

No sooner had Christ uttered the command, than it was obeyed. The utterance to the body was heard by the departed soul, and it returned to its tenement of clay. *Sat up.* The young man, without any human help, rose upon the bier, *and began to speak*, thus showing that he was

really alive. What were his first words? We are not informed. Did he inquire who had restored him to life? He soon must have known; for He who had snatched him from the grasp of death, *delivered him to his mother*. This sweet office Jesus would perform Himself. O, what a solace it must have been to His loving heart to behold the joyful meeting of the parent and the child! He did not oblige this youth, to whom He had given a new life, to follow Him, as His disciple to minister to Him, much less, as a trophy of His dominion over death, to get honor by him, but presented him to his mother, to attend her, as a dutiful son, thus indicating that it was mainly in compassion of her affliction He had wrought the life-giving miracle.

16. ¹And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, ²That a great prophet is risen up among us: and, ³That God hath visited his people. 17. And this rumor of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about.

¹Luke i. 65. ²Luke xxiv. 19; John iv. 19 and vi. 14 and ix. 17. ³Luke i. 68.

The effect of the miracle upon the multitude was marked. *There came a fear on all*. A religious awe and reverence pervaded them; *and they glorified God*, praised Him for His mercy in remembering and visiting His people Israel. *Saying, that a great prophet is risen up among us*. They concluded that no ordinary prophet was among them, but a "great" one, since none but the very greatest prophets of the olden times, an Elijah or an Elisha, had brought the dead to life. In their other exclamation, *God hath visited his people*, lay no less an allusion to the long periods during which they had been without a prophet, so that it might have seemed, and many might have almost feared, that the last of these had arrived.

And this rumor of him went forth. Wherever this miracle was reported, which was not only in Judea, but in all the neighboring regions, it produced the same opinion in those who heard of it, namely, that God had visited His people in an extraordinary way, and had raised up among them a very eminent prophet, which greatly heightened and increased the mighty expectations from Him, which long before they had begun to entertain.

From this narrative we may learn the following lessons: 1. The young may die

Their bloom and beauty do not shield them from the destroyer. 2. The tender compassion of the Saviour. He sympathizes with us in our sorrows. To Him we should go for succor and comfort in every time of trouble. 3. There comes a day, of which this was a foreshadow, when, for His people, "God shall wipe all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." (Rev. xxi. 4.) 4. The miracles of Christ were so peculiar as to attest His Divinity. How many times He may have raised the dead, we know not; we have record of but three cases; and these three cases form a striking contrast. The daughter of Jairus was raised from her *bed*, the son of this widow from his *bier*, and Lazarus from his *tomb*. Nor was this a *contrived* climax, but appears spontaneously, from a comparison of three Evangelists, and, thus appearing, it is deeply significant. 5. The soul separated from the body plainly lives independent of that body. 6. The fact that this young man began to speak, and yet nothing is said as to what the conversation was—this fact, as well as the sequel of the resurrection of Lazarus, and that of Jairus' daughter, are indirect evidences of the inspiration of the Gospel. If these incidents were mere figments of the fancy, their authors would have given whole pages of the conversation of these persons on their return to this world; and this would have been done with greater boldness, because they knew that no wing could follow them to see the districts they described, or confront them with refutation. 7. This miracle is a pledge of the resurrection. It is as easy to raise a million of the dead as it is to raise one. 8. Jesus will deliver to us again our loved and lost ones who have died sprinkled with His atoning blood, and we shall recognize them, and dwell with them forever, where no grave is opened, and no tear is shed. 9. Christ has power to quicken dead souls. (Eph. ii. 1.) Let us never despair of any soul. Let us pray for our children, and faint not. Our young men and our young women may long seem traveling on the way to ruin. But let us pray on. Who can tell but that He, who met the funeral at the gate of Nain, may

yet meet our unconverted children, and say, with almighty power, "Young man, arise!" With Jesus, nothing is impossible.

18. ¹And the disciples of John showed him of all these things.—Matt. xi. 2.

John was now in prison (Matt. xi. 2), where he had been confined for rebuking the adulterous intercourse of Herod with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. The prison, as we learn from *Josephus*, was the fortress of Machærus, on the border of Perea and the desert. It is very likely that John's disciples attended the ministry of our Lord at particular times. Though bigotry existed in its most formidable shape between the *Jews* and *Samaritans*, yet we do not find that it had any place between Jews and Jews, though they were of different sects, and attached to different teachers. At this time, *the disciples of John*, who seem to have had free access to him, *showed him of all these things, i. e., of Christ's teaching*; His election of the twelve Apostles to preach the Gospel, and His miracles, particularly His raising from the dead Jairus' daughter, and the widow of Nain's son.

19. ¹ And John, calling unto him two of his disciples, sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou ²⁰me that should come? or look we for another? 20. When the men were come unto him, they said, John the Baptist has sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

¹Gen. xlix. 10; Num. xxiv. 17; Dan. ix. 24; Zech. ix. 9.

He that should come, more literally, *the coming one*—the promised Messiah, *or look we for another*—under that character? They did well to come to their teacher to express their doubts. It is always well to confide such thoughts to those who are able to help us, for by hiding them in our own bosoms, we may often occasion ourselves much uneasiness, and expose ourselves to great danger. Considering what clear evidence John had received by a miraculous sign from Heaven that Jesus was the Messiah (John i. 33), and what express and repeated testimonies he himself had borne to this truth, it cannot reasonably be supposed that he now doubted of it. The utmost that we can suppose concerning him is, that whilst not doubting the Saviour's person, he could not fully understand His mode of action. He was somewhat impatient. Matters moved too slowly for him,

especially as he himself, as a prisoner, was now condemned to involuntary inactivity. He was anxious for some speedy and public declaration of the Lord in respect to His Messianic dignity—a declaration corresponding with the expectation which doubtless he had formed to himself of the Lord of the threshing-floor with His fan in His hands. (Matt. iii. 11, 12.) But John's disciples were unwilling to acknowledge Christ to be the Messiah, who about that time was generally expected, because they had such a zeal for the honor of John, their master, that they were not willing to own any one greater than him. Probably, also, they were prejudiced against the Lord on account of His manner of life, which was very unlike that of John, for Jesus freely mixed with sinners, and was entertained by them, while John had always led a solitary life, and had lived upon the coarsest fare. John, therefore, to whom a delegation had been sent to know from him whether He was the Christ, now sends two of his disciples to Jesus, that they might obtain further satisfaction as to His Messiahship, and have their faith confirmed in Him from whom they had otherwise fled, out of a preposterous emulation.

21. And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities, and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight.

What a view is here given of the number and variety of our Lord's miracles! By *plagues*, we are not to understand, as some do, palsies and leprosies, but more violent and active diseases. It will be noticed that Luke, the physician, distinguishes the demoniacs from naturally sick persons. *He gave sight* might be rendered, "he made a present of seeing," or "he graciously gave sight." The words denote how highly gratifying the gift of sight was to those who had been blind, as well as the kind manner in which our Lord bestowed it. In all Christ's miracles, not only the *cure*, but the *manner* in which He performed it, endeared Him to those who were objects of His compassionate regard.

22. ¹Then Jesus answering, said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; ²how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, &c. to the poor the gospel is preached.

¹Matt. xi. 4. ²Isa. xxxv. 5 and xlii. 7. ³Luke iv. 18.

Go your way, and tell John. The answer

is addressed to John, from whom the question came, and therefore can determine nothing as to its true motive. *What things ye have seen and heard*, of which a specification is made in the remainder of the verse—not exhaustive, but illustrative, by means of a few signal instances. Christ would have men judge of Him and of others only by their works. This is the only safe way of judging. A man is not to be credited because he professes to know such and such things, but because he demonstrates by his conduct that his pretensions are not vain. *How that the blind see*. Our Lord here refers to Isaiah (xxix. 18), and other passages where these works are made the proofs of the Messiah. *The lame walk*, literally, *walk about*, showing their cure to be real. *The lepers are cleansed*—delivered from their disease and defilement. *The deaf hear*—their ears are unstopped. *The dead are raised*. Perhaps the raising of the dead may have been among the miracles the messengers actually witnessed, or the reference may be to the resuscitation of the widow's son at Nain. *To the poor the gospel is preached*. This was a sign of Messiah's time. (Isa. xxix. 19.) Contempt for the poor seems to have been very common in the times of the Gospel. (John vii. 49; ix. 34 and James ii. 24.) Concern and tender interest about the poor was a distinguishing feature of our Lord's ministry and that of His Apostles. *Then*, as ever since, the poor of the world have been more disposed than other men to hear and embrace the Gospel. It will be noticed that the miracles here enumerated were not only the most convincing proofs of the supreme power of Christ, but were also emblematic of the work of salvation which He effects in the souls of men. Sinners are *blind*, their understanding is so darkened by sin that they *see not* the way of truth and salvation. They are *lame*, not able to walk in the path of righteousness. They are *leprous*, their souls are defiled with sin, the most loathsome and inveterate disease, *deepening* in themselves and infecting others. They are *deaf*, to the voice of God, His word and their own conscience. They are *dead*, in trespasses and sins, God, who is the life of the soul, being separated from it by

iniquity. As Christ would be known by His works and doctrines, so must true Churches of Christ and true ministers of Christ. When the dead in sin are not quickened, and the blind are not restored to sight, and the poor have no glad tidings proclaimed to them, we may generally suspect that Christ's presence is wanting.

23. And blessed is *he* whosoever shall not be offended in me.

Blessed, truly fortunate or happy, with particular reference to the Divine favor. *Whosoever*, a contingent expression, not necessarily implying that any one had actually been, but simply that some one might thereafter be *offended*, or be *stumbled*, made to fall, *i. e.*, betrayed into sin and error. The warning thus given is just as needful now as when it was delivered. Many are offended at Christ: some at the asserted divinity of His person, and the meritoriousness of His satisfaction; some at the mysteriousness of His doctrine; others at the sanctity and strictness of His laws; some at the free dispensation of His grace; others that the terms of Christianity are too hard, humbling to the proud and earthly hearts, and laying too great a restraint upon human nature; others, that the world does not believe in Him, that there are so many hypocrites and inconsistent professors of religion, and that his real followers are generally poor and unlearned. But those who believe in Him, notwithstanding all these hindrances, shall be in a happy condition here, and, at the judgment-day and beyond, learn the deep meaning of our Lord's words in this verse.

24. ¶ And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?—Matt. xi. 7.

Unto the people. Not before John's disciples, but before the multitude, Christ commended John, for as John's disciples had too high, so the multitude had too low an opinion of him, possibly because of his imprisonment and sufferings. Reminding the people of their visit to the wilderness of Judea, bordering on the Jordan, where John preached and baptized, He assured them they had gone there not to see a common sight, but an extraordinary one. This He did by a form of

expression not uncommon in the Bible, by which a question is equivalent to a strong and positive affirmation. John, whom they had gone out to hear preach, was not a *reed shaken with the wind*, not as easily shaken as they, by every gust of rumor or prejudice, or every change of outward circumstances. He was not a man of an unstable and unsettled judgment, but fixed and steadfast. Convinced of the truth, he continued to believe and assert it. *Steadiness* is essentially necessary to every preacher and to every private Christian.

25. But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

It was unreasonable to expect to see in the desert a man clothed delicately and faring sumptuously, for such persons were rather found in kings' palaces, whereas John was a plain man, clothed in a camel's-hair garment, with a leathern girdle, and living on plain, coarse fare, and there was nothing to please the eye in his appearance. Here John is commended for his gravity and sobriety—his mortification to the glory, honor, ease and pleasures of the world. The spiritual nature of the Messiah's kingdom is thus intimated. As Christ's forerunner did not resemble any of the officers who attend the courts of earthly princes, consequently Christ Himself was in no respect to be like an earthly prince. A minister of the Gospel should have nothing about him which savors of effeminacy and worldly pomp.

26. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet,

Our Lord, with a fine climax in His questions, from a *reed* to a *man* (intending by this that John was no weakling), and then to a *prophet*, gave the people to understand that John, instead of having lost in any respect his claim to the name of a *prophet*, was even exalted above ordinary prophets. He was *much more than a prophet*, because he pointed out Christ more clearly and fully than any of the prophets before him. The ancient prophets beheld Christ afar off, but John saw Him face to face. They prophesied of Him, *he* pointed at Him, prepared His way, foretold that His kingdom was at hand, and had the honor of

baptizing Him. He excelled in everything peculiar to a prophet.

27. This is *he*, of whom it is written, *Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.*—Mal. iii. 1.

This is he. The clearer any ministry is in discovering Christ, the more excellent it is. *Of whom it is written.* In the verse referred to (Mal. iii. 1), *Jehovah*, speaking of the coming of Christ, says, "*my face*," and "*before me*:" but it is here quoted as the language of the Father to the Son, and He therefore says, "*before thy face*," and "*thy way before thee*," so that, to prepare the way of Christ was "*to prepare the way of the Lord Jehovah*," for "*He and the Father are one*."

28. For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

Among those that are born of women, that is, among the whole race of mankind in all former ages, *there is not a greater prophet*, &c. John was greater than any of the ancient prophets, on account of his wonderful conception and birth, his intimate knowledge of Gospel mysteries (see especially John iii. 27, &c.), his express testimony to the Messiah, and his remarkable success in making way for Him. John was also himself the subject of ancient prophecies, and long expected by the Church. The world thinks that kings, generals and statesmen are the greatest of men. But God measures differently. The Divine head of Christ is the loftiest of all men's heads, and His nearest servant's is next. It was when John was in prison, that Jesus thus commended him. How precious is the thought, to faithful ministers, that though the world may slight and despise them, Jesus will maintain their honor, support their cause, and prove to them an unchanging Friend! How comforting is it also to all true Christians who are suspected, slandered and falsely accused, to know that Jesus will never desert any of His people! *But he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.* Jesus here speaks of His disciples, not only so far as they appear as Apostles or Evangelists, but without any distinction. The humblest Gospel minister who preaches Christ *as come*, is to be preferred before all the old prophets who prophesied of Christ

as to come. That minister who sets forth the life and death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, is greater in the kingdom of God—that is, has a higher office in the Church, and a more excellent ministry—than all the prophets, yea, than John himself.

29. And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of him.—Matt. iii. 5; Luke iii. 12.

The people who flocked to hear the Gospel message, even the *publicans*, who generally were esteemed notoriously wicked, on account of their injustice and extortion, *justified God*, that is, owned and approved His wisdom and mercy, in having called them to repentance by John's ministry, and prepared them for Him that was to come, and they testified their approbation by receiving baptism at John's hands.

30. But the Pharisees and lawyers *rejected the counsel of God* against themselves, being not baptized of him.

*Or, *frustrated*. †Acts xx. 27. †Or, *within themselves*.

They who *esteemed themselves* good, and were generally regarded as learned, honorable men, *rejected the counsel of God*, &c., that is, despised, frustrated and made of no avail the gracious offer of repentance and salvation which God sent to them by the Baptist. It is a fearful thought, that men have power to ruin themselves forever. God has "no pleasure in the death of him that dieth." (Ezek. xviii. 32.) Christ is willing to gather men to His bosom, if they will only be gathered. (Matt. xxii. 37.) But by continued impenitence and unbelief, by persevering in the love and practice of sin, by pride, self-will, laziness and determined love of the world, we may bring upon ourselves everlasting destruction.

31. † And the Lord said, "Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? And to what are they like?"—Matt. xi. 16.

Our Lord now proceeds to describe and condemn the fickleness and perverseness of the Pharisees, whom nothing could induce to embrace the Gospel, neither His own ministry nor that of John. *This generation*, i. e., of this age. The question is asked, as though it were difficult to find an object with which such men could be compared.

32. They are like unto children sitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.

The market-place. In the earlier times of the Jewish history, the markets were held near the gates of towns, sometimes within, sometimes without, where the different kinds of goods were exposed for sale, either in the open air or in tents. But we learn from *Josephus*, that in the time of our Saviour, the markets, at least in cities, had become such as they now are in the East, where they are called "bazaars." These establishments are usually situated in the center of the towns, and do not by any means answer to our notions of "a market," which is usually for the sale of articles of food, for in these bazaars all the shops and warehouses of the town are collected, and all the trade of the city is carried on, of whatever description it may be. It was common for children in the market-place to play at rejoicing and at mourning. One party of children imitated the glad songs of the Jews at their marriages, and on other joyful occasions, while another party were expected to dance at the sound of their music. But sometimes sullen and wayward children would not join in the amusement. Then the other party would good-naturedly change the play, and imitate the mournful music of funerals, expecting their companions to use sorrowful gestures and to appear to weep, but the same froward children would object to this play also. In a matter of infinite importance the Pharisees had imitated this example. All the methods which Divine wisdom had tried for their conversion had proved vain.

33. For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.

*Matt. iii. 4; Mark i. 6; Luke i. 15.

They had demanded cheerfulness of John, and as he led so solitary and so strict a life, being clad in skins, feeding on locusts and honey, and refusing to taste wine or strong drink, they accused him of being demoniacally possessed, saying, *He hath a devil*—he acts like a wild, distracted demoniac, whom an evil spirit drives from the society of men.

34. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!

The severity of John's ministry proving unsuccessful, with respect to the conver-

sion of the scribes and Pharisees, God sent His own Son to address and conduct Himself toward them in a more free and familiar manner; but because Christ manifested a mild and joyous spirit, in no way despising the comforts of life, but temperately enjoying them, these same Pharisees, because they did not find in Him the austere, unbending sternness which they had not been able to endure in John, applied to Him the epithets, *glutton, wine-bibber, and friend of publicans and sinners*, in doing which, however, they did not consider that these latter words indicated His highest titles of honor. (Luke xv. 2.) What a contradiction was this! Yet thus do men always and everywhere act, when left to themselves. The first and natural movement of the sinner's heart, when God speaks to him, is to question something regarding the mode, or even to doubt the reality of the communication altogether. No matter how clear and convincing the evidence may be—no matter how varied its attendant circumstances, as, for example, in the outward difference of life in the case of the Baptist and Jesus—no matter how lavish God has been in furnishing tokens of Himself, and of the reality of what He demands, still the wicked heart craves for something more. "This is not the evidence exactly that convinces me," are practically its words. "If this single point had been different, or if some clearer statement had been made, or if I were to see with my own eye the miracles recorded in Scripture, I might believe." So, too, those who hate the Gospel, excuse themselves for not attending to it, by accusing those who preach it of faults in their manner, or of errors in their life.

35. *But wisdom is justified of all her children.
 †Matt. xi. 19.

Rather, *by all her children*. Wisdom can here be no other than the Divine wisdom which had been revealed by John and Jesus, and in Jesus was personally manifested. *Her children* are those who are born of her, and possess a wise heart. The *justification* of wisdom takes place where she is acquitted of accusations of this kind, and acknowledged in her true character. Wise and good men, not only some, but

all, admire the beautiful variety in the conduct of Providence, and in the methods of revealing Divine grace, approve religion in their judgment, honor it in their conversation, and adorn it in their lives.

36. † *And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.
 *Matt. xxvi. 6; Mark xiv. 3; John xi. 2.

The time and place of the occurrence of the things here related are not particularly indicated. In some respects the incident here recorded is similar to the anointing of Jesus' feet by Mary, as narrated (Matt. xxvi. 7; Mark xiv. 3; John xii. 3); but must not be confounded with that event. We know nothing of this Pharisee, except his name, *Simon*. (Verse 40.) There is no proof that he was the same as "Simon, the leper," mentioned in Mark xiv. 3. He certainly was not Simon Peter, or Simon Zelotes. There is as little reason for ascribing his invitation to hostile intentions, as for believing that it sprang from esteem and affection. Perhaps pride itself impelled him to receive a rabbi at his table, whose name was already upon so many tongues, and in respect to whom one did not know how high He might yet rise, and Christ readily accepted the invitation, never refusing any opportunity for doing good.

37. And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, †Rom. v. 8; 1 Tim. ii. 9.

The *woman* mentioned in this narrative is one whose name is, for wise and kind reasons, not stated. This is the view maintained by the great majority of all Protestant commentators. She is never again mentioned, that we are aware of, in the Gospel history. *Which was a sinner*. That she was an unchaste woman can scarcely be doubted, from the emphasis the word "sinner" receives from its connection, and from the reference made to her by the Pharisee. (verse 39.) She *was a sinner*, but at the time here spoken of gave evidence that she had already learned to hate and forsake her sins, and to love dearly and tenderly the Saviour for whom she had forsaken them. *When she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house*. This is additional proof that this woman was not, as some have

strangely supposed, Mary, the sister of Lazarus, for Mary was well known to Christ, and had not come accidentally, but had been invited. (John xii. 2.) It also shows that the woman's heart had been touched by some previous attendance upon our Lord's ministry, inasmuch as she made preparations for what she was about to do, after she had learned that He was in the Pharisee's house. *Sat at meat*—reclined, which was the usual position at the table, and, as it appears from the sequel, without having His feet washed or being anointed. *Brought an alabastron box of ointment.* The alabastron box containing the ointment, or rather oil, is in the original called simply an *alabastron*, a name derived from the Alabastron in Egypt, where there was a manufactory of small pots and vessels for holding perfumes, made from stone found in the neighboring mountains, and which was thought to conserve better than any other substance the qualities of the precious unguents. The Greeks gave to these vessels the name of the town which produced them, and then to the species of stone of which they were made, and eventually to all perfume vessels of whatever form or substance. Ointments and oils were used in Eastern countries to an extent we can hardly understand. The excessive heat of the climate made it almost necessary, to preserve the skin from cracking. (See Ps. civ. 15.)

38. And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

*Isa. lxi. 3; Matt. v. 4; 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11; James iv. 9.

It would appear that the meals at which Jesus took part had a somewhat public character. The entrance stood open to all, not because they were invited by Him, but because the concourse could not be hindered. *Stood at his feet behind him.* The guests at meal-time so reclined on couches that their feet were behind them, toward the open space or passage, between the couch and the wall, where the servants stood in attendance. Into this open place, to which access, without obtrusiveness, was easy, this woman came. Christ could not perhaps have seen her without turning His head. Hence, the force of the expression, "behind him." *Weeping* tears of penitence and love. *And began to wash*

his feet with tears. From a deep conviction of her many sins, and of the obligations she was under to the Saviour for bringing her to a sense of them, she shed tears in such abundance that they trickled down on His feet, which were then bare. Neither the Jews nor the Romans wore stockings, and as for their shoes or sandals, they always took them off when they went to their meals. At feasts it was the custom of the entertainer to provide water, and direct his servants to wash the feet of his guests. *And did wipe them with the hairs of her head.* Observing that the tears shed so freely wetted the Saviour's feet, she wiped them with her hair, which she now wore flowing loose about her shoulders, as mourners commonly did. *And kissed his feet with affectionate tenderness,* or kissed them *again and again*, which is the true force of the original word. The *kiss* was used in ancient times as the emblem of *love, religious reverence, subjection* and *supplication*. It has the meaning of *supplication*, in the way of *adoration*, accompanied with *subjection*, in 1 Kings xix. 18; Job xxxi. 27, and in Ps. ii. 12. *And anointed them with the ointment.* That which she had before used in self-adornment, she now poured out upon the feet of her Lord, as a token of her love, and a pledge that, thereafter, her chiefest beauty and ornament were to be a meek, penitent and believing spirit.

39. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him, saw it, he spake with himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.—Isa. lxxv. 5. *Luke xv. 2.

When Simon observed that Jesus permitted such a notorious sinner to approach, nay, and to touch Him, *he spake within himself*, he thought in his heart, *this man, if he were a prophet*, as he pretends to be, *would have known what manner of woman*, what a disreputable person, *this is that toucheth him*, thus familiarly; and, instead of allowing her to do so, would immediately have driven her away with just disdain, as the tradition of the elders directs, for it was a maxim with the Pharisees that the very touch of the wicked caused pollution. The discerning of spirits was, according to the Jews, one of the characteristics of the Messiah. (Isa. ix. 3, 4.)

40. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

Though Simon did not declare his sentiments, they were not hidden from Christ, who, to show him that He was a prophet, and that He knew not only the characters of men but the inward and invisible state of their minds, conversed with him on the subject of his thoughts. *Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee*, something demanding thy whole attention, applicable to thee, and important for thee. *Master, say on.* Though the Pharisee's heart had just pronounced his guest to be an impostor, the courtesy of the lip proclaimed Him "Master" still. If Jesus had directly attacked Simon in regard to his wicked and unreasonable pride, and unfeeling disdain of the poor, weeping penitent, he would probably have been only hardened and irritated by it. He therefore adopted a method adapted to convince, without offending him. He did not expose him before the company, by making what he said within himself public, but with great delicacy proceeded to utter a parable, to show that Simon erred in condemning a woman whom the Heavenly Judge had acquitted, and that it was well known to Him what both the woman and Simon were, not merely as to what is outward, but in the most secret recesses of the mind.

41. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.—See Matt. xviii. 28.

Creditor. A man who is accustomed to lend. *Five hundred pence*, about \$75; *fifty pence*, \$7.50. God is the creditor, men are the debtors, and sins the debts. The determinate numbers used can only be meant to indicate the great inequality of the debt of these two persons, and at the same time to teach, that whilst it is not true that any man's sins are *really* small, yet sinners, in the eye and according to the judgment of God, are not equal, but have different degrees of guilt; all are guilty, but not all alike.

42. And when they had nothing to pay, ^{he}he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?

^dPs. xxxi. 1, 5, ciii. 3; Acts xiii. 38; Rom. iii. 24 and iv. 5, 8.

Nothing to pay—he frankly forgave them both. Here, on the part of the debtors, two things are evident: the certainty and

greatness of the debt, and their utter incapacity to make restitution, being entirely insolvent; while on the part of the creditor there appears correspondingly in the remission of the debts, 1. A very great goodness, and, 2. That goodness perfectly free, depending simply on his own will, quite undeserved by the debtors, and never to be demanded by them as a matter of right. Such also is the relation of the sinner to God, that all sins require an exercise of grace that is perfectly free, and this also it is possible for them to find. *Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most? Both would love*, for such a manifestation of love infallibly begets love in the heart of the receiver. It is also implied that the degree of the reciprocal love will be determined by the apprehension of the greatness of the received benefit. *Neither of the debtors would love at all the creditor before he had forgiven them.* An insolvent debtor, till he is forgiven, does not *love*, but shuns his creditor, apprehending severe treatment from him. It is entirely the same in the heart of the sinner. He learns from the Divine law, both his guilt and his liability to punishment, so that nothing but fear of God can take possession of him. But the sinner, in such a state, is met by God in the Gospel with the gracious method of pardon for his sins, and this, in the believing heart, which appropriates to itself the word of God, becomes the means of rooting out fear, and implanting a principle of love (Rom. xv. 1, 8, 15; 2 Tim. i. 7; 1 John iv. 18, 19.) The application of the parable, therefore, leads to the following conclusions: 1. Love to God cannot precede the pardon of sin. 2. And hence it cannot deserve this pardon of sin. 3. But infallibly marks an act of forgiveness, already past and experienced.

43. Simon answered and said, I suppose that *he*, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

Simon answered, and said, I suppose, &c. He surely who was forgiven most was under the greater obligations, and must reasonably be supposed to feel the greater affection for his merciful and generous creditor. By this acknowledgment he was, unknowingly to himself, prepared to receive our Lord's reproof. And he said,

Thou hast rightly judged, and the reflection is evidently suited to the case that we have before us.

44. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. 45. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. 46. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.—P's. xxiii. 5.

Now follows the application of the parable.

He turned to the woman, who had been a notorious sinner, and was the greater, the five hundred pence debtor. The Pharisee, however, though the less, the fifty pence debtor, yet was a debtor too, which was more, perhaps, than he thought himself to be, judging rather that God was his debtor. (Chap. xviii. 10, 11.) *Seest thou this woman*, afflicted and distressed as she is? and canst thou avoid taking notice of the extraordinary tenderness and affectionate regard to me that she has now manifested? *I entered into thine house*, as a guest, on thine own express invitation; *thou gavest me no water for my feet*, though that be so customary and necessary a refreshment on these occasions; but *she*, nobly supplying the lack of service, *hath washed my feet*, not with mere water, withheld by thee, but by something far more precious, *her tears*, and *wiped them*, not with a common napkin, but *with the hairs of her head*. *Thou gavest me no kiss*, as men do when they receive a guest, *but this woman since the time I came in* (some copies read, *she came in*), *hath not ceased to kiss even my feet* with the greatest humility and affection. *My head with even common oil thou didst not anoint*, though few entertainments fail of being attended with that circumstance (see Deut. xxviii. 40; Mi. vi. 15; Ps. xxiii. 5, civ. 15 and cxli. 5); *but this woman hath anointed*, not my head, but *my feet*, with precious ointment. This comparison, drawn so much to the advantage of the woman whom the Pharisee so thoroughly despised, must have put him to shame. Then comes the judgment pronounced by Christ—a judgment in which He furnishes His reply to the silent query of Simon, *whether this professed prophet discerned spirits*, by showing him that He did most truly discern both her spirit and his.

47. Wherefore, I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.—1 Tim. i. 14.

Wherefore must not be coupled with *I say unto thee*, but with what follows, so that *I say unto thee* should be placed in parenthesis. *I say unto thee*, I declare it openly, both for her vindication and for thy admonition, *her sins, which are many*, and exceedingly heinous, as I well know, *are forgiven*, freely and graciously, for, rather, *therefore she loved much*, as I have been the means of bringing her to repentance, and to enjoy pardon and peace, she has thus testified the great love and high regard she has for me, as being persuaded that she never can sufficiently express her sense of the obligation. From this woman's manifestations of love to me, thou mightest have drawn the conclusion that her many sins have been forgiven her. There are three things in this passage which show that the forgiveness of sin is not, as Romanists contend it is, obtained through works of love. 1. Christ said to the woman (verse 50), *Thy faith hath saved thee*; 2. In verse 47, forgiveness of sin goes before love; and, 3. If we, as debtors, could by any merit of our own, obtain forgiveness of sin, we should, then, in contradiction of the parable itself, *have something wherewith to pay*. But *to whom little is forgiven*, or who thinks his debt was but small, *the same loveth little*, is not much affected by the kindness of the creditor that forgives him, and feels but little gratitude and love to him on that account.

48. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.
 49. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?—Matt. ix. 3; Mark ii. 7.

The woman's sins were not now forgiven for the first time. She was really forgiven *before* she came to Christ. Now she received a public and authoritative declaration of it before many witnesses, as a reward for her open expression of love and gratitude. Before, she had hope through grace. Now, she received the assurance of hope. Before, she was justified before God; now, Jesus has justified her before men, before this Pharisaic company, by declaring that her sins had been forgiven. While the Pharisees murmured, the poor penitent rejoiced.

49. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?—Matt. ix. 3; Mark ii. 7.

Began to say. Just as in chap. v. 21. It would seem almost inconceivable that the same censure should have been already repeated, if we forget that a Pharisaic heart at all times remains the same; besides, these guests need not, of course, have been acquainted with that which had already taken place at the healing of the paralytic. *Sins also.* A better translation would be, *even sins*, the contrast being between the display of His power in curing physical infirmities (verse 21), and the greater exercise of it in the forgiveness of sin, which was solely God's prerogative.

50. And he said to the woman, 'Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.'

¹Matt. ix. 22; Mark v. 34 and x. 52; Luke viii. 48 and xviii. 42.

Our Lord rebuked not the insolent murmurers, but the more they murmured the more persistently did He assure the penitent. He did not say, "Thy *love* hath saved thee." Here, as in every other part of the New Testament, *faith* is put forward as the key to salvation. This woman had embraced our Saviour's invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest;" and in her case it was proved true that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Faith is the *instrument* of receiving the *salvation* which is promised to those who repent. *Go in peace*, was a phrase which was a common valediction among the Jews, like our "Good-bye," or "God be with you."

The following lessons are taught by this narrative:

1. Men may show some outward respect to Christ, and yet remain unconverted. This Pharisee even desired that our Lord would eat with him, yet all this time he was profoundly ignorant of the nature of the Gospel. 2. For great sinners there is

a great Saviour. "This man receiveth sinners," which was the ironical taunt of proud and haughty Pharisees, is the Saviour's own motto, and the glorious peculiarity of His great salvation. 3. Love to the Saviour forms a necessary part of religion. It is not, as some maintain, enthusiasm, or the mere effect of a high-wrought imagination. It has its ground-work in the sober foundations of the word of God. That state of heart which the Saviour on this occasion prized so highly, He values still, for He is "the same yesterday, to-day and forever." Just in proportion to our love will be our obedience. 4. Toward a great sinner there ought to be great tenderness. However his sin may be rebuked, *he* should be deeply pitied. We should speak to him in terms of holy sympathy, and be ready to show the nature and issues of his transgression, and direct him to Jesus, who came into the world, "that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life." 5. Our salvation is of grace. It is utterly impossible for any person of himself to pay the debt he owes to God's violated law. They that owe least stand in need of mercy and forgiveness, as well as they that owe most. Let us rejoice to know that God, the great Creditor, forgives freely, fully and *frankly*, not grudgingly or indifferently, but graciously, cheerfully all who come to Him through Jesus Christ—who, though not the *cause* of God's love, is yet the expression of it, and the channel through which that love flows. 6. The knowledge of forgiveness, instead of leading to presumption or indifference to God's claims, will produce humility, and stimulate to obedience. That sinner loves Jesus most who is the most sensible of what Christ has done *for him*.

1. Whose servant was sick? 2. What did the centurion do? 3. What did our Lord say about his faith? 4. Why was his faith great? 5. What did Jesus meet at the gate of Nain? 6. How did He restore the dead man to life? 7. For what purpose did John send two of his disciples to Christ? 8. What was our Lord's message in reply? 9. What eulogy did Jesus pronounce on John? 10. Explain verses 31-35. 11. What occurred when Jesus sat at meat? 12. How are we to understand the parable of the creditor? 13. What did Jesus say to Simon?

CHAPTER VIII.

3 *Women minister unto Christ of their substance.* 4 *Christ, after he had preached from place to place, attended with his apostles, propoundeth the parable of the sower.* 16 *and of the candle.* 21 *declareth who are his mother, and brethren.* 22 *rebuketh the winds:* 26 *casteth the legion of devils out of the man into the herd of swine:* 37 *is rejected of the Gadarenes:* 43 *healeth the woman of her bloody issue,* 49 *and raiseth from death Jairus' daughter.*

Much of what is contained in this chapter in relation to Christ's preaching and miracles is also recorded by Matthew and Mark. These portions of our Lord's history are here repeated, as well for their intrinsic importance, as that out of the mouth not only of two, but of three witnesses, every word may be established.

AND it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,

Afterward—after the laying of the platform of the new dispensation, by preaching the sermon on the Mount, and confirming it by miracles indicating His power over body and soul, or, as the original expression may be understood to imply, *in the order of His work*, for He went through it regularly, and the end of one good work was with Him the beginning of another. *He went through every city, &c., that is, of Galilee. Preaching and showing, &c., proclaiming and evangelizing, or publishing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God*—the good news of the kingdom He was now about to erect among mankind. *And the twelve were with him*, that they might be further instructed for their work, and that their having been thus publicly seen in His train, might promote their reception, when they afterward came to any of these places by themselves.

2. And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, 3. And Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.—^aMatt. xxvii. 55, 56. ^bMark xvi. 9.

The *women* here mentioned seem for the most part to have been of some social standing and means. They were probably attached to Jesus and His company, by having been the subjects of remarkable cures. *Evil spirits and infirmities.* It is thus evident that the forms of affliction here denoted were not the same. Devils and diseases may combine, but they are not identical. *Mary called Magdalene*, so called

from Magdala, now Medjil, a town on the west side of Lake Gennesaret, the patrilial name being given her to distinguish her from the other Marys in attendance on our Lord's ministry. She is mentioned here in a manner that does not betray the faintest consciousness of her having been mentioned before, and thus it is clearly implied that she is not the same as the sinful woman mentioned in the last chapter. *Out of whom went seven devils.* This phrase must here, as in every other passage, be taken literally, not figuratively for sins. It denotes an intensity of demoniacal possession. *Seven* may be a symbolical and indefinite number to indicate the malignant character of the possession. Instances of the indefinite use of the word *seven* may be found in Matt. xii. 45, and in Ruth iv. 15; 1 Sam. ii. 5; Isa. iv. 1. Of Mary's life previous to her having thus become a miracle and monument of the Saviour's power and mercy, we know nothing. Very great injustice has been done by some to the memory of Mary Magdalene, in supposing her to have been, before her conversion, a prostitute. (See notes on chap. vii. 37.) The fact that she was possessed with *seven demons* is no evidence against her, for *Joanna and Susanna* (verse 3), might as well, on this ground, be censured, for they seem to have been dispossessed likewise by Jesus. Then, again, such possession, instead of necessarily implying any peculiar criminality, seems to have been an *affliction*, for we never find that Jesus rebuked the *persons* who were possessed. From the time she had experienced Christ's miraculous power, she became His devoted follower. She seems to have exceeded all the other women in duty and respect to our Lord's person. At this time she came forth from the retirement in which she had long kept herself, in gentle considerateness to minister to the indigence of her homeless Saviour, as she afterward attended Him to His cross, embalmed His corpse, watched by His shroud, and wept at His grave. It will be remembered that she had the honor of being one to whom Jesus made His appearance on the morning of His resurrec-

tion, and that her name was the first word His risen tongue uttered.

And *Joanna, the wife of Chuza*. Joanna is the feminine of John, and the same as Jane. *Herod's steward*, of whom she was the wife, was the manager of the property concerns and household affairs of Herod Antipas. The bad examples of Herod, and of Herodias, had not hindered her from embracing that Gospel which her superiors despised. She also continued faithful to Jesus at His death, and at His grave. (Luke xxiv. 10.) Her case teaches us that not all our Lord's followers were poor. It throws light on Herod's anxiety to see our Lord, when He was sent to him by Pilate. He had probably heard of Him through his steward's family. It also suggests the pleasant idea that John the Baptist's imprisonment by Herod led to the conversion of some of Herod's retainers. Even in the worst places God has some to stand up for His name, and bear witness for His truth: there was a Joseph in Pharaoh's court, an Obadiah in Ahab's court, a Daniel in Nebuchadnezzar's court, a church in Nero's house, and a Joanna in the family of the bloody Herod, who had put John the Baptist to death.

Susanna means Lily. This is the only place in which we find this woman mentioned, but doubtless she was one of the noble band which exhibited their devotion and constancy in the time of Christ's passion. Who the *many others* were, we do not know. Their names, we may hope, are in the Book of Life, and "the day will declare" them. *Which ministered unto him of their substance*, literally, *things on hand, possessions, property*. For the words "to him," many versions have "to them," *i. e.*, our Lord and the Twelve Apostles. No doubt the holy courage and liberality of these female followers of our Lord drew upon them jeers and scoffs from many, for following the carpenter's son, and a few fishermen; but this, instead of cooling, inflamed their zeal.

What was true during our Lord's ministry has been ever since: more women than men have been, and are, among the followers of Jesus. In many congregations, at most communions, at meetings for social worship, and in enterprises of Christian

beneficence, the number of females largely preponderates.

4. [†] And when many people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable:—Matt. xiii. 2; Mark iv. 1.

(We include in our exposition the explanation of the parable given of it by the Saviour in verses 11–15.)

A *parable* is a form of speech in which something is presented to us in lieu of some other thing which it resembles, and which we wish to illustrate. It is derived from a Greek word signifying to *compare together*. This first of the parables which Jesus uttered is recorded also by Matt. xiii. 3–8, and Mark iv. 3. It is generally called the "Parable of the Sower," but among the Germans has the title of "The four kinds of ground." The delivery of this very heart-searching and conscience-rousing parable, when the crowd of hearers was greatest, shows that our Lord was far from flattering men, and speaking smooth things; and teaches that ministers should always denounce sin most plainly when their churches are most full, and their congregations largest.

5. A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way-side: and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

It cannot be doubted our Lord intended to set Himself forth as the Chief Sower, though nowhere, in the three interpretations of the parable, has He announced Himself as such. His entrance into the world was a going forth to sow. *Others* were only able to sow, because He had sown *first*. They did but carry on the work which He auspicated and began. By the *seed* is meant the Word of God in general, but, pre-eminently, His Gospel; His gracious message by Christ; His gift of grace and glory; His testimony and invitations concerning the kingdom of heaven. It should be noted, that whilst the seed is the Word, the Word is Christ. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." (John i. 1, 14.) Christ is the living seed, and the Bible is the husk that holds it.

"*His seed*." The fields must all be sown with Christ's own seed, with no mixed grain. Woe unto the minister who

sows his own seed, and not Christ's. It will be observed that Christ sows the seed upon all soils. He gives to all opportunity of knowing Him; if any perish, it is not because the Sower withheld the seed, or because the seed was not good, but because their own hearts were not ready and open to receive it.

And as he sowed, some fell by the way-side, that is, some fell on the hard foot-path which skirted the edge of the field, or, perhaps, ran by way of short cut through the middle of it, where the glebe was not broken, and so it could not sink down in the earth, but lay exposed on the surface to the feet of passers-by, till at length it became an easy prey to the birds, such as in the East are described as following in large flocks the husbandman, to gather up, if they can, the seed-corn which he has scattered. Those here represented are such as, by deep-rooted prejudices against Christianity, have minds which are impenetrable, and inaccessible to conviction; also, the thoughtless, the inattentive, the inconsiderate, the trifling, the gay, who think of nothing beyond the present scene, and who do not consider themselves as in the smallest degree interested in a higher invisible world. Those last described, though not formally rejecting the Gospel, yet do in fact never concern themselves about it. They *hear* the word (verse 12), but here the matter ends. The truth never goes beyond the surface, never penetrates into their hearts, but lies on the hard beaten highway. As an effect of the refusal of the hard heart to let the seed penetrate into it, or to "understand" it (Matt. xiii. 19), the good word of God, being exposed to the scorn and contempt of others, is *trodden down*. Nor only this, it is also *devoured by the fowls of the air*. The *devil* (verse 12) *cometh, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved*. The kingdom of darkness fights against the kingdom of God, which is built up within us through the word of God, and there is still permitted to exist a secret power of Satan, which, through much cunning and all kinds of wicked artifice, draws from the heart the preached Word. (Eph. ii. 2; 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.) Satan comes through his

emissaries, symbolized by the *fowls*. Temptations have wings, and they come in flocks, and they have open beaks to snatch up the word of life and carry it off or *devour* it. And how easily the seed of the word does go! People on Monday have forgotten both the sermon and the text of the Sabbath. The birds have come and devoured them up.

6. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

Here, again, we include in our exposition, the explanation of the parable given by our Lord, in verses 11-15.

Upon a rock. This explains what is designated in Matthew, *stony places*, and in Mark *stony ground*—reference being had, not to a field abounding in small stones, for then would seeds germinate in the crevices between, but to one, underneath which were large flat rocks, covered with a thin surface of earth, which prevented the seed from having any depth of root. The rocky soil of many parts of Palestine makes the circumstances here mentioned far more likely than they appear to be in a country like ours. The *rock* is the earthly, sinful nature of man. *And as soon as it was sprung up, &c.* In such a soil as has been described, because the seed had not fallen into deep earth, the plant the sooner appeared above the surface, and while the rock below hindered it from striking deeply downward, it put forth its energies the more luxuriantly in the stalk. It sprung up without delay, but was not rooted in that deep moist soil, which would have enabled it to resist the scorching heat of the sun, and being smitten by that, withered and died.

The persons here represented *are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy, and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.* (verse 13.) They *receive the word with joy, with delight*. It is not, however, a joy springing up from the greatness of the benefit, even after all the counterbalancing costs and hazards are taken into account, but a joy arising from an overlooking and leaving out of calculation those costs and hazards. The word to which they have listened with delight, makes an impression upon them, and this impression passes

into expression. They move out of the passive into the active state, making a profession, and entering on the practice of religion. They are also often marked by the outward evidences of precocious piety, and a forward, flaming zeal. But after all, there is in them no real, thorough change. Whilst there is no conscious, intentional deceit, there is no radical renovation. The sad mistake in all such cases is, that convictions are mistaken for conversion; admiration of the preacher's eloquence for attachment to the Saviour (Ezek. xxxiii. 30-32); an appreciation of the moral beauties of the Gospel, for an appreciation of its holiness, and the pleasures of emotion, or such gratification as taste enjoys in a beautiful discourse, for the pleasures of piety. *And these have no root.* How beautifully does this figure show, that, as from the roots which are out of sight, a tree derives its stability and firmness, so, upon the hidden life of the Christian, that life which is out of the sight of other men, his firmness and stability depend. The word has never gone down into the hearts of the persons referred to, their roots lie along in their profession of religion.

Which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. The striking characteristic here, is the rapid change from bloom to decay, from the reception of the word to the renunciation of it. Divine truth has produced no deep or permanent effect, for while the hearts are soft and susceptible, they are, at the same time, weak and inconstant. Just as the sun scorches the plants, which have not sufficient depth of earth or moisture, whilst it contributes to the growth of plants which are not destitute of these conditions, so the troubles, afflictions and persecutions which will strengthen a true faith, cause a faith which is *temporary* to fail.

7. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

The portion of the seed here referred to wants neither root nor depth of earth. It grows up, but the misfortune is that the thorns grow up with it. The fault of the soil is not that of bearing nothing, but of bearing too much; of bearing what it ought not; of exhausting its strength and

nutrition on vile and worthless productions—*thorns* (under which term may be included all rank weeds, varying with countries and climates, which infect the soil and hurt the harvest), the roots of which drank up the sap of the ground, while their branches veiled off the sunlight, so that the good seed, starved beneath and overshadowed above, although it made a fair promise in the spring, produced nothing in the autumn.

And that which fell among thorns, &c. (verse 14.) Many persons in their youth receive religious instruction. They imbibe right principles, and listen to good advice, but no sooner do they *go forth*—no sooner do they leave those persons and places from which they received them, than they take the road either of business or of pleasure, pursue their interests, their amusements or their guilty indulgences with unbounded eagerness, and have neither time nor inclination to cultivate the seeds of religion that have been sown in their hearts, and to eradicate the weeds that have been mingled with them. The consequence is, that the weeds prevail, and the seeds are choked and lost. All classes and ranks are on this side exposed to danger. As principal antagonists to the efficacious working of the Divine word, Christ mentions *cares*—care for our present livelihood—the pressure of an earthly existence—*riches, and pleasures of this life* which riches procure; the glittering side of this life, both with poor and rich, with those who are in quest of them, and those who already have them, because both look upon them as the highest good, and put their confidence in them. So that, be it woman's household cares, or the anxieties and annoyances of man's business; the harassments of poverty or the enticements of wealth, the pursuit of fame or power, whatever it be that engrosses our attention, and stealing our thoughts from God and our hearts from heaven, counteracts the holy influences of Bibles, churches, Sabbath, sermons and sacraments, it is *choking the word.* It should be remembered, however, that *only where the seed and the thorns grew together* was the mischief done. There is a place for cares and for riches, too—a place in which they help and do not

hinder the kingdom of God. Kept in its own sphere, the lawful business of life becomes a protecting fence round the tender plant of grace in the Christian's heart. We should not permit the thorns or noxious weeds to occupy the position which is due to the good seed. Not as rivals in the field, but as guards around it—earthly affairs are innocent and safe. "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

8. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit a hundred-fold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

The fourth class of hearers, here, as well as in Matt. xiii. and Mark iv., are represented by certain salient distinctive points of character, which are as touchstones, by which every man may and should try himself. They *hear* the word willingly and with attention, and *understand* it, receive it in faith, obey it, and thus experience its power, in which respects they are distinguished from the first class. They also *keep* it in a pure, good heart, often meditating on it, and laying it up in the deepest recesses of the mind, which constitutes their distinction from the second class. They *bring forth fruit*, in them are manifested the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22; 1 Cor. xiii. 4-7), *with patience*, persevering with unshaken steadfastness against opposition and difficulties, under the reproach of the world, in the storm of persecution, and this patience which they exercise distinguishes them from the third class. The expressions, "good ground" and "an honest and good heart," do not imply that any one's heart is naturally good, or even can become so without the grace of God. The *ground*, here, like the *tree* in another analogical lesson, is not good until it is *made* good. The fairest sense of these expressions is, "an unprejudiced heart, willing to be taught," such as was peculiarly lacking among the Jews in our Lord's time. The Bereans are an illustration of the expression *good ground*. (Acts xvii. 9.) The good heart is good by reception of the truth. It does not receive the truth because it is good. There is no regeneration of heart, except by the power of the Spirit of God, and generally through the instrumentality of the truth.

Bare fruit a hundred-fold. Luke only mentions summarily the hundred-fold increase, while Matthew and Mark speak of the "thirty" and "sixty-fold." The return of a hundred-fold for one is not unknown in the East, though always mentioned as something extraordinary. If there be no fruit, there can be no Christianity. Fruit is the test of the tree, character the symbol of principle. That some portions of the *good ground* produced a larger return than others, corresponds with the fact in the spiritual sphere. There are diversities in the Spirit's operation, diversities in natural gifts bestowed on men at first, and diversities in the amount of energy exerted by believers as fellow-workers with God in their own sanctification and diversities, accordingly, in the fruitfulness which results in the life of Christians. While all true believers are safe in Christ, each should covet the best gifts; and no true disciple will be contented with a thirty-fold increase of usefulness, if, through prayer and watching, if, by denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, if, by sternly crucifying the flesh, and trustfully walking with God, he may rise from thirty to sixty, and from sixty to an hundred-fold, in that holy obedience which grows on living faith.

And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. This expression is especially recorded by all the three Evangelists, and seems to point out the special importance of the parable. The verb rendered *cried*, implies an utterance in loud and distinct tones, so that all could hear. This method of announcement Christ often adopted when uttering some important and mighty truth.

9. ⁴And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be?—Matt. xiii. 10; Mark iv. 10.

They wished to understand the meaning of the parable. We should earnestly desire to know the true *intent* and full *extent* of the word we hear, that we may be neither mistaken nor defective in our knowledge.

10. And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.—Isa. vi. 9; Mark iv. 12.

Unto you it is given, &c., as a reward of your diligence, and desire to be informed,

these things shall be explained to you, but the rest shall be left in darkness, and shall have their voluntary ignorance punished with judicial ignorance. *Mysteries of the kingdom of God*; things respecting the Messianic kingdom, things which cannot be known until they are revealed. *But to others, &c.*—"but to them that are without, all these things are done in parables." Here observe, 1. That the doctrines of the Gospel are great mysteries. 2. That it is an invaluable privilege rightly to understand them. 3. That in this privilege all are not sharers, but only those to whom *it is given*. 4. That whilst God does not arbitrarily aim to confirm any in judicial blindness, it is, nevertheless, a righteous thing with Him to leave to farther blindness and ignorance in spiritual things, those who, as the Pharisees in Christ's time did, willfully reject the truth, and shut their eyes against the evidence of it.

11. *Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.—Matt. xiii. 18; Mark iv. 14.

Our Lord, in this case, gave both the parable and its explanation. He became His own interpreter. The Master takes us, like little children, by the hand, and leads us through all the turnings of His first symbolic lesson, lest in our inexperience we should miss our way. The Son of God not only gave Himself as a sacrifice for sin, He also labored as a patient, painstaking teacher of the ignorant. He is the Apostle as well as the High Priest of our profession. His instructions have been recorded by the Spirit in the Scripture for our use. We may still sit at His feet and listen to His voice. (See notes on verse 5.)

12. Those by the way-side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.* 13. They on the rock are *they*, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy: and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.† 14. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth and are choked with cares and the riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

*See notes on verse 5. †See notes on verse 6.

Bring forth no fruit to perfection. In Matthew and Mark, *becometh unfruitful*. (See notes on verse 7.)

15. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.*

*See notes on verse 8.

Concerning this parable, let the follow-

ing things be observed: 1. It is addressed to *hearers* of the Gospel: those who *refuse to hear* are elsewhere in the Scriptures noticed and condemned. 2. The four classes of hearers described include the whole mass of hearers. It is impossible to find any hearer who does not come under one of these descriptions. 3. As there never yet has been in the history of the world an assemblage of mixed hearers which might not be resolved into these four divisions, we have here decisive proof of our Lord's power of foreseeing future events. 4. It is a solemn thought, that only in one, out of the four classes of hearers, the seed brought forth fruit. 5. It is not enough merely to *admire* this parable. If a traveler, who possesses an accurate map of his route, turn aside from it and perish in a pit, it will not avail him in his extremity to reflect that he carries the correct track in his hand. 6. The minister receives the seed which he sows from Christ, but it must also have become, through spiritual experience, his own possession; for it must be taught of faith. (Ps. cxvi. 10; 1 John i. 1-3.) 7. The minister's vocation is one involving much labor, and requiring patience. 8. The work of spreading Divine truth is not confined to those who are formally set apart to it. As every leaf of the forest and every ripple on the lake, which itself receives a sunbeam on its breast, may throw the sunbeam off again, and so spread light around, in like manner, every one, old or young, who receives Christ into his heart, may and will publish, with his life and lips, that blessed name. 9. It is not the fault of the seed, or of the sower, if men do not bring forth fruit unto eternal life. The difficulty is with the soil. Men will not receive with meekness the ingrafted word, as an Apostle exhorts. (James i. 21.) The Gospel is always fruitful seed in regard to its Divine virtue, but not in regard to its actual effects. 10. There is not a uniform proficiency in holiness among Christians. None are destitute of fruit; but it is not always the same, even in the same person, nor is it so in different persons—it varies according to their respective powers, the relations of life, the spheres of operation in which the Lord has placed them, and

especially according to their degrees of fidelity in the cultivation of their hearts.

16. † "No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light."—Matt. v. 15; Mark iv. 21; Luke xi. 33.

Lighted a candle, or lamp. *Covereth it with a vessel*, &c. From some ancient writers we learn, that only those who had bad designs hid a candle, that, in the dead of the night, when all were asleep, they might rise up, and have a light at hand to effect their bad purposes. *But setteth it on a candlestick*, &c. "As men do not light a candle that they may cover it, so I have not communicated my truth or my grace unto you, my Apostles and disciples, merely for your own use, but for that of others." Ministers and disciples of Christ, shining by light derived from Him as the "Light of the world," are, in a subordinate sense, the "light of the world," also, and diffuse His truth and salvation where darkness and wickedness would otherwise reign. It is their duty, and should be their grand object, so to recommend the truth by pious, edifying conversation and conduct, that men may see their good works and be led to glorify God. Every Christian should strive to be a *burning* and *shining* light. Heavenly good things are lost by parsimony, and increase by liberality.

17. † "For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known, and come abroad."—Matt. x. 26; Luke xii. 2.

What is committed to you in *secret*, should be *made manifest*, or, rather, *become manifest*, by you. Your Master did not give you talents to be buried, but to be traded with. Ye shall teach publicly, and explain and illustrate what I now teach you in private.

18. Take heed therefore how ye hear: † for whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he *seemeth to have.

† See Matt. xiii. 12 and xxv. 29; Luke xix. 26. *Or, thinketh that he hath.

How ye hear. In Mark, *what ye hear*. The same general idea of care and caution, in regard to the reception of truth, lies at the basis of both directions. Take heed that you attend to my words, for they must be listened to studiously, with teachableness of disposition, and with diligence, since they are symbolical and sublime, and not spoken at random, or by chance. Every advantage bestowed on us by Providence, and religious instruction especially, is a

trust, of which we must hereafter give account. We should therefore hear the words of eternal life with attention, impartiality and seriousness of heart, mixed with faith, not a mere historical persuasion of the truth of the Gospel, though with this we are to begin, but a deep sense of the need of God's mercy promised in it, a thankful acceptance of the terms on which that mercy is offered, and an humble reliance on a crucified Saviour for pardon, grace and strength.

For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have. The words *which he seemeth to have*, throw light upon the phrase *what he hath*, in the parallel places. (Mark iv. 25; Matt. xiii. 12.) The gifts we have will either be continued to us, or taken from us, according as we do, or do not, employ them for working out our own salvation, for promoting the glory of God, and for the edification of our brethren. Men only *seem* to have what they do not *use*, and mere shows of religion will be lost and forfeited. It is not that which a man does really possess, of which he can be deprived, but of that which he *seemeth* to have, *i. e.*, of which he has got a temporary or imaginary possession, like the stony-ground hearers, who at first received the word with joy, but falling away, were stripped of every semblance of a belief in Christ. There is no surer way to thrive in grace and increase in gifts, than to exercise and improve them. It is of vast advantage to cultivate and cherish a willing and receptive disposition and purpose in relation to the Gospel.

19. † "Then came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press."

† Matt. xii. 46; Mark iii. 31.

The earnestness and assiduity of Christ in teaching the people notwithstanding the opposition of the Pharisees, gave quietude to His friends. They wished Him to desist from His labors, and they seem to have engaged Mary to concur in the design, which was doubtless reprehensible, as it implied sentiments of Him derogatory to His perfect wisdom and excellence. *His brethren*, or near relations. Some think the word means the children of Joseph by a former wife, or His cousins. For the wide signification of "brethren," see Gen.

xxxi. 46; Matt. xiii. 55, xxvii. 56; Mark iii. 18; Gal. i. 19.

20. And it was told him *by certain* which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee.

As the crowd was so great as to render it impossible for any one on the outside to directly address Jesus, the report of His mother and brethren being present, and desiring to speak with Him, was passed along through the crowd, and thus communicated to Him.

21. And he answered and said unto them. My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

Christ here reaffirms the sentiment uttered while sitting in the temple in the midst of the doctors, that He has higher affinities and relationships than those of an earthly nature. We must not suppose from this answer that He intended any disrespect to, or felt no regard for His mother, or any of His relations, for we know that He bore to His mother such affection, that, when hanging on the cross, He commended her with His expiring breath to the care of His beloved disciple. (John xix. 27.) *My mother and brethren are these.* The pronoun having a strong demonstrative force, as though He pointed with His finger to His disciples who were present. As the Saviour speaks alone of *mother and brethren*, it is probable that Joseph was now dead. The fact that our Lord, among the possible relations which human beings can sustain to Him, does not include that of father, may, however, also be well explained from His unwillingness to attribute to any human being the relation which God alone sustained to Him.

Observe, 1. That those united to Christ *in spirit*, are nearer to Him than those related to Him in the *flesh*. With what sacred dignity does this invest all true believers! Although we cannot *see* our Lord, yet we may love Him; and although His bodily presence cannot be enjoyed by us, His spiritual presence is not denied. Though not ours in affinity and consanguinity, yet He is or may be ours, in faith, in love, and in service. 2. All true Christians are obedient to God. As soon as any one is converted, He begins to desire to do the will of God. David said, "O that my ways

were directed to keep thy statutes!" (Ps. cxix. 5.) "I delight," said Paul, "in the law of God after the inward man." Yet the sin of his nature troubled him. He said, "I see a law in my members, warring against the law of my mind." All the children of God endure the same struggle that Paul and David endured.

22. ¶ Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples; and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth.—Matt. viii. 23; Mark iv. 35.

This beautiful and instructive incident is also recorded by Matt. viii. 18-27, and Mark iv. 35-41. The time of it is here left indefinite, but Mark tells us that it was the same day in which He pronounced the parables of the sower, the tares, the grain of mustard seed, &c., by the lake of Galilee. Jesus wished to visit the region that lay east of the southern extremity of this lake, and embarked with His disciples in a *ship*, or large boat, for that purpose. *The lake.* (See notes on chap. v. 1.) *And they launched forth*, probably as the bright sun was setting, and with the prospect of a fair wind and prosperous voyage. Thus many launch forth into the world, with fair appearances and high-raised expectations.

23. But as they sailed he fell asleep; and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy.

He fell asleep. Fatigued with the labors of the day, Jesus had withdrawn Himself to the hinder part of the vessel, and composed Himself to sleep. We have here evidence of His humanity. Though Christ's Godhead is the Rock to which we must all fly for hope and help, and in the clefts of which we must seek to be secure, yet it is, as it were, through His human nature that we have to enter into those clefts. What comfort does it afford to see Him who is all our hope and confidence, so truly a partaker of our necessities and sinless infirmities, as to need the repose which we ourselves require! The humanity of Jesus is here shown to be pure and perfect. Jonah once slept in a storm, but his sleep was the result of the opiate of a dead and benumbed conscience. The sleep of Christ in the tempest, was because of a pure, innocent and holy conscience. Another truth taught by the sleep of Jesus in the storm is, that even when the case of His people may *seem* most desperate, He has

not forgotten them. He may shut His eye, but not His heart.

And there came down a storm of wind on the lake, and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy. A sudden and violent squall, such as those small inland seas, surrounded with mountain gorges, are notoriously exposed to, descended on the bosom of the lake, and the ship which bore the Saviour of the world appeared to be in imminent peril, as, humanly speaking, no doubt it was, for the disciples, exercised to the sea, many of them from their youth, would not have been terrified at the mere shadow of danger. Thus they who in such favorable circumstances had set sail, were suddenly overtaken with a storm. "Judge not according to the appearance." "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." There is neither room nor reason to doubt that Jesus is with us, because in temporal or spiritual things trouble and sorrow assail us. We may encounter storms when sailing with the Son of God Himself. "In the world," says our Lord, "ye shall have tribulation." "We are they," say the saints in glory, "who have come out of great tribulation."

24. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, Master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.

How much was there to sustain the disciples with a sense of security! Jesus was in the same vessel with them, and exposed to the same peril, and if He perished not, their safety was surely guaranteed. Yet, for the moment, fear overwhelmed them. We see their terror in the double *Master, Master*, and in the words of almost rebuke, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" with which, according to Mark, they addressed Jesus. *We perish.* According to Matthew, "Lord, save us, we perish!" One advantage of trials is, to make us know our weakness, so that we shall apply to God by faith in Christ. It is by *faith* alone that we may be said to approach Him, by *love* we are united to Him, and by *prayer* we awake Him. All good perishes in us without Christ; without His grace we are in momentary danger of utter ruin.

Then he arose and rebuked the wind and

the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. The word *rebuked* is one which we apply to living and intelligent creatures only. We talk of rebuking a servant, or a child, but not a tree, or a stone. It is possible, therefore, that in this case there is not a mere historical personification, but a recognition of a malignant agency to which the word is spoken. There may have been demons—spirits giving strength to the hurricane—mustering, in diabolic rage, the destructive forces of nature, under some mad delusion that they might possibly effect the ruin of the voyagers, and thus prevent the discomfort they seem to have known too well was at hand. Jesus needed not, as Moses, to stretch a rod over the deep—He needed not an instrument foreign to Himself to do His mighty work. Calm and collected He went upon the deck, and addressed His reproof to the *wind* and the *water*—the wind as the cause, and the raging billows as the effect. Nature yields obedience to him of whom the Psalmist prophetically sang: "Thou rulest the raging of the sea; when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them." The sea, no longer, as after a storm, rises, and falls, and frets, but at once becomes smooth and tranquil.

This scene strongly resembles that which the commencement of the sacred volume supplies: "And He said, Light be; and light was." And the analogy of the two examples is nearer than might at first appear; for He who now rebuked the wind and the raging of the water is He "by whom also God made the worlds," He "without whom nothing was made that was made." We have in this scene an instance of the juxtaposition of lowliness and greatness which is so often observable in the history of our Lord.

25. And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

The disciples had faith, for they turned to Christ in their need; but it was not quick and lively; it was imperfect, as was evident in their excess of terror, in their counting it possible that the ship which bore their Lord could ever truly perish, for they doubtless meant to include Him

in their *we*. The haste, agitation and weak faith of the disciples, drew forth from Jesus the gentle, tender, yet faithful words: *Where is your faith?* There is no reproach for that rude *awaking* from slumber He so much needed. But, gazing with earnestness upon them, He asks (as in Matthew), "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" • What encouragement is here given to feeble Christians, from the fact that even the disciples themselves possessed but "little faith?" A true and living faith, although it cannot be too large for God's glory, and for our own comfort, cannot be too small for the purpose of salvation. *What manner of man is this?* &c. By the miracle the disciples were led into thoughts, even higher and more awful, of that Lord whom they followed, and were brought more and more to feel that in nearness to Him was all safety and deliverance from every danger. Their faith was disciplined, and they were prepared for sterner moral storms yet in reserve for them. God has a kind design in *all* the afflictions which befall his people. Happy are those for whom all the hurricanes of life's unquiet sea have the effect of making Jesus more precious.

This miracle may be regarded as symbolical of the Church—the Church in the world, and yet not of the world, subject to the storms of persecution. From all these storms she shall be delivered, as she ever has been, by Christ, who is in her, being roused by the cry of His servants. "God is in the midst of her: she shall not be moved: THE LORD shall help her, and that right early." This miracle was not a mere miraculous feat, but also a prophetic fact. It was not finished when it was done, but a foreshadow, as all Christ's miracles were, of a grand result yet to be. That clear dominion of man's spirit over the material universe which Christianity gives, the calm courage which it inspires, and the lordship over the winds and waves, and over all the blind uproar of nature which it secures, is the appointed sequence of the calming of the storm on the Galilean lake. It is also a part of the recuperative and restoring process which is going forward under Him "by whom and for whom are all things."

It is an advance toward the time of the promised "restitution of all things."

26. ¶ And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.
 Matt. viii. 28; Mark v. 1.

We have just seen Jesus show Himself the controller of the elements by which our world is assailed. We now come to contemplate Him in a light still more glorious, as the Lord of the inner storms—the moral hurricanes by which the human mind and heart are deranged. *The country of the Gadarenes.* The city of Gadara, which was one of the ten cities called Decapolis, was on the east of Jordan, in the vicinity of the lake of Genesaret, beyond the brook Jarmuk, about eight miles above its junction with the Jordan. This city gave its name to the district or canton of which it was the chief town—*Gadarene*. *Gergesa* was another city in the same neighborhood, which gave to another district the name of the country of the *Gergesenes*, so that the region generally might be designated by either name.

27. And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and wore no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.

In describing this fearful scene, each Evangelist that records it has some touches which are particularly his own. (Matt. viii. 28–34; Mark v. 1–20.) *A certain man, which had devils long time*, was long demoniacally possessed. (See notes on chap. iv. 33, &c.) He was no madman or maniac bereft of reason, the victim of a disordered fancy or bewildered imagination; a deeper and darker woe brooded over him. A careful observation of the narrative shows us, that in that tempest-tossed spirit there was a strange, mysterious blending of human consciousness and fiendish hate—an interweaving of truth and error—a confounding of his own personality with that of the devils. His own nature was crushed to the dust by some savage tormentor, lording it over him, yet the overmastered soul (the nobler being of the man), seems ever and anon to rise to the surface, and to utter longings for emancipation.

And wore no clothes. He was naked, for he tore off whatever was put upon his person. *Neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.* There are in the part of the country re-

ferred to, and especially near the ruins of the city of Gadara, still to be seen numerous old sepulchres hewn in the sides of the hills, some of which are occupied as residences of poor families. These places of tombs being outside the towns, and being avoided by the Jews, for fear of contracting pollution from contact with human bones, formed secluded retreats, acceptable to those who, from demoniacal possession, madness or crime, or other causes, shunned the society of men. Though men are not literally possessed of devils, all are by nature the slaves of sin, and led captive by the great adversary at his will. How frequently does sin cut off men from social happiness and God! Hemmed in by deeds of moral turpitude, sinners live on, shut out from Heaven's own joys. Their home is but a tomb—a dark, cold place, though songs and revelry and thoughtless mirth are often found within.

28. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.

The man may have rushed down from his dismal dwelling-place, to encounter with hostile violence the intruders that had dared to set foot on his domain. Or it may have been that he was drawn to Christ by the secret instinctive feeling that He was his helper, and driven from Him by the sense of the awful gulf that divided him from the Holy One of God. At any rate, if it *was* with purposes of violence, ere the man had fully reached Jesus his mind was changed, "for he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man." (Verse 29.) *Jesus thou Son of God most high.* Perhaps the demoniac was a Jew not wholly unacquainted with the Messianic hope, but certainly it is in the spirit of the Evangelists if we believe that the knowledge of the Lord which the demons usually exhibited had been attained in a supernatural way. *What have I to do with thee?* These are the words of the devil, by whom the man was possessed, rather than the man himself, and they mean, "What have we in common? Why interest thou with us? Why wilt thou not let us alone?"

I beseech thee, torment me not. How torment him not? It has been alleged that

in this entreaty the possessed man identified himself with his demon, dreading the pains and convulsions of the casting out, but if that had been meant, the possessed man would have distinguished himself from his demon, and not identified himself with him, for in that identification he would have felt the nearness and supremacy of Jesus itself a torment, and still more banishment into the abyss. These words, as well as those in Matthew, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" are a striking incidental proof that there will be a judgment and a hell. The devils believe this, if men do not.

29. (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him; and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)

For he had commanded, &c. (See notes on verse 28.) *For oftentimes it had caught him,* therefore our compassionate Lord had made the more haste to cast it out. *And he was kept bound, &c.,* he was possessed of that extraordinary muscular strength which maniacs so often put forth (Acts xix. 16), and thus all efforts to bind him had proved ineffectual. *Into the wilderness,* where he found a congenial habitation, howling amid the barren and dreary solitudes.

30. And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.

When Christ commanded the unclean spirit to come out, the demoniac consciousness in the man was shaken to its depths, but still he felt himself to be possessed of a legion of evil spirits, and hence our Lord proceeded to perfect the cure, by asking him his name. Jesus did not ask the name because of His own ignorance of the state of this demoniac, but in order to show to those around Him how malignant was this Satanic possession, and the mighty power demanded to effect the cure of the afflicted man; also to restore the man, before his last and most fearful paroxysm, to personal consciousness—to the remembrance of his earlier history and better times. Anticipating the reply to the question, *What is thy name?* as if it had been addressed to him, the indwelling demon said, *Legion*

Legion is a well known name, by which a division of the Roman army was designated, and which is supposed to have contained 5,000 or 6,000 men. The word is here evidently used indefinitely to express a great number, and it was used to intimidate Christ, as though it had been said, "Don't interfere with us; you will find that we are not one that you can easily crush, but a mighty multitude, that will rush upon you and destroy you also." What a horrible representation does this word *Legion* make of this demoniac!—his whole inner being invaded, wildly torn and dislocated, by a host of infernal fiends—the spirits of darkness running riot within him!

31. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out ^ainto the deep.—^aRev. xx. 3.

They besought him, &c. In Mark the singular is employed; in the narrative before us one of the demons is (verse 28) speaking for himself and companions; *here, all*, uttering themselves through one, unite in *beseeching* Jesus not to send them *into the deep*. The *deep* here means, not the sea, but the abyss or pit of hell. It is the same Greek word which is five times translated "bottomless pit" in the book of Revelation: for instance, xx. 1, 3; xii. 11. Evil spirits have their wishes and understand their interest as well as man.

32. And there was there a herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them.

The demons, in this ever-intensifying conflict between themselves and the Messiah, becoming aware that they must in some way yield before Him, entreat at least to be handled in the mildest way. They had great objections to being in the abyss, and much preferred to wander about. But it was held that they could only do this within the vehicle of some body—human or animal, divested of which they returned to the abyss. To avert this the demons implored permission to enter a herd of swine that was feeding near, knowing that it would be in vain to ask leave to enter into any other man, or into any lawful beast of the country. It should be remembered that to keep swine was a breach of the Mosaic law, swine being unclean animals. If, therefore, the Gadarenes were Jews—and there seem strong reasons for supposing they were—they were com-

mitting an habitual sin. *And he suffered them*, permitted the fiends to enter the swine.

33. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

A large herd of swine were feeding on the neighboring cliffs; into these the demons entered, and the herd rushed headlong in frantic rage over the crags or slopes overhanging the lake, and were engulfed in the waters below, thus showing the extraordinary malice, hatred and love of mischief, which are attributes of Satan, and which extend their operation beyond *men*—even to *brutes*. The destruction of the swine does not, as some have imagined it does, present any serious difficulty. A man is of more value than many swine; and if the Lord that made all things could do man good morally, physically, or otherwise, by sacrificing these swine, He only did then and in that act what is done every day when the innocent lamb, the unoffending bird, the patient ox, are slaughtered for man's nutriment. In relation to the loss incurred by the owners of the swine (at which some have cavilled), it is no more open to objection than every murrain that causes cattle to die, or inundation that destroys the fruits of the field, or other natural calamity with which God chastens His children, punishes, or seeks to make contrite the hearts of His enemies. For oftentimes the taking away by God is, in a higher sense, a giving. It is the taking away of the meaner thing, for the purpose of making receptive of the higher.

34. When they that fed *them* saw what was done, they fled, and went and told *it* in the city and in the country. 35. Then they went out to see what was done: and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. 36. They also which saw *it* told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

They that fed the swine fled in consternation to the adjoining city. The inhabitants hurried out to verify with their own eyes the strange report that they had heard. And not only did they find the herd perishing in the waters, but, stranger than all, the scourge and terror of the region *sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind*—clothed, doubtless, by the intervention of the disciples. It is likely that the one-sided report of the swineherd, in justifying themselves to the owners of

the swine, had filled the latter with hostile intentions against Jesus for the loss they had sustained. But when they came to the spot, and saw the demoniac thus quiet as a child, and heard from the keepers of the swine, as actual spectators, by what means he was healed, *they were afraid* to molest Christ. The *sitting at the feet of Jesus* implies that the man, as a disciple, was ready and anxious to receive and obey His instructions. The mercy of Jesus is the only medicine of the soul. When Jesus forgives a man his sins, He enlightens his mind, and thus is he brought to take the lowest place, while his chief anxiety will be to put the crown upon the head of his redeeming Lord. Christ also clothes the pardoned soul with righteousness—a righteousness which His own hands have wrought, which outshines the heavens in their brightness, and which shall never decay.

37. ¶ "Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again.

¶ Matt. viii. 34. ¶ Acts xvi. 39.

The whole multitude, gathered from the entire country round about to see the strange sight, having learned, by what they heard and saw, of the wondrous miracle, were seized with superstitious and half-heathen fear, and dreading further destruction of their property, they besought Jesus to depart out of their country, and He returned to the boat. What a contrast to the entreaty of the Samaritans! (John iv. 40.) How seldom are the first offers of a Saviour cordially heard, and immediately accepted, by those who have lived in ignorance of God! Many a repulsive feeling, many a rebellious thought rises up within them, and though few will emulate the open opposition of the Gadarenes, and say, "depart from us," how many there are who put the word of salvation willfully from them, rush into the world, give way to folly, yield to sin, and in their days of darkness seek any and every master, rather than commit themselves at once to the Shepherd of their souls, and give themselves up to be guided, governed, sanctified and saved by the God of their salvation! How awakening the reflection, that we, like the Gadarenes, may be permitted but

once to have the offers of a Saviour's presence and a Saviour's love!

38. Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, 39. Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.—¶ Mark v. 18.

The prayer with which the recovered demoniac followed the departing Saviour, may serve as an unequivocal proof of the completeness of his healing, as well as the warmth of his thankfulness. The man had friends at home. Probably he was now in danger of despising his own people. Perhaps the fact that Jesus, who, in the case of those who were healed elsewhere, imposed silence, appointed this man to be a living memorial of His own saving manifestation for that entire district, is a proof that He had not the intention of returning into the land of the Gadarenes. At all events, Christ's refusal to let the recovered demoniac accompany Him, may teach that true rest and repose in a Saviour's presence is reserved for Heaven, that life has great duties and great responsibilities, that religion is not a thing to be thrust into a corner, the joys of which are to be selfishly appropriated, without one effort to impart them to others, but home, friends, country, human kind, are the successive spheres for the operation of our Christian influence. Shining first and brightest in our own dwelling, the light of truth must radiate to the earth's circumference.

There is no revelation of Christ as the King of the world of spirits which contains so much that is obscure, as that made in the miracle we have just considered. In relation to such miracles the Saviour's own words hold good. (Luke vii. 23.)

40. ¶ And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people *gladly* received him: for they were all waiting for him.

At landing, He met with a better reception than among the Gadarenes, for the multitude gathered round Him to hear Him preach, many having waited there in expectation of His return.

41. ¶ "And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue, and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house:—¶ Matt. ix. 18; Mark v. 22.

Behold! The expression seems intended to call our attention to the greatness of the miracle, and partly to the singular

goodness of God in raising up friends to the Gospel even in the synagogues. Jairus was a ruler of the *synagogue*, doubtless the synagogue of Capernaum, where Jesus now was. His duties were to direct the performance of Divine worship, and to govern the affairs of the synagogue. There were commonly several of these officers in every town, but one ranked higher than the rest, and was called the president, or "father of the synagogue." Such, it is thought, was Jairus. It is most probable that he was one of that deputation which came to the Lord to intercede in behalf of the centurion's servant. (Luke vii. 3.) He was there pleading for the restoration of another—one ready to die. He is here pleading, if it be possible to conceive that he realized the idea of a resurrection of his daughter from the dead, for the restoration of his own. And what does this contrast teach us? That sympathy with others in their trials is the earnest of success to us in ours. Jairus *fell down at Jesus' feet*—a revelation of the life of faith in the president of a synagogue certainly not too friendly to Jesus, of no mean significance. And *besought him that he would come into his own house*, although he did not, like the centurion of Capernaum, say that Jesus could cure his child at a distance, yet he held that He could by a touch of the hand.

42. For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went, the people thronged him.

Luke is the only one of the Evangelists who uses the pleonasm, *one only daughter*. The statement of the age is also confined to him—facts, both of which show that he drew his materials from an independent source. The expression "little daughter" (Mark v. 23), is, according to the Talmud, thus explained: A daughter, till she had completed twelve years, was called "little," or, "a little maid," but when she became of the full age of twelve years, and one day over, she was considered "a young woman." And *she lay a dying*. Matthew makes the ruler say, *even now dead*; Mark and Luke make him say, *is at the point of death, is a dying*. The different accounts admit of easy combination, if we only consider the excited state of the speaker, who certainly did not weigh his words in

a gold-balance. He left the child as one who was dying, and having no certain notices since of her actual condition, he was perplexed whether to speak of her as departed or not, and thus at one moment he used one expression, at the next another. The variant statements just referred to constitute one of those apparent discrepancies in the Gospels which prove that there was not, as has been alleged, a conspiracy among the Evangelists to write the same thing, and thus to palm a joint imposture on a credulous world—that they were the independent witnesses of facts, and the independent recorders of the performance of them—and that what *appear* to be discrepancies or discords in the Gospel narratives, are found, when really and thoroughly understood, to be only grander harmonies. *But as he went, the people thronged him*. The Saviour did not allow Himself to be kept back by the imperfect form of Jairus' faith, as shown in conceiving of the miracle under one form, and stipulating that the Saviour must Himself come and lay His hands on his little daughter, instead of entreating "Speak, in a word." And as He went the people crowded upon Him, as the original verb rendered *thronged* signifies even to suffocation, to witness what the issue would be.

43. ¶ "And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any," 44. Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd.—Matt. ix. 20.

A woman having an issue of blood, &c. To realize the greatness of the miracle here recorded, we should read Lev. xv. 19. The woman's disease rendered her ceremonially unclean. This helps to explain her desire to avoid publicity and observation. Her case was very grievous, and of long standing *Which had spent all her living upon physicians, &c.* Her suffering was much aggravated by many fruitless efforts she had made to be relieved—efforts which were not only painful, but had also brought her to poverty. Yet it is right, when we are sick, to use the means which appear likely to restore our health, for if we say we trust in God, while we refuse those means which are suited to our case, we only tempt Him, while to depend on them alone is to dishonor Him.

Came behind him. In her hopeless state this woman heard that Jesus was near, and forming her resolution in faith, hastened to join the multitude as they passed along. The crowd heedlessly thrust her aside, but she struggled on until she was by the side of our Lord. *And touched the border of his garment.* Possibly she had heard of "the multitude" who, a short time before, "sought to touch him, for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all." (Luke vi. 19.) Reaching forth her trembling hand, she silently and secretly touched the border or fringe of His outer garment—the square mantle, or vesture thrown over His shoulders. As the subjects of an Eastern prince, when presenting their petitions, touched the end of his robe, as an act of submission, this woman in like manner expressed her reverence and faith, and in a moment *her issue of blood was stanch'd*, not only the blood ceased flowing, but she experienced the healthy feeling of a new life. Her faith had peculiar strength and energy. Many had believed that a command of Christ was sufficient to heal the worst maladies, but none, that we are aware of, ever had faith to believe, as this poor woman did, that a single touch of His garment, even of the hem of His garment, would be superior to all physicians upon earth.

In every Christian congregation there are some happy few, whose cases are remarkably analogous to this. They make no public displays of their deep conviction, of the plague which lies at their heart's core; they have in vain tried many methods for relief; they come at length to Jesus in the crowd, their malady unknown even to those who follow in the same throng, or worship in the same temple. Thus all unknown and all unseen to others, they draw near by faith to the Saviour, and not only touch His garment, but hide themselves, and their own corruptions, and their wo, beneath it, even the garment of a Saviour's righteousness, and find there, where alone it can be found, their healing and their cure. These are they whom David calls "the Lord's hidden ones." (Ps. lxxxiii. 3.) The multitude of people who fill the churches, and make the crowd at sermons, and yet cease

not to go in their usual course, in following the world and their own passions, throng and press Christ, but do not touch Him.

45. And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

Who touched me? more literally, "who is the person that touched me?" Not that Christ needed to be informed, for He knew who had received the benefit. Nor was He about to chide the trembling woman for her boldness. The sequel of the history in which the woman was obliged, by this repeated question of the Lord, to own that she had come to seek, and had found health from Him, abundantly proves that there was a purpose in the question. *Peter and they that were with him said.* The reply of Peter, which has in it a shade of censure, that his Master should ask who touched Him, when such numbers were pressing upon Him, is entirely in agreement with Peter's forward and precipitate character. *Master.* The word thus translated is only used by Luke in the New Testament, and is only applied to Christ. It signifies literally, "one who is set over any thing to take care of it." It is a title of respect, and an acknowledgment of authority.

46. And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.
 *Mark v. 30; Luke vi. 19.

Virtue, i. e., the healing power. *Out of me,* literally, *away from*—external rather than internal separation being denoted by the Greek preposition. Of the going forth of this miraculous power, the Saviour had an intellectual knowledge; He knew it within Himself. And that this virtue proceeds from the Lord need occasion as little perplexity as that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. (John xv. 26.)

47. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

*Ps. xxxviii. 9; Jer. xxxi. 18; Hosea v. 3. *Isa. lxxvi. 2; 2 Cor. vii. 15; Phil. ii. 12; Heb. xii. 28.

Not hid. (See Mark v. 32.) *Came trembling, &c.* She desired to remain in concealment out of a shame which, however natural, was untimely here in this crisis of her spiritual life: and this her loving Saviour would not suffer her to do; by a gracious force he drew her from it,

yet even here He spared her as far as He could. For not before, but after she was healed, did He require the open confession from her lips. *She declared unto Him before all the people, &c.*, in contrast with the great pains she had previously taken to promote the concealment of her action. Silence, which, in the first instance, was a proof of her modesty, would, if persevered in, now have been culpable. Though Jesus healed her upon her *secret* application, He desired her to make a *public* acknowledgment of her cure. He desires every sinner to do the same. "With the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness, and with the *mouth* confession is made unto salvation." The feeblest believer must not be ashamed to stand forth and acknowledge his obligations to the Saviour. The Christian may not be required to do this at the very beginning of his course, but neither will Christ permit him to be long concealed. He must own his Redeemer, and for his Redeemer's glory. In this will he resemble the saints above, who are not ashamed to acknowledge the blood by which they were redeemed.

48. And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

Her faith had made her whole, and Christ's virtue had made her whole; it is as when we say that faith justifies; our faith is not itself a blessing, but it is the organ by which the blessing is received, it is the right hand of the soul, which lays hold upon it. *Go in peace*. This is not merely, go with a blessing, but go into the element of peace as the future element in which thy life shall move. The words, *Daughter, be of good comfort; go in peace*, express the one great privilege of the Gospel. Take this from the believer, this spirit of adoption, this assurance of his sonship, and he is left poor indeed. For there is no middle state here on earth, as there shall be no middle state throughout eternity, between those who are the children of God through Christ Jesus, having been reconciled and brought near by the blood of the cross, united to Himself and carried into His family by the Spirit of adoption—and those who are outcasts and rebels, neither partakers of God's grace nor preparing for His inheritance.

It furnishes us with some little idea of the abundance of the miracles of our Lord, of which comparatively so few have been recorded, when we find one so remarkable as that just noticed conveyed thus, as it were, merely in a parenthesis, and so little dwelt upon, that had it not occurred during Christ's passage to the ruler's house, it seems probable it never would have been narrated.

49. ¶ While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.
*Mark v. 35, on which see notes.

While he yet spake, &c. From this it appears that Jairus had come forth with the knowledge and approbation of his family to call the Master. It would seem, also, from this messenger, who probably was sent by the distressed mother, that no further benefit was expected from the *Master* or Teacher (the Greek word here translated the *Master* not being the same as that used in the 45th verse, but signifying "the teacher"), that, however efficient Jesus might be as a physician, it could not be expected that He had power to call back the pulsation of blood into the still and silent heart of her that was *dead*.

50. But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.—John ii. 25-40; Rom. iv. 20.

It—the messenger's report. Fear not: believe only, &c. Jesus gave this prescription for hope and victory. The delay with the cure of the woman had been for Jairus a trial of fire, his just awakened faith had been most intensely shaken, but now, when about to succumb, he is strengthened by the Saviour. In his earlier ministry Christ allowed His miracles to *precede* the faith in order to create faith, but in His advancing ministry He had a right, from His past works, often to require faith *before* the miracle, and then the miracle justified and rewarded the faith.

51. And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.

*2 Kings iv. 33, 36; Isa. xlii. 2; Acts ix. 40.

He suffered no man, &c. It was the Saviour's intention to keep the miracle as much as possible concealed. That He admitted into the house with Himself the three Apostles, who had a clearer revelation of His Divinity, humanity, power

and compassion towards the sorrowful and sinful, and who were with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration and in the garden of Gethsemane, is a proof of the high significance which He Himself attributed to the raising of the dead.

52. And all wept and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not, she is not dead, but sleepeth.
John. xi. 11, 13.

Notice the quiet power and calm self-possession of Jesus. In the midst of great distress He was unmoved and composed, and that, too, though performing a deed which, in dignity and power, might rival the creation of a universe. Thus quietly, calmly, unobtrusively, Christ often still acts by His Divine Spirit, when the yet greater work of the spiritual resurrection of a soul, dead in trespasses and sins, is to be perfected. A single discourse, a sentence, yea, even a word, has been blessed to this great and wonderful end—no effort visible, no display of majesty and power, except to the happy soul thus raised to spiritual life. All truly great men are quiet men. Evidence of power is self-composure, self-possession. All the greatest forces in nature make the least noise. The light descending from the sun has infinitely greater power than the flashing lightning and rolling thunder.

Weep not, she is not dead, but sleepeth. By this our Lord meant, *not* that she was in a state of suspended animation, or in a swoon, or a trance, which He *would* have said, if He meant this, but, "To you this is indeed death without hope of resurrection, but with me, in power and in purpose, it is but a *sleep*, from which she is now to be awakened."

53. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.—Job xii. 4; Ps. xxii. 7.

Who shall complain that they are subjected to the ridicule of the world, when they behold their Lord, thus, at the very moment of exerting the highest attribute of Deity, "quickenings whom he will," calling the breathless corpse to life again, laughed to scorn by these poor fallen sons of earth?

54. And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.
Luke vii. 14; John xi. 43.

The words, *he put them all out, and they laughed him to scorn*, should be read together. It seems a rule in Christ's dealings with

men not to force evidence upon them, but rather to withhold from scorners and scoffers those proofs of His own mission which He affords to others. And *now, as then*, the scoffing spirit is the spirit which is often left to itself.

55. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.

Her spirit came again. This shows that the soul is a thing distinct from the body in which it sojourns. *Commanded to give her meat.* This was intended to strengthen that life which was come back to her, and to prove that she was indeed no ghost, but had returned to the realities of a mortal existence. (Luke xxiv. 41; John xxi. 5; Acts x. 41.) This precaution was the more necessary, as the parents in that ecstatic moment might easily have forgotten it.

56. And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.
Matt. viii. 4 and ix. 30; Mark v. 43.

The astonished parents were not to make the miracle known beyond the circle of those who, of course, would know that the once dead maiden still lived, thus giving it an unsafe notoriety. The command of Jesus to this effect was occasioned by the intense expectation of the people at the time (among whom were scribes and Pharisees, who would not be convinced), who might easily have given themselves up to insurrectionary commotions. Besides as respects the little daughter awakened to new life, who does not feel how injuriously the continual questions and expressions of astonishment and curiosity would have worked upon the higher and inner life in her case? Then, again, it was the will of God that the Divine glory of Christ should not be manifested to the world all at once, and suddenly, but, little by little, during His state of humiliation; for His resurrection was the time appointed by God for the full manifestation of Christ's Godhead. (Rom. i. 4.)

Practical Lessons. 1. Affliction often is the means of awakening to an appreciation of Christ. But for sickness, sorrow and trouble, many had never sought or found the Saviour of the world. 2. All are exposed to bereavement. Death is a cruel enemy. He makes no distinction in his attacks. He comes to the rich man's hall, as well as to the poor man's cottage. He

does not spare the young, the strong, and the beautiful, any more than the old, the infirm, and the gray-haired. Our blessed Redeemer knows our trials when sorely bereaved, and sympathizes with us under them. Of the three memorable instances in which He brought the dead to life, one was the case of an only brother; another, an only son; and this an only daughter. 3. Prayer is of great comfort in the hour of sickness and death. Our prayers, like that of Jairus, should be marked by faith, fullness, earnestness, and importunity. Faith is of vast importance. 4. Let the convinced and anxious sinner only believe, as he gazes upon Jesus on the cross, and his heavy burden will fall at his feet, to oppress him no more forever; let the discouraged Christian do this, and perplexities and obstacles will disappear, or he will be strengthened to encounter them; let

the dying saint do this, who has, for a moment, amidst the clouds that overhang him, lost sight of the Star of Bethlehem, and the shades of darkness will disperse, the scales will fall from his eyes, the anguish be removed from his soul, and all will be peace. 5. Jesus is the great vanquisher of death. The death of Christians is like a quiet sleep. Soon the morning hour shall strike, the waking time of immortality arrive, and the voice of Jesus be heard saying, "I go that I may awake them out of sleep." Let us take comfort in the thought that there is a limit to death's power. Thanks be unto God, there is one stronger than death, who has said, "O death, I will be thy plagues: O grave, I will be thy destruction." (Hosea xiii. 14.) That One is the Friend of sinners, Christ Jesus the Lord.

1. Where did Christ go, preaching, &c.? 2. What is said of "certain women"? 3. What parable was spoken "when much people were gathered together?" 4. Who was the Sower? 5. What is the seed? 6. What are the four classes of persons represented? 7. Explain verses 16 and 17. 8. What is said concerning Christ's "mother and brethren?" 9. On what lake did the storm occur? 10. What miracle was then wrought? 11. What took place in the country of the Gadarenes? 12. Repeat the narrative of Jairus' daughter. 13. Also that of the woman having an issue of blood.

CHAPTER IX.

1 Christ sendeth his apostles to work miracles, and to preach. 7 Herod desired to see Christ. 17 Christ feedeth five thousand: 18 enquireth what opinion the world had of him: foretelleth his passion: 25 proposeth to all the pattern of his patience. 28 The transfiguration. 37 He healeth the lunatick: 43 again forewarneth his disciples of his passion: 46 commendeth humility: 51 biddeth them to shew mildness toward all, without desire of revenge. 57 Divers would follow him, but upon conditions.

In chap. vi., verse 13, we saw the Saviour's choosing of His twelve Apostles to their work and office, and their several names. They were first chosen disciples to be with Christ, and learn of Him, and be witnesses of what He did. Now they are sent forth to execute their office. Our Lord deemed it fit that those who were thereafter to carry on His work on earth, should learn to act without His personal presence, and that through them the Gospel of the king-

dom should be more extensively proclaimed by their dispersed and separate condition than it could otherwise be.

THEN she called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.—*Matt. x. 1; Mark iii. 13 and vi. 7.*

Jesus qualified His Apostles to authenticate their mission by miracles. What an evidence of His power! He could not only work miracles Himself, but could enable others to work them. He *gave them power and authority over all devils, i. e., to be exercised over or upon all devils, of whatever malignity and potency.* "Though ministers," says an old divine, "cannot be expected to cast out evil spirits, they may fairly be expected to resist the devil and all his works, drunkenness, blasphemy, uncleanness, fighting, revelling, and the

like, faithfully reproving them." *And to cure diseases.* In performing miracles, the Apostles no doubt acted vicariously, as in later times, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

2. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

^aMatt. x. 7, 8; Mark vi. 12; Luke x. 1, 9.

Preaching the kingdom of God was the prime object of the mission of the Apostles, healing of diseases and ejection of demons were the credentials of their Divinely appointed ministry. None ought to take upon them the office of preaching, or any other ministerial function, until thereunto called by Christ Himself. His ministers are now called mediately, they receive their authority from Christ by the hands of the officers of His Church. If ministers do not take a special interest in all sick people, visit them, sympathize with them, and help them, if needful, as far as they can, they are not true to their office as pastors. Yet *preaching* is the great work to which they are called. This they are to make their main business. The pulpit is the place where the chief victories of the Gospel have always been won.

3. And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.

^aMatt. x. 9; Mark vi. 8; Luke x. 4 and xxii. 35.

They were to go forth to the discharge of their office without any anxious care for the future. They were going forth on God's work, and they might rely upon it that God would provide for all their wants. They were to make no provision for their wants, to take no money in their purses or girdles, no food in their scrips or bags, and no new clothes to supply the place of the old when worn out. If they had a staff, they were to go forth with it (Mark vi. 8), as they had it at the time, but they were not to seek one carefully, or make it a condition of their traveling. The fundamental idea is this, that they were to go forth with the slightest provision, and in dependence upon being provided for by the way.

4. And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart.—^aMatt. x. 11; Mark vi. 10.

In every place to which they came, they were to accept the first hospitality that offered, and having thus attached themselves to one household, that would become

the center of operations, they might go out of it for the purposes of their mission, but not shift their quarters so as to subject themselves to the imputation of being difficult to be suited, or of preferring the hospitality of the more affluent to that of the poor. They were there to *abide*, until they departed from the place, like men who regarded all the world as an inn, heaven as their home, and were content with any lodging, and any kind of entertainment.

5. And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.

^aMatt. x. 14. ^bActs xiii. 51.

And whosoever will not receive you. Our Lord prepared His Apostles to find some who would refuse to hear their message. The sin of rejecting the Gospel is far greater than any sin that the heathen *can* commit. Men may think the idolater who leaves his aged parents to starve, or who cruelly slaughters the innocent children of his enemies, is the most wicked of the human race. But the Bible declares that the man who refuses to accept the merciful offer of the Son of God is far worse than any of the heathen, and that he shall suffer the hottest wrath of his insulted Redeemer.

Shake off the very dust from your feet. This symbolical act would be perfectly intelligible to the Jews, as a declaration that they were excommunicated—"no better than heathen"—and that the Apostles would have no further intercourse with them. *For a testimony against them.* Wherever the word is preached, it is for a testimony, either for or against a people. And if the dust of a minister's feet whilst alive, and the ashes of his grave when dead, do bear witness against the despisers of the Gospel, their sermons will do much more.

6. And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere.

^aMark vi. 12.

Preaching the gospel is expressed in the original in one word. In Mark it is "preached that men should repent." The promises and blessings of the Gospel are theirs only who truly repent of their sins. Preaching the Gospel embraces the preaching of repentance; the part is included in the whole. *Everywhere*, in all the towns and villages to which they came. Minis-

ters of the Gospel stand in great need of help and comfort, of the assistance and encouragement of each other in the weighty duties of their calling, and, like laborers in the same vineyard, should extend to one another sympathy, the strong endeavoring to strengthen the hands of the weak. *And healing everywhere.* The healing activity for which power was bestowed upon the Apostles, is a striking symbol of that which evangelization and missionary labor must even now everywhere accomplish wherever it directs its steps. Missionaries who are also physicians, other things being equal, have the largest success in winning souls to Christ.

Notwithstanding the instructions Jesus gave to His Apostles (verses 3, 4, 5), applied peculiarly to the period in which they were given, yet they contain a lesson for all time, and their spirit is meant to be remembered by all ministers of the Gospel. Ministers are to free themselves as much as they possibly can from worldly incumbrances, which may hinder them in performing the duties of their office. (2 Tim. ii. 4.) They are to avoid worldliness and luxurious habits. They are to study simplicity in their mode of life, confidence in God, contentment with such things as they have, not being unwilling to accept gifts, in imitation of the humility of their Master, who received the donations of His pious followers.

7. ¶ Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead; 8. And of some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again. 9. And Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? 10. And he desired to see him. —¹Matt. xiv. 1; Mark vi. 14. ²Chap. xxiii. 8.

Very little is related concerning the events that happened while the Apostles were absent from the Lord. This, however, we know, Jesus continued to preach and to perform miracles. His fame was so great that it reached the ears of Herod, the governor. (See notes, chap. iii. 1.) *And he was perplexed*, &c. It immediately occurred to him that he had himself, not long before, most cruelly and wantonly put to death an innocent, virtuous and holy man, whose reputation for wisdom, integrity and sanctity of manners, stood almost as high in the estimation of the world as that of Jesus, and who had even

declared himself the herald and forerunner of that extraordinary person. (See notes on chap. iii. 19, 20; also, Matt. xiv. 1-12 and Mark vi. 14-29.) This instantly suggested to him an idea, the most extravagant that could be imagined, that this very person who assumed the name of Jesus was (though some were of the opinion that Elias, and others that one of the old prophets, had appeared), in fact no other than John the Baptist himself, whom he had beheaded, and who was now risen from the dead, and was endowed with the power of working miracles. Doubtless Herod also imagined that John would exercise this power for the purpose of inflicting exemplary vengeance upon him for the atrocious murder he had committed, as well as for his adultery, incest, and all his other crimes, which now probably presented themselves in their most hideous forms to his terrified imagination, pursued him into his most secret retirements, and tortured his breast with unceasing agonies. *Who is this, of whom I hear such things?* "Having just gotten rid of John, has he returned? or who is this of whom I hear such mighty works? What am I to think of him, or fear from him? With these feelings *he desired to see Jesus*, that his doubts and fears might be removed. *Was risen.* It will be noticed that this expression is not employed of Elias, as of John and one of the old prophets, inasmuch as he did not suffer death, but was taken bodily up to heaven. (2 Kings ii. 11.)

There is here exhibited the power of a bad conscience. Amid all his splendor and power the wicked monarch could not forget his faithful reprover. He had silenced the *prophet* by decapitation, but he could not silence his own *conscience*, which upbraided him with the murder of the holy man. "The way of transgressors is hard." If, *before* sin was perpetrated, it could be known what would be the state of mind *afterward*, many would tremble to do the deed. A bad man is a terror to himself, and needs no further disquietude than what his own guilty conscience occasions him. "Which way I fly is hell, myself am hell." Conscience cannot save the soul. Herod's fear was not followed by repentance. When at last he did see

Jesus (chap. xxiii. 6-12), it was to insult Him, and to array Him, just before His crucifixion, with a gorgeous robe that ill became His wounded, bleeding form.

10. ¶ And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. ¹And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert-place belonging to the city, called Bethsaida.

²Mark vi. 39; Matt. xiv. 13.

Ministers must report their labors to God, by whose authority they preach. The excitement among the people concerning Jesus was very high when the Apostles returned to Capernaum, and it was so much increased by their return, when they reported to Him how they had executed their office, that it was impossible to obtain in the city the rest and repose so much needed. With a view to the enjoyment of Himself and His disciples, Jesus withdrew with them privately into a secluded place from the multitude. Occasional retirement, self inquiry, meditation and secret communion with God, are absolutely essential to spiritual health. "If a man is always driving through the business of the day," says an old writer, "he will be so in harness as not to observe the road he is going."

11. And the people, when they knew it, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

When the crowd were aware of Christ's withdrawal, they flocked after Him. Some have thought that the quiet spot to which Jesus repaired was on the other side of the lake; others, on the same side across a bay. He went by water, and the fact that the crowd was able in a short time, and without apparent instruction, to reach the same place by land, is in favor of the latter opinion, as the Upper Jordan (which in the other case must have been crossed by them) is, as well as the Lower, in flood, and unfordable at and about the time of the Passover, which was then at hand. *And spake unto them of the kingdom of God, &c.* Unmannerly and uninvited as this intrusion of the multitude on the privacy of our Lord and His Apostles seems to have been, it elicited no rebuff from Him. On the contrary, He whose meat it was by day, and sleep by night, to do good, embraced the opportunity for bestowing upon their souls instruction, reproof and counsel, and upon their bodies, health and

healing, thus teaching us by example that no occasion for a good work should be unacceptable to us, and that spiritual alms should be mixed with bodily relief. Mere spiritual counsel cannot be expected to produce much good effect in the case of those who are suffering physically from causes which we could, but are not willing to, remove, or at least abate.

12. And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert-place.

¹Matt. xiv. 15; Mark vi. 35; John vi. 1-5.

The miracle, the record of which properly begins here, is one of the few which are recorded by all the Evangelists. They narrate it with that variety of manner, yet agreement in fact, that evinces independence of relation, with common truth at bottom.

"A great multitude" of people (John vi. 2) were present, and composed partly of Capernaïtes, and partly of passengers to the approaching Passover at Jerusalem. (John vi. 4.) *The twelve*, who were frequently distinguished thus from the other disciples, after their call to the Apostleship, suggested that Jesus should dismiss the crowds, and let them seek for the refreshment which they required, in the neighboring hamlets and villages. This proposal implied that the people had not brought provision with them, which, indeed, was true, except in the case of the lad, who had five barley-loaves and two small fishes. (John vi. 9.) But as Jesus knew that mere love of wonder-working was the low motive of the great number (John vi. 2), He determined to perform upon the whole mass a compassionate miracle, emblematic of His mission to the world, seeking on this bridge, as it were, to bring them up to higher views.

13. But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all these people. 14. For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company. 15. And they did so, and made them all sit down.

¹2 Kings iv. 42, 44. ²Num. xi. 21, 23; Prov. xi. 24, 25. ¹1 Cor. xiv. 40.

We have no more but five loaves and two fishes, &c. When Jesus commanded the multitude to be furnished with food, the Apostles, ignorant of their Master's will, alleged their inability to comply with His

order, in view of the scantiness of their supply of food, unless they should go and buy, thus showing a most pitiable perplexity, which had no other means at command. These *loaves*, which were of barley, were the kind of bread then and still eaten by the poor of Palestine. What a slender provision for *about five thousand men*, besides women and children (Matt. xiv. 21)—a whole number, probably of not far from ten thousand persons! With this small stock of homeliest fare the Lord undertakes to feed all the multitude, and bids His disciples to make them all recline on the “green grass”—at that season of the year a delightful resting-place, and which both by Mark and John is noted to have abounded in the place, for though this was a *desert-place*, in the sense that there was no possibility of making a purchase there, it was not a desert in the sense that nothing grew upon it. The people were to recline *by fifties in a company*, the separate companies looking, in their symmetrical arrangement, like so many garden-plots. In this subordinate circumstance we behold the wisdom of Him who is the Lord and lover of order. Thus all disorder, all noise and confusion were avoided. There was no danger that the weaker, the women and the children, should be passed over, while the stronger and ruder unduly put themselves forward; thus the Apostles were able to pass easily up and down among the multitude, and to minister in orderly succession to the necessities of every part. *Loaves and fishes*. Idle and indecent application of sentences, taken from the Scriptures, is a mode of merriment which a good man dreads for its profiteness, and a witty man disdains for its easiness and vulgarity. (Eph. v. 4, iv. 29.)

16. Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude.

What a scene was then presented! The ranks of guests rising in lines on the ascending slopes—their canopy the evening sky, their table the green earth. Order and silence prevail. There stands the Master of the feast; majesty and benevolence beaming in His countenance, as He looks around on the gathered throng. Before Him are laid *the five loaves and the*

two fishes. By His side stand the disciples, with their eyes directed to Him, awaiting His command.

In the distance a few fishing-boats are gently making their way on the lake. And now the Saviour, taking the scanty and humble provision into His hand before them all, *looking up to heaven, he blessed them*. It was customary with the Jews at every meal to offer a prayer, commencing with the thankful words, “Blessed be God.” Hence the Hebrew *to bless*, which originally had for its object God, as the author of the meal, took as its objective case the food itself, and thence arose the phrase, to bless the food, or to ask a blessing on the food. *And gave to the disciples to set before the multitude*. Having blessed the food before Him, and broken it, Jesus delivered it to the Apostles, who in their turn distributed it to the different tables, if such they might be called. The employment of the disciples in the service of distributing was doubtless intended, in part, to gain respect to them from the people. The marvelous multiplication taking place, as many say, first in the hands of the Saviour Himself, next in those of the Apostles, and lastly in the hands of the eaters, yet at all events so that all were satisfied—the fact that the hunger of the multitude had been fully satisfied being evident by the gathering by the Apostles of what remained. That which the Apostles thought an impossibility became a palpable fact—they fed the thousands with the few loaves and fishes. What does this teach us? That to use what we have is the way to get more. The man who will make good use of the little religious light he has, is sure to get more.

We are not told how the food was multiplied on this occasion. As it is not possible for us to realize to ourselves any act of creation, it was wisdom in the sacred narrator of this miracle to leave the description of the indescribable unattempted. His appeal is to the same faith which believes “that the worlds were formed by the Word of God.” (Heb. xi. 3.) All that we can do, is simply to behold in this multiplying of the food an act of Divine omnipotence, not, indeed, now, as at first,

of absolute creation out of nothing, since there was a substratum to work on in the original loaves and fishes, but an act of creative accretion, the bread growing under Christ's hands, so that from a little stock all the multitude were abundantly supplied. Wonderful as this miracle was, the same power that was seen in it is displayed every day. In the seed of the corn that shoots into the stalk, the blade and the ear, and in the acorn cast into the earth, that develops itself into the gigantic and overshadowing oak, we have processes just as marvelous as turning the few barley loaves into a bountiful and a gracious supply. But we are so accustomed to these things that we call them natural occurrences, and only when the same result is achieved by a more rapid or a more startling process, do we call it a miracle. It may be observed here that our Lord never performed a miracle without laying hold of a substratum to work upon, and certainly this seems by analogy to teach us that God is not going to supplant this earth by another earth, and to supersede our present bodies by other bodies, but out of the present earth to constitute a glorious one, and out of our present bodies to raise incorruptible from corruptible, and immortal from mortal, till death is swallowed up in victory.

17. And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.

They did eat, and were all filled. None of our Lord's miracles were better attested than this one. Five or more thousand witnesses could not be deceived, for the miracle was done openly, and was easy to be observed. The want of food was known to them all—they were in a desert where it could not be obtained. There was no delay to allow the disciples to buy it in the distant villages, and no secret supplies could have been obtained without detection. The senses of the people convinced them it was real. They *saw* the small provision enlarged more than a thousand fold; they *heard* the blessing given; they *felt* the food in their hands; they *tasted* it and were satisfied that what they received was real fish and bread. This miracle is, as it were, a revelation of

the Creator. The impenetrable and mysterious veil which conceals God from the creature in the midst of His creation is drawn aside, and we see, not indeed sunshine and showers, sowing and reaping, but Christ the compendium of them all, and from whom all of them issue, the Lord of the sunshine and the shower, the Lord of the spring and of the harvest, the Lord of the fertility of the soil and the produce of the earth. We are here taught confidence in the providence of God. "It is a greater miracle," says *Augustine*, "to govern and provide for the whole world, than to feed five thousand men with five barley loaves of bread." God will supply the wants of them that trust in Him, and withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly.

Baskets. The Greek word thus translated is only used in the New Testament, in the accounts given of this miracle. It means a wicker basket, such as the Jews were remarkable for carrying with them, as remarked even by the Roman poet *Juvenal*. It was in just such a basket that Paul was let down from the wall. (Acts ix. 25.) The twelve basketsful of fragments gathered by the Apostles were a greater quantity than the original five barley loaves and two fishes. It will be noticed there was one basket for each Apostle. In the increase of the loaves and the fishes, notwithstanding the large distribution, we have an apt symbol of that love which exhausts not by loving, but really grows after all its outgoings on others, and of the multiplying which there ever is in a true dispensing. (2 Kings iv. 1; Prov. xi. 24.) By feeding the hungry we shall often enrich ourselves, for God will bless our earthly substance. How much more will He bless those who feed souls with Divine truth! The teachers of Sabbath-schools, who in an humble spirit search the Scriptures, that they may scatter the crumbs among poor little ignorant children, and those missionaries who go abroad to point the perishing to the Redeemer, find that the Christian receives in the ratio in which He gives, so that the greatest giver is always the greatest receiver, and that the Christianity that unfolds itself in liberality or labor for others, by a beautiful reflex

operation, becomes deeper and richer in the heart of him that has it.

Fragments that remained. From John vi. 12, we learn that the fragments were gathered at the command of Jesus, that nothing might be lost. In performing this miracle Christ moved in the orbit of a God; in giving this command, He reassumed His place, reaccepted the laws, and re-entered the domain, of man. We see at once the mighty God and the dependent man. How strange the combination—bounty the most profuse, economy the most rigid! The gathering of the fragments by Christ's command shows us how precious He esteemed even the least works of God, that we may not dare to waste the food that our Heavenly Father has provided. If earthly bread is too precious to be wantonly trampled under foot, how inestimably precious must heavenly bread be! Yet how much of the Divine Word is suffered to fall to the ground! How carelessly we sometimes read the Scriptures! How many heart-stirring sermons have we heard, and then immediately forgotten! We should gather up all the fragments that can be made conducive to God's glory. "If," says an old divine, "the great Housekeeper of the world is so particular about saving fragments, what account will they give at the day of judgment, who think nothing of wasting time, money, health and strength, in the service of sin and the world?"

The bread which Jesus multiplied was an emblem of His own flesh, which He gave for the life of the world. The Apostles were appointed to proclaim the crucified Saviour to perishing sinners. It was necessary that they should believe that He could save by His death the souls of all believers. They now saw with their own eyes that He could make a *little* bread sustain a *vast* multitude. They would remember this in future days when preaching His name to assembled thousands. This lesson of Christ's ability to supply our spiritual wants is as precious now as it was then. We are poor sinners in the midst of a dreary and wicked world, without strength or power to save ourselves, and sorely in danger of perishing from spiritual famine. But He who said of the

starving multitude in the desert-place, "give ye them to eat," is ever pitiful, ever kind, ever ready to show mercy, even to the unthankful and the evil. He is not changed. He is just the same now that He was eighteen centuries ago. The simple truth that Jesus gave His flesh for the life of the world, has fed innumerable souls, and will feed innumerable more, till the multitude without number are gathered around the throne, and then the Lamb *Himself* will feed them through eternity with food which we know not of. (See John vi.)

18. ¶ And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him; and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?
 *Matt. xvi. 13; Mark viii. 27.

Our Lord's habit of private prayer is frequently mentioned in the Gospels. He sets an example to all who work for God. Much private prayer is one secret of success. Some of the most glorious acts and manifestations of Jesus were made in connection with a season of prayer. Together with the revelation which He here made of Himself to the disciples, as a suffering, dying, and rising Messiah, we might include in these seasons of prayer, the descent of the Spirit at His baptism, the ordaining of the Twelve, and the Transfiguration.

And he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am? Not that Christ was ignorant of, or vain-gloriously inquired after, the opinion of the multitude; but, as the time had now come when He must speak more openly than He had to His disciples of His approaching suffering and death, before He would grant them a deeper view into the nature of His *work*, He designed to establish them more firmly in their faith in His *person* and His character. Though the world fluctuates amidst various errors, the truth must not, on that account, be despised, but rather the knowledge of it should be the more diligently sought, and the profession of it made with the greater constancy.

19. ¶ They answering said, John the Baptist; and some say, Elias; and others say, That one of the old prophets is risen again.—Matt. xiv. 2; verse 7, 8.

The opinions of Himself reported to Jesus by His disciples, though different, are yet fully explicable. That *John the Baptist* had risen was perhaps an echo of

that which was talked of at Herod's court (verse 7, 8, 9); as to *Elias*, or *Elijah*, comp. Mal. iv. 5; and as to *one of the old prophets*, men believed, from Mic. v. 5 and other passages, that they were warranted to conclude that at the time of the Messiah different prophets would again appear. It will be observed that no one took the Messiah for an ordinary or insignificant person. It should not surprise us to find the same variety of opinions about Christ and His Gospel in our own times. God's truth disturbs the spiritual laziness of men. It obliges them to think. It makes them begin to talk, reason, speculate and invent theories to account for its spread in some quarters, and its rejection in others. Talk and speculation about Jesus and His Gospel are one of Satan's great traps for ruining souls. Many a man cloaks his indolence about religion under a pretense of the variety of opinions and the difficulty of knowing who is right.

20. He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am?
 *Peter answering said, The Christ of God.
 *Matt. xvi. 16; John vi. 69.

Having heard the echo of the people's views concerning Himself, our Lord will now hear an expression of the living, personal and independent faith of His disciples, to whom He had given occasion to mention the several errors of the world in relation to His person, that they might be the more fully convinced that their faith did not proceed from themselves. (Matt. xvi. 17.) *The Christ of God*. This reply of Peter was in his own name and in that of his brethren. Some make the words, *of God*, equivalent to *the Son of God*; others interpret the whole expression, as "the Messiah sent of God." Matthew has it: "The Christ, the Son of the living God." (xvi. 16.) Mark: "The Christ." (viii. 29.) All are varied forms of expression for the Messiah. The veil of Christ's human nature did not prevent the eye of the disciples' faith discerning Him in His true character. What a noble confession was that by which, notwithstanding the great, and wise, and learned, of the nation to which the disciples belonged, saw no beauty in their Master, they acknowledged Him *the Christ of God*! (See Dan. ix. 21.) We make a proper use of those mistakes and false

conjectures which prevail in the world, when we make them contribute to our establishment in the truth. It is of great significance that Peter does not in his Epistles once mention a word of Christ concerning *his* own personal priority among the Apostles, least of all as the institution of an official primacy.

21. And he straitly charged *them*, and commanded them to tell no man that thing;—(Matt. xvi. 20.)

The premature and unreserved avowal of this truth must, without perpetual miracles, have excited the ill-judging multitude to such measures, as would have given the scribes and priests an occasion against Jesus, and even rendered the Romans jealous of His popularity, and thus He might have been cut off before His time. It was, therefore, highly proper that He should, in the most peremptory manner, forbid the disciples to declare openly that He was the Messiah. There is a time to speak, and a time to be silent, concerning the Divine mysteries.

22. Saying, "the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day."
 *Matt. xvi. 21 and xvii. 22.

The disciples being now in a measure prepared to receive the great and mysterious truth, that Jesus was to suffer and die for the sin of the world, He made it known to them. This was done, 1. To prevent that offense which otherwise they might have taken at His sufferings. 2. The better to prepare them for the great trial when it should come. 3. To correct the error which they had entertained of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah. Let it be noted that our Lord makes known, 1, who the accomplishers of His suffering should be; 2, in what form it was prepared for Him; 3, the necessity of this suffering, and, 4, the issue of this suffering, namely, His resurrection. By the necessity of Christ's suffering, just referred to, we mean becomingness, for the Greek word translated *must* in this verse, does not quite bear the sense of force and necessity which our English word "must" conveys. It rather means, "It is becoming, it is suitable, it is necessary for certain great ends and purposes." In chap. xxiv. 26, the same expression is rendered, "*ought* not Christ to have suffered?"

23. ¶ And he said to *them* all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

¶ Matt. x. 38 and xvi. 24; Mark viii. 34; Luke xiv. 27.

What is meant by the connection of this verse with the preceding one, if not that the mysteries of the Head must be accomplished likewise in the members, and that those who have by the baptism of the Spirit been made partakers of the Divine nature in Christ, are one day to partake of His resurrection, but not unless they have partaken of His sufferings and death? *Will*, here, and in the following verse, must be interpreted as "wills to," or "is willing to." It is not a future tense, but the same Greek word that is used in John v. 40: "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life," which means, "Ye have no will, or wish to come." Thus our Saviour recommends His religion to every man's choice, not attempting by force or violence to compel any to the profession of it.

If any man will come after me; that is, if any man choose and resolve to be a Christian. Observe our Lord's terms of discipleship. An impostor would have made easy conditions, and promised a prosperous and pleasant career to induce people to follow him, but Jesus pursued the opposite course. His terms are, 1. *Let him deny himself*. By self-denial is not meant that we are to ignore reason altogether in matters of religion, but that we should be willing to part with our earthly comforts, and abandon all our temporal enjoyments, for the sake of Christ and His religion. We are to deny ourselves, our earthly desires for ease, pleasure, riches, esteem. We are to habituate ourselves to give a flat denial to the most clamorous solicitations of our pride, ambition, avarice and carnal self-love, and to curb every sensual inclination to submission. The injunction does not solely or mainly refer to the renunciation of vice, which, of course, is to be renounced, but the advantages of this life, of which the followers of Christ must be prepared to suffer the loss with an undisturbed mind. Even if those to whom we bear the greatest natural affection, or any authority on earth should tempt us to do what Christ forbids, Christ must be loved

and obeyed before all these. 2. *And take up his cross daily*. By this is meant Gospel-suffering. There is here an allusion to a Roman custom, that the malefactor who was to be crucified, took his cross upon his shoulders and carried it to the place of execution, and an obscure intimation of Christ's own approaching suffering on the cross. The duty enjoined is, not the making of the cross for ourselves, but the patient bearing of it when God lays it upon our shoulders. The Christian is to be prepared even to die for Christ's sake. He is to have the *spirit* of a martyr, and to be ready to give up all things, even life itself, for Jesus. *Daily*. This word is peculiar to Luke, and has not only the sense day by day, but through the entire day, and also implies, that as day succeeds day, so would one cross follow another. Particular notice of the word, *daily*, and of the three words, *to them all*, should be taken. No person is excused, and no day is excepted. Of what, therefore, do those think, and what have they reason to expect, who make every day a day of pleasure, luxury and diversion? 3. *And follow me*. By this is denoted Gospel-service. *Let him follow me*, says Jesus; that is, obey my commands and imitate my example. He must set my life and doctrine continually before him, and be daily correcting and reforming his life by that rule and pattern.

24. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

In order to make evident the indispensable necessity of self-denial, our Lord presents a motive in verses 24-26. *Whosoever will save his life, &c.* The meaning of this apparently paradoxical expression is, "Whoever will preserve his natural, selfish life, walking in accordance with his natural inclinations, may reckon upon it that he loses his true, his proper life; but those who, for the sake of Christ and His cause, set at stake the possession of life and the enjoyment of life, in the common sense of the word, will, through this very temporary perishing, become partakers in perpetually richer measure of the true and higher life of the spirit." This was a truth of infinitely deep significance for the first Apostles of the Lord, who, for His sake,

left all, yet not less significant is it for the history of the development of the Christian life of each one. It is evident that the word *it*, occurring twice, refers to the life or salvation of the soul, else how can he who *loses his life for Christ's sake, save his life?*

25. *For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?
*Matt. xvi. 26; Mark viii. 36.

In Matt. xvi. 26, and Mark viii. 36, the same word here translated *advantaged* is rendered, as it should have been in this place, "profited." The equivalent expression to *himself*, also in those Evangelists, is "his soul." *Lose himself*. What can this mean but final perdition? *Be cast away*, literally, *bring loss upon himself*. If a man should save his life, and gain the whole world, by apostasy from Christ, or rejection of Him, and thus lose the happiness and insure the destruction of his soul, where would be his gain? Nothing can compensate the loss sustained by him who loses his soul. Let us but weigh the gain and the loss which there is in following or not following the rules of the Gospel, and we shall soon be convinced that it is no better than madness to be in the least doubt or suspense what to do.

26. *For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.
*Matt. x. 33; Mark viii. 38; 2 Tim. ii. 12.

Whosoever shall be ashamed, &c. "Whosoever shall deny and disown me, either in my person, in my doctrine, or in my members, through the influence of shame, he shall be disowned by me, and rejected by me, at my second coming to judge the world." Three kinds of glory are mentioned here, as accompanying the second advent of Christ: His own, the Father's, and the glory of the angels. *In his own glory*. This, as distinguished from "the glory of the Father," denotes the glory of Christ as Mediator, exercising all Divine perfections through the medium of His human nature, in accomplishing and perfecting the grand purposes of His incarnation. Besides the *glory* which the *human nature of Christ* habitually wears in heaven, some additional splendor shall be given Him by the Father, when sent with *His commission* on an occasion so august as the

universal judgment. Whosoever is ashamed of the truth while it is humbled and oppressed in this world, shall be humbled and confounded before truth itself, glorious and triumphant, in heaven.

27. *But I tell you of a truth, there he some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.—*Matt. xvi. 28; Mark ix. 1.

These words are interpreted in three ways. 1. As referring to the times of the Gospel after Christ's resurrection and ascension, when the Gospel was propagated far and near, and the kingdom of God came with power. 2. As referring to Christ's coming and exercising His kingly power in the destruction of Jerusalem, which some of the Apostles then standing by lived to see. 3. The right view, however, appears to be that which connects the verse with our Saviour's transfiguration, and regards the glorious vision of the kingdom, which the transfiguration supplied, as the fulfillment of the promise of the verse.

Practical Reflections. 1. Self-denial is an absolute necessity. It is not a mere accident of Christian character, but essential to it. Without it, and without following Jesus, our claim to discipleship is vain. 2. The soul is of unspeakable value. Other losses can be comprehended, and often repaired, but the loss of the soul is inconceivable, incompensable, irrecoverable. It is the loss of God, and Christ, and heaven, and glory, and happiness to all eternity. A sermon preached on Matt. xvi. 26, first led an English missionary to care for his soul. He was an ungodly youth at the time he heard it, but afterward he gave up the world, took up his cross, and followed Christ. At length he lost his life in His service. Having landed upon the island of Erromango, in the New Hebrides, hoping to preach the Gospel there, he was pursued by the natives. He had just reached the sea, when he fell down, was overtaken, and bruised to death by the clubs of the savages. His blood was mingled with the waves, his flesh was devoured by cannibals, and his bones made into fish-barbs. But will he regret the choice he made in the day when the Son of man shall come in His glory? 3. There is, perhaps, no sin, to which every convert to true Christianity is more powerfully tempted, than being

ashamed of Christ and His words, and no temptation which induces such large numbers to act habitually against the light and conviction of their own consciences in order to escape the reproach and scorn of men, and often of their dependents and domestics. The wickedness of being ashamed of Christ is very great, and the fear lest the Saviour and Judge should at last be ashamed of us, is the proper preservative from yielding to this temptation, in all those who desire above everything else to have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. 4. The most eminent servants of Christ, for faith, holiness, and service, must at length in God's appointed time, taste and have experience of death, as well as others. Yet although they must taste, they shall but taste of death, they shall not drink of the dregs of that bitter cup; though they fall by the hand of death, yet shall they not be hurt by it, but in the very fall be victorious. They shall "conquer though they die." The valley through which they pass shall be "the valley of the shadow of death"—the substance being gone, and the shadow only remaining.

28. † And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.

*Matt. xvii. 1; Mark ix. 2. *Or, things.

The Transfiguration is also recorded by Matthew (xvii. 1) and Mark (ix. 1). According to them it occurred *six days* after the just mentioned conversation. If we assume that Luke has reckoned in the day of the discourse and a second day for the Transfiguration, which had perhaps already taken place in the morning, the difference is then almost reconciled. The expression, *after these sayings*, seems to make it plain that the words "see the kingdom of God," in the preceding verse, were spoken with special reference to the vision of the Transfiguration.

He took Peter and John and James. Why three witnesses? and why these three? As the Law required no more than two or three witnesses to constitute a regular and judicial proof, our Saviour frequently chose to have only this number of witnesses present at some of the most important and interesting scenes of His life. The three disciples whom He now selected were

those that generally attended Him on such occasions. They were chosen witnesses at the raising of Jairus' daughter, of the agony in Gethsemane, and of the Transfiguration. *And went up into a mountain to pray*—most probably *Tabor*. This mountain stands alone, and its top is not pointed like that of most mountains, but hard and flat, and therefore well suited for a resting-place. Its height is not great. In one hour it may be ascended.

29. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening.

Here, in this retired and lovely spot, our Saviour was *praying* with the three disciples named. *And as he prayed* His form underwent a most glorious alteration. *The fashion of his countenance was altered*, more literally rendered, "other," that is, His appearance was changed, "other than it generally appeared" (see Mark xvi. 12), but His bodily form remained the same, without which the witnesses could not have identified Jesus. *And his raiment was white and glistening.* The word *glistening* is only used once in the New Testament, and is explained as meaning "to emit flashes of light, to shine or glisten as lighting." (See Nahum iii. 3.) As the conjunction is not found in the original, the words *white* and *glistening* are highly intensive, literally, *whitely glittering*. There is here evidence of the fullness of the Spirit, which from within, over-streamed the Saviour's whole being.

30. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: 31. Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

Two men. Jesus was not alone. The two men who appeared beside Him were Moses and Elias, the chiefs of the Law and the Prophets, who came, as it were, to give testimony and homage to the Consummator, who had, in these latter days, appeared to finish the work which they had, in their day, been employed to advance and prepare. Moses and Elias *appeared in glory*, a glory somewhat similar, we may suppose, though far inferior, to that with which Christ was invested. Like Him, they were probably clothed in raiments of unusual whiteness and splendor, and the fashion of their countenances might also be changed to something more

bright and illustrious. Like their Lord, both these holy men, when on earth, had fasted forty days in the wilderness. But all *their* sufferings were over, while the bitterest sufferings of Jesus were yet to come. Hence they were well prepared, by what they had themselves endured, to comfort the Lord in the prospect of His agonizing death. That death, as Luke alone informs us, was the subject of their discourse.

And spake of his decease which he should accomplish, or fulfill, at Jerusalem, literally, "His exode or departure." It is remarkable that in Acts xiii. 24, we have a Greek word used for our Lord's "coming" to take the office of a Saviour, which might be translated literally His "entrance." Both expressions are singularly applicable to Him who came into the world, and was made flesh, and after doing the work He came to do, left the world and went to the Father. It is noticeable that Peter (2 Peter i. 15), calls his own death also, to which he is looking forward, an *exode*. The word *accomplish*, used in reference to Christ's death, is a very peculiar form of speech. To depart from life is the common lot; but to *fulfill* His decease or departure from the world was peculiar to Christ, because His death was the grand subject of prophecy, and the event upon which the salvation of the earth was suspended.

32. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

*Dan. viii. 18 and x. 5.

Heavy with sleep. It should be observed that the very same disciples who here slept during a vision of glory, were also found sleeping during the agony in the garden of Gethsemane. Flesh and blood does, indeed, need to be changed before it can enter heaven. Our poor, weak bodies can neither watch with Christ in His time of trial, nor keep awake with Him in His glorification. The grandeur and solemnity of a scene may induce drowsiness. (Dan. viii. 18, x. 9.) Perhaps the cause just mentioned united with the long-continued watching and fatigue of the disciples, to throw them into a deep slumber. This slumber accounts for the fact, that there was no ill-timed interrup-

tion of the heavenly converse by the disciples, until at or near its close. *When they were awake*, &c. The disciples awoke of their own accord, or, more probably, were aroused by the flashing upon them of the glorious light which emanated from Jesus, for the bright cloud, the Shechinah of God's presence, had not yet overshadowed them, as appears from verse 34. *Saw his glory*, which was so great, that the glory of the two men that stood with him is not here mentioned as being observed by the disciples.

33. And it came to pass as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said.

The first feeling which animated the disciples in the view of the heavenly spectacle was naturally fear. (Mark ix. 6.) But scarcely had they recovered from that, when an indescribable feeling of felicity filled them, to which Peter, almost with child-like transport, gave expression. The full meaning of Peter's exclamation, uttered, perhaps, with a mingled feeling of joy and awe, was, "What greater happiness, Lord, can we experience than to continue here in the presence of three such great and excellent persons! Here, then, let us forever remain! Here let us erect three booths: for Thee, for Moses, and Elias, that you may all make this the constant place of your abode, and that we may always continue under the protection and government and united empire of our three illustrious lords and masters, whose sovereign laws and commands we are *equally* bound to obey."

It is evident that Peter's words were an utterance of immediate feeling, and an expression of a state of perfect complacency. They were spoken by a man who was wholly taken captive by the extraordinary-ness of the whole scene, hence the remark of Luke, *not knowing what he said*. That Peter's request was improper and unwise is evident, for these reasons: 1. He placed Moses and Elias on a level with his Divine Master. 2. Peter himself was not fit to continue in such a scene; flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. 3. He forgot the unwelcome truths lately revealed by his Master, that He

must be offered as a sacrifice for sin before He could enter into His glory, and that His disciples must *partake* of His *sufferings*, before they could partake of His *glory*. 4. He forgot also that there was much work to be done in the world. But though Peter's request betrayed an ignorant mind, it showed an affectionate heart, and we cannot but admire his delight in the company in which he found himself. It is a sign we have made one step in religion, if we really prefer the society of the godly to any other pleasure.

31. While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

The cloud of light which formerly filled the Sanctuary of the Lord now received the three (Christ, Moses and Elias), as into a tabernacle of glory, and withdrew the end of the manifestation from the eyes of the disciples, as its beginning also had remained hidden from them—they again being agitated with fear as they witnessed the overshadowing process.

35. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, *This is my beloved Son: hear him.*

*Matt. iii. 17. *Acts iii. 22.

The same voice which was heard before on the Jordan consecrating Christ as King of the Kingdom of Heaven, and afterward (John xii. 28), as the High Priest of the New Testament, here attests his supreme prophetic dignity. *This is my beloved Son: hear him.* This is an echo of an utterance of Moses (Dent. xviii. 15; comp. Ps. ii. 7; Isa. xlii. 1), "This is my beloved Son (not as Moses and the prophets were, my *servants*), Him and Him only, shall ye now and henceforth hear." Thus are we placed under Christ's tuition alone, and commanded from Him alone to seek the doctrine of salvation, to depend upon and listen to One, to adhere to One—in a word, as the terms import, to hearken to One only. (See on chap. iii. 22.)

36. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. *And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

*Matt. xvii. 9.

When the words referred to were uttered, and the cloud of light melted into thin air, *Jesus was found alone*, and had resumed His ordinary appearance, except that, perhaps, a Divine effulgence lingered on His face,

as on that of Moses when he descended from the Mount. The disappearance of Moses and Elias, and the fact that Jesus was *alone*, together with the words *hear him*, show that the law of ceremonies was about to pass away, and that the true Lamb of God and true Prophet was come. This seems to have been *one* of the great things the Transfiguration was intended mainly to teach. *Another* was, that the sufferings and death of Jesus were not, as the disciples and Jewish converts in general inclined strongly to think, incompatible with His dignity and glory.

From the scene of the Transfiguration, observe, 1. The value of prayer. God's people have many of their happiest experiences, and make many of their nearest approaches to heaven, in prayer. 2. The appearance of those departed saints on the Mount is calculated to comfort *us* also in the prospect of death. Moses had been dead nearly fifteen hundred years. Elijah had been taken up by a whirlwind from the earth more than nine hundred years before this time. Yet here these holy men were seen once more alive, and not only alive, but in glory. Is it not evident from the appearance of these saints, and their recognition by Peter, that the spirits of the saints do *immediately* pass into glory, not waiting for the general resurrection to be introduced into the presence of Christ, and that we shall *know* the saints in glory, not only our *own* friends, whom we loved upon earth, but *all* the saints? 3. The Old Testament saints in glory take a deep interest in Christ's atoning death. It is a grave error to suppose that holy men and women, under the Old Testament, knew nothing about the sacrifice which Christ was to offer up for the sin of the world. Their light, no doubt, was far less clear than ours; but there is not the slightest proof that any Old Testament saint ever looked to any other satisfaction for sin but that which God promised to make by sending the Messiah. 4. The glory which Christ will have at His second coming. To this scene on the Mount, Peter, who witnessed it, refers as a symbol of our Lord's second coming. (2 Peter i. 16, 17.) 5. The reason why heaven is not revealed to us fully is, the disclosure of its glory would be

insupportable. As there was necessity for a cloud to be put before the disciples' eyes, so we must be content in this world to see God through a cloud darkly: we could not bear an unveiled view. 6. Whilst enjoyment of the privileges of religion is proper, this must not be allowed to conflict with the claims of duty: we must often descend from the Mount to work for God. 7. The obedient ear honors Christ more than either the gazing eye, the adoring knee, or the applauding tongue. 8. Let us learn to bear with ignorance in others, and to deal patiently with beginners in religion. If Jesus could endure so much weakness in His disciples, we may surely do likewise. 9. Let us not fail to notice the difference between the manifestation of the Divine presence *here*, and *that* at the giving of the Law. On *Sinai* there was a *cloud*, but it was *dark and thick*, and there were thunders and lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, and all the people that were in the camp *trembled*. (Ex. xix. 16.) On *Tabor*, the *cloud* was *bright*, the whole scene was luminous and transporting, and nothing was heard but the mild, paternal voice of the Almighty.

37. 1. And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him. 38. And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child. 39. And lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him. 40. And I besought thy disciples to cast him out: and they could not.—Matt. xvii. 14; Mark ix. 14, 17.

When our Lord descended from the mountain, a scene of sin, sorrow and suffering, met His eye. There were the scornful scribes, the weak and wavering disciples, a poor demoniac, and his afflicted father, with the wondering multitude gathered around them. How unlike was this scene to that which the three Apostles had just witnessed on the top of the mountain! There all was light and love, perfect bliss and ineffable joy; Angels behold the same painful contrast; for, as they gaze upon the glory of God, they also watch over the sorrows of men.

Master, I beseech thee, &c. The appeal of the distressed parent to Jesus is peculiarly tender and touching. And as we notice the painful peculiarities of his affliction, we shall not wonder that when he came to Jesus, he *cried out*, beseeching Him to

deliver him from it. Not only was the son an *only child*, but he was a lunatic, in the bloom of youth deprived of reason, and, instead of being a comfort to his parents, was a continual cause of care and distress. Alarming fits often seized him, and so suddenly, that sometimes he fell into the fire, and at other times into the water (Matt. xvii. 15), so that his life was always in danger. Nor, at any intervals of reason, could he pour his sorrows into the ears of his parents, or hold affectionate communication with them; for, alas! he was dumb. (Mark ix. 17.) And what was worse than all, he was possessed by an evil spirit, who, acting on the disease, grievously increased his sufferings. When this spirit took him in its might, then in these paroxysms of his disorder he *suddenly cried out* (an expression not inconsistent with Mark's statement that he was *dumb*, for his dumbness was only in respect of articulate sounds; he could give no utterance to these), and it *tore* him, till he foamed and gnashed with his teeth, and *bruised* him, reluctantly leaving him, so that altogether he pined away (Mark ix. 18) like one the very springs of whose life were dried up. Besides, the application of the father to the disciples had been unsuccessful, and thus his hope was covered with a still darker cloud, by being made to know that the case of his son was one of such a degree of Satanic possession, and of so long-standing, as to baffle them. Perhaps the sight of the fearful condition of the boy had filled the disciples with mistrust as to their own powers; perhaps they had also become lately weary in fasting and prayer (Matt. xvii. 4); at all events, the attempt had failed: the evil spirit had not yielded to their word.

41. And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation! how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither.

Our Lord's rebuke was designed, not for the father of the lad, but for the surrounding multitude, and the term *generation* seems to point to them as specimens and representatives of the whole Jewish nation: it was intended also for the disciples, in whom so brief an absence from Him had produced weakness of faith, and whom it had shorn of their strength, and left powerless against the kingdom of

darkness. (Matt. xvii. 20.) *How long shall I be with you, and suffer you?* are words not so much of one longing to put off the coil of flesh, as of a master, complaining of the slowness and dullness of his scholars. *Bring thy son hither.* This command was intended to contribute toward awakening the believing expectation of the father.

42. And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

As the first bringing of the child to Jesus caused another of the fearful paroxysms of His disorder, so the kingdom of Satan, in small and great, is ever stirred into a fiercer activity by the coming near of the kingdom of Christ. Satan has great wrath when his time is short. *And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, &c.* There was nothing intermediate, as usual in such cases—none of the customary appliances and seeming instrumentalities. He did not take the lad aside—He did not touch him—He made no application to His mouth, but covering the failure of His disciples with the glory of His own acts, He commanded the unclean spirit to quit the child, and enter him no more. The parting throes was indeed terrible, and the boy lay as dead upon the ground. But Jesus raised him by the hand, and delivered him, perfectly restored, to his father.

43. ¶ And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples, 41. Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men. 45. But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.

¶ Matt. xvii. 22. ¶ Mark ix. 32; Luke ii. 50, and xviii. 31.

The people were *all amazed at the majesty of God.* Here, as often in Luke, the glory redounding to God by the healing is the crown of the Saviour's miracle. Jesus was not to be misled by any false appearances, and hence, whilst the multitude were wondering at His mighty deeds, He proceeded to speak of his coming sufferings. *Let these sayings, &c.* By this Christ most probably meant that they should take heed to those intimations which He had made to them from time to time respecting His sufferings and death, and which He was now just about to repeat. We are disposed to pass over lightly those

things which we do not wish to hear. The disciples could not bear to hear of their Lord's painful and ignominious death. Each display of His power and His glory filled them with fresh hope that nothing but success and triumph awaited their beloved Master. Therefore, after every such display, He reverted to the unwelcome but profitable subject.

But they understood not, &c. The disciples seem to have understood the sayings which Christ had just uttered, in a degree, for "they were exceeding sorry" (Matt. xvii. 23), but it was in a very faint degree. The reason of this was that their minds and hearts were still too full of worldly desires—they were yet too much under the notion of Christ as a temporal, reigning, victorious Messiah. They could understand all *joyful* truths concerning Jesus, because they *loved* them, but they could not understand *mournful* truths concerning Him, because they did *not* love them. This explains the clause, *and it was hid from them*, showing that the hiding of the *saying* was entirely the result of their own worldliness of heart and dullness of understanding. And this is the more evident from the fact that the word "*that*" is to be regarded here as equivalent to *so that*, or, *inasmuch that*, and not *in order that*, as if it was the intention of Christ that the disciples should not understand His words, for if He so intended, why did He speak to them at all on this subject? It will be noticed that they did not venture, through fear, to interrogate personally their Master, who alone could have cleared up the obscurity of *that saying* for them, and hence remained much in the dark concerning it.

If Satan opposed a youth who was brought to Christ to obtain a bodily cure, how much more will he strive to prevent the young from seeking the salvation of their souls! Many have found that Satan has pursued them with the most painful temptations, just as they were escaping from his bondage.

Through the *father's* faith this son was healed (as in the history of the nobleman, and of the Canaanitish woman). Here is an encouragement for parents. If Jesus showed so much compassion to one who

prayed for a *bodily* cure for his son, how much more must He feel for those who implore *spiritual* blessings for their children?

46. ¶ ¹Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.

²Matt. xviii. 1; Matt. ix. 34.

Strangely enough, when we remember that Christ had just predicted to them His approaching sufferings, it was with reference to offices and position in an earthly kingdom that the question of their relative greatness was started. Probably the occasion for this strife, although the germ of rivalry must have been in their hearts before, was found in the singling out of the three intimate disciples to be present at the Transfiguration, &c., &c. Alas, the best and holiest of men are too subject to pride and ambition, too disposed to covet worldly dignity and superiority. There is no sin against which we have such need to watch and pray, as pride. It is a pestilence that walketh in darkness, and a sickness that destroyeth at noonday. No sin is so deeply rooted in our nature. No pope has received such honor as pope "self." How displeasing must it have been to our Lord, especially at such a time, to find that His disciples were disputing about personal preferment. Yet how gentle His reproof.

47. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him. 48. And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

¹Matt. x. 40, xviii. 5; Mark ix. 37; John xii. 44, xiii. 20. ²Matt. xxiii. 11, 12.

Perceiving the thought of their heart. Their words spoken among themselves could not escape Him, who knew their thoughts, or *reasonings*. *Took a child and set him by him, i. e.,* by the side of Jesus, *and said unto them, &c.* As in John xiii. 1-11, so did Christ here give force to His instruction by a symbolic act. By the fact that He shows how high He places the child, He commends to the disciples the child-like mind, and in what this consists appears from Matt. xviii. 4. The point of comparison therefore is formed, not by the receptivity, the striving after perfection, the absence of pretension in the child, but most decidedly by its humility, which was so entirely lacking in the

disciples. By this humility the child's understanding was yet free from vain imagination, its heart from rivalry, its will from stubbornness. Great as was the affection our Lord showed to young children, we must beware that we do not wrest His language about them here and elsewhere into the false notion that they are naturally innocent and without sin. (Verse 48.)

In my name, i. e., acting from Christian principle. Not only did Jesus here show His love for little children, but also and mainly for such as resemble them in a child-like spirit, and those who receive them, resting upon His name, as a principle of action. For the attainment of this child-like spirit, there must be an entire transformation of the inner man. (Matt. xviii. 3; John iii. 3.) It is strong evidence of the tender interest and attachment cherished by Christ toward His followers who resemble children in their humility, that He regards the kindness and respect shown to them, for His sake, as shown to Himself. If we wish to please our Lord, we shall show great tenderness to His disciples who are least in their own eyes. God shall exalt, and men will honor, them that stoop to the meanest services for the good of souls.

49. ¶ ¹And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us.

²Mark ix. 38; see Num. xi. 28.

It seems much to the credit of the disciples that the word and conduct of Jesus commanding humility, instead of wounding their self-love, awakened their conscience. *John answered and said, &c.* John had a fact in his mind which he must bring into the light of this act of Christ. It was frank and ingenuous in the Apostle to open up this matter to his Master. He suspected that he, with his colleagues, had acted wrong, but he did not on that account conceal their conduct. How apt are we to hide from the friends we most revere those actions which we fear have been faulty! Yet if we were frankly to acknowledge them, we might obtain valuable counsel. *We forbade him.* The disciples had hindered one who in the name of Jesus was relieving the miserable, and doing works of mercy. This

man was not a deceiver, for if he had been, he would not have been able to cast out demons by the name of Jesus, for this name wrought no magical effects. (Acts xix. 3.) He was one who, though he may not have been a decided believer, and thus known to John as such, yet had in him a measure of trust in the name of Jesus, a germ of true faith—one who, at a time when all the rich and great were joined against the Son of God, was not ashamed to acknowledge Him, and who, though not having a commission to work miracles as the disciples had, yet attempted to cast out devils, and sometimes had success, God granting this success for the honor of His Son. He belonged to those servants of our Lord who were not required, or even *permitted* to follow Him, as the Apostles did, yet *they* also were dear to Him. And yet this man, because he did not statedly follow with them, and was not regularly sent forth as they had been, was forbidden to cast out devils by the disciples (“we”), nine of whom had themselves, very lately, from unbelief, failed in working a miracle; thus interdicting one whose faith was at least equal to their own! Perhaps, indeed, this prohibition in some measure grew out of the failure of the nine in healing the lunatic boy, rendering them unable to bear that another should succeed in this respect better than they. It arose, mainly, however, from the assumption by the disciples that the Messiah’s kingdom was to be essentially like human governments, that they were to form the regal court, and hence, that they, to whom the command, “cast out devils,” had been given, were to be the sole medium of the Messianic blessings to the people at large, and that no one had a right to usurp their prerogatives. The reason of the prohibition given, let it be observed, was not “because he followeth not with *Thee*,” but, “because he followeth not with *us*”—certainly the utterance of an excited human party feeling. They signified that the man should either follow Christ *as they did*, or abandon all working in the name of Jesus.

59. And Jesus said unto him, *Forbid him not: for the that is not against us is for us.*

⁶⁰ See Matt. xii. 30; Luke xi. 23.

Forbid him not. By this command our Lord assured His disciples that the man in question would not dishonor His name; his experience would prevent him from turning round and going over to His enemies. Had not Christ secretly and effectually wrought by the man, he could not have succeeded in the attempt to cast out devils in His name. (Acts xix. 13-20.) And as the disciples could hardly have been unaware of this, they should have regarded the favorable result of this man’s endeavor as a proof, at least for the time, that they had to do with no enemy of the cause of the Saviour. They were, therefore, reprehensible in prohibiting him, especially without so much as asking their Lord’s advice. Hence Jesus warned them not to forbid any such an one, for the reasons which they gave for their action in this case. *Is for us* (Mark ix. 40), “is on our part,” *i. e.*, on our side, is our friend and co-worker. All who were not engaged *against them* were to be considered as *for them*. The rule given by Jesus here is not in the least conflict with His saying in Matt. xii. 30. *That* rule is applicable in judging our *own* temper, *this* one must guide us in our judgment respecting *others*. The one shows the *tolerance* of the Gospel, the other its *intolerance*.

There is no neutrality in the cause of Christ. All men are on one side or the other. Man is so constituted that he cannot be neutral in regard to anything that touches his interest, and Christianity must be to him either *the savor of death unto death*, or, *of life unto life*. Many persons *wish* to be neutral on the subject of religion. They are afraid of being on the side of Satan, but they have not resolved to be on the side of Jesus. The devil reckons these among his most trusty servants. Such cowardly spirits are *less* likely to escape from him than those who openly expose his cause and do his work.

Bigoted exclusiveness is to be eschewed. The words of Jesus, *he that is not against us, is for us*, embody a solemn and most important lesson for all God’s people. They are not to exhibit the spirit of unholy rivalry or contend with one another, but to rejoice in any good that is doing in the world, by whomsoever and by whatsoever

means it may be done. We do not understand the passage as at all intended to sanction such indifference to sound doctrine as would lead to the belief that it matters not of what religious faith men are, Jewish, Socinian, Papist or Protestant, so long as they seem earnest-minded men. The persons to whom the passage applies, as will be noticed, are persons who do apostolic work in the name of Jesus, who labor to pull down the kingdom of Satan by the use of Gospel weapons. We must beware how we ever forbid such persons, or hinder them in their work. As has been well remarked, a right understanding of these words of our Lord will prove most useful to us in these latter days. The divisions and varieties of opinion which exist among Christians are undeniably great. The schisms and separations which are continually rising about Church government, and modes of worship, and the sectarian jealousies which it requires no practiced eye to discern, are very perplexing to tender consciences, and exceedingly embarrassing to those who look at the Church from without. Is this the normal condition of the Church? Is it that state of believers for which Jesus prayed, in those tender words, "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me?" (John xvii. 21.) Is it not true, as intimated in the last clause of the verse just quoted, that disunion is one cause of the slow progress of Christianity? And may it not be feared that this cause will operate still more fearfully in the future? Certain it is that those evangelical denominations which agree in very many points, and differ only in a few—the former essential, and the latter not only non-essential, but practically admitted even by those who insist on them to be so—have a solemn responsibility resting upon them, in view of their continued separation. Whatever may become of existing divisions, in union there is strength. And it should not be forgotten that men may be true-hearted followers of Jesus Christ, and yet for some wise reason be kept back from seeing all things in religion just as we do. When we at-

tempt to stop any such an one from doing service for Christ, because he does not wear our uniform, and fight in our regiment, and do battle in our way, we may be sure that Jesus is saying to us, "Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us."

51. ¶ And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.—*Mark xvi. 19; Acts i. 2.*

We have now arrived at an extended passage (including ix. 51–xviii. 15), which may be called *THE Great Lukean Section*, comprising Luke's largest independent contribution to Gospel history. It embraces the portion of our Lord's history developed during His last journey to Jerusalem. (Matt. xix. 1; Mark x. 1.) The journey was not a direct or continuous one to Jerusalem, but very circuitous, and embraced the interval of time, from the Feast of Tabernacles in October (to which He went up privately, John vii. 10), to just before the Passover, at which time He made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. It was a journey which the Saviour, on the approach of the end of His life, had entered upon with His view directed to His exaltation. At the same time, in the whole narrative of the journeying, different details do not appear in their strict historical sequence, which was the more to be expected as our Lord's whole public life might properly be called a journey to death.

When the time was come that he should be received up, &c. This clause, which refers to Christ's *assumption* into heaven at His ascension, is very erroneously translated, and gives the idea that the time of the ascension had fully come, whereas, it wanted nearly or quite six months to the time of His crucifixion. It should be rendered, *when the days were being fulfilled*, that is *during the period or stage of our Lord's earthly ministry, which was closed by His death*. Having now, at the beginning of the last six months of His life, left Galilee for the last time, the mission of Jesus thereafter was in Perea and Judea, and during this period Jerusalem was the center toward which, how often soever He diverged, He must ever gravitate until His final hour there. *Steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.* Though Jerusalem was the place

of residence of many of Christ's enemies, and where His bloody sufferings were to be endured, He resolved with an invincible courage and fortitude to go. The fact that there is here no mention made of Christ's death, but of His ascension only, as if all thought of death were swallowed up in His victory over death, teaches us, by His example, to overlook our sufferings and death, as not worthy to be named or mentioned with that glory we are to be received into after death, in the heavenly Jerusalem.

52. And sent messengers before his face, and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

And sent messengers, &c. The large number of persons forming our Lord's retinue rendered it necessary to make some provision beforehand for lodging in the towns and villages through which they were to pass. Some have conjectured that these messengers were James and John. *A village of the Samaritans.* The central province or section of the land of Canaan, having Galilee on the north and Judea on the south, was called, in the time of Christ, Samaria. As but a single village is mentioned as thus rejecting Jesus, it would seem that His journey was generally pleasant. *Samaritans.* The Samaritans of the time of our Lord sprang from the colonists with whom the king of Assyria peopled Samaria after the ten tribes were carried away. (2 Kings xvii; Ezra iv.) The animosity between them and the Jews was very bitter.

53. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

^aJohn iv. 4, 9.

This refusal of theirs was no piece of ordinary inhospitality, such as the Samaritans were wont to show the Galilean pilgrims on their way to the feasts at Jerusalem. It was not merely as such a pilgrim that they shut their doors against Him, but because, as they esteemed it, a Messiah going to Jerusalem to observe the feast there, did by this very act proclaim that He was no Messiah, for on Gerizim, as they believed, the old Patriarchs had worshiped (John iv. 20.), consecrating it to be the holy mountain of God—which, therefore, and not Jerusalem, the Christ, when He came, would recognize and honor as the central point of all true religion.

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54. And when his disciples, James and John, saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?—2 Kings i. 10, 12.

Lord. The exasperation of these disciples was probably associated with their recollections of the scene of the Transfiguration, where Moses and Elias did Jesus homage. They did not say, "Master, will it please thee, who art Lord of the creature, to command fire to come down?" Nor did they say, "If it be thy pleasure, command us to call down fire," but, *Will thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them*, referring to *lightning*, which comes from clouds in the atmospheric heaven. This savored too much of pride, cruelty and revenge. *Even as Elias did.* (2 Kings i. 10, 12, xix. 12.) They so entirely overlooked the distinction between the Old and New Testament, that they, in the service of the mildest Master, continued to believe that they could act as was permitted Elijah, in calling fire from heaven, forgetting, too, that his office was that of a stern judge and reformer, and that he was the vicegerent of an avenging Deity, to execute judgment upon the worship of Baal, which had almost wholly superseded that of Jehovah.

The spirit exhibited by these two disciples, on this occasion, shows us that it was not without good reason that our Lord called them Boanerges, or Sons of Thunder, when He first ordained them to be Apostles. (Mark iii. 17.) It was commendable on the part of these men that they had so much love to Jesus, as to feel indignant at a denial of an act of kindness toward Him, but their fault was that they were so carried away with passion and revenge. It is also evidence of the transforming power of the grace of God, in John's case, that though we find him three times guilty of sins against charity—once when he asked to sit at Christ's right and left hand in His kingdom, and to be preferred before all the Apostles; another, when he forbade a man to cast out devils, because he did not follow the Apostles; and here again showing a fierce and cruel spirit against the Samaritan villagers for not receiving our Lord—yet this was the Apostle who proved at last most remarkable for preaching love and

charity. No change is too great for the Lord to work.

"Our Saviour," says *Paley*, "always had in view the posture of mind of the persons whom He addressed. He did not entertain the Pharisees with invectives against the open impiety of their Sadducean rivals; nor, on the other hand, did He soothe the Sadducees' ear with descriptions of Pharisaical pomp and folly. In the presence of the Pharisee He preached against hypocrisy; to the Sadducees He proved the resurrection of the dead. In like manner, of that known enmity which subsisted between the Jews and Samaritans, this faithful Teacher took no undue advantage to make friends or proselytes of either. Upon the Jews He inculcated a more comprehensive benevolence; with the Samaritan He defended the orthodoxy of the Jewish creed. (2 Tim. ii. 15.)"

55. But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, 56. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.
John iii. 17 and xii. 47.

Jesus rebuked the revengeful spirit of the disciples as contrary to the design of Christianity, and as proceeding from ignorance of the dispensation under which they lived, of themselves and of Him as their Lord and Master. "You are missing your true position, which is, having been born of the spirit of forgiving love, to be ruled by that spirit, and not by the spirit of avenging righteousness." There is no slight cast here on the spirit of Elias. The spirit of the Old Testament was such that God was teaching men by "terrible things in righteousness" His holiness. But the spirit of the New Covenant, not contrary but higher, is that of forgiving love. In it He is overcoming man's evil with His good. *For the Son of man*, &c., i. e., the proper intent and design of Christ's coming was to save and not to destroy, though the accidental effect of it may be otherwise, through the malice and perverseness of men. *Another village*, where the friends of Jesus may have been numerous.

A mild, merciful and forgiving spirit, should be cultivated and cherished by all Christians. God loves more to hear His people intercede for perishing sinners (as Abraham did for Sodom), than to hear them plead for their destruction. It better

becomes a creature, who deserves himself to be consumed, and who has been snatched by the arm of Divine mercy, as a brand from the burning, to ask for *mercy* for his fellow-sinners, than to invoke vengeance. How important it is that our zeal for God should be "according to knowledge!" John afterward came down to Samaria in a very different spirit from that manifested on this occasion. (Acts viii. 25.) Our Lord's rebuke to his disciples plainly expresses His entire disapproval of all persecution for religion's sake. Whatever we may think of men's doctrines or practices, we are not to persecute them.

57. ¶ And it came to pass, that as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest, 58. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.
Matt. viii. 19.

A resolution to follow Christ is a good one, if made deliberately, and not rashly, nor for sinister and secular advantages, which, it is to be feared from the answer our Saviour gave, was the case here. There is no reason to suppose that this aspirant to discipleship meant at the time otherwise than he spoke, yet he had not in him true devotedness. (See Rev. xiv. 4.) Seeing this, Jesus met him with rather a repulse than a welcome, to throw him back on deeper heart-searching. *Foxes have holes*, &c. "Lookest thou for worldly advantages through the following of me? In this thou must needs be disappointed. These cannot be my followers' portion, since they are not mine. Beasts have dens, and birds have shelters, which they may call their own, but the Son of man is homeless and houseless upon earth, He has not where to lay His head." Nor does this answer of Christ our Lord come out to us in all its depth of meaning, till we realize that hour when upon His cross He bowed His head, not having where to lay it, and having bowed it thus, gave up the Ghost. (John xix. 30.)

The title, *the Son of man*, which Christ here gives to Himself, is, 1. An intimation that He who requires so much self-denial, also fully deserves it; 2. Shows the truth of His humanity, for the Son of man must be man; and, 3. Indicates the depth of His abasement; Christ humbled, yea,

emptied Himself, when, being the Son of God, He submitted to be made man. Had this *certain man* truly loved Jesus, he would not have been deterred by any prospect of privation from following His steps. As no further mention is made of him, it is most probable that he was discouraged by the reply Jesus gave.

59. "And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." 60. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. *Matt. viii. 21.

Though Jesus deterred the former man who had offered to follow Him, He *calls* this man to do so. If the first was too sanguine and inconsiderate, the second was too melancholy, even in the most immediate neighborhood of the Prince of Life, finding himself pursued by the gloomy images of death, and therefore requiring encouragement. It was not *unwillingness* to obey His call, but a sense of duty to an aged parent, whose funeral he wished to attend that prompted the request. The Lord replied, *Let the dead bury their dead*, &c. "Let the other sons or relatives who are spiritually dead bury the naturally dead." *Go thou and preach the kingdom of God*. Spread far and wide the glad tidings of life, which as many as hear shall live. By this remarkable instance—strong even to seeming harshness—our Lord did most pointedly indicate the superior object and higher duty to which *all* others must give place.

61. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee: but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. 62. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.—See 1 Kings xix. 20.

It is not stated definitely in the case of this person whether the initiative proceed-

ed from the Saviour or himself. He declared his willingness to go with Jesus, but asked permission to delay his coming for a little while, *that he might bid them farewell*, &c. But he too must learn that there is no dallying with a heavenly vocation, that when this has reached a man no room is left for conferring with flesh and blood. (See Gal. i. 16; Ps. xlv. 10; Matt. x. 36, 37.) Our Lord, therefore, gives no allowance to His request, shuts out at once all dangerous delays and interludes between the offer of service and the actual undertaking of it.

Put his hand to the plough, and looking back.

This proverbial expression derived from the labors of agriculture, has been illustrated by parallel citations from the heathen poets. It was necessary that the ploughman should give his undivided attention to the work before him, that his furrow might be kept straight. This therefore aptly inculcates that he who would be a spiritual ploughman should not "cast one long, lingering look behind," upon the world and its concerns. If he does so, his work will be toilsome, ill-regulated and insignificant. Such a man is not *fit*, literally, "well-placed or well-disposed," *for the kingdom of God*, or Gospel work, any more than a man looking behind him is rightly placed for ploughing. It is not merely that he may not *turn* back or withdraw his hand. There must be no back *glances* of his eye, no turning of his head, but the forward throw of the man with all his might. It was by such a winnowing that our Lord selected His seventy. How hardly did even they fulfill the high office,

1. What power did Jesus give His twelve disciples? 2. What did He send them to preach? 3. What directions did He give them? 4. What is said of Herod? 5. What is said of the "desert place?" 6. What miracle was performed there? 7. What did Christ ask His disciples when He was alone? 8. How did Peter answer the Saviour's question? 9. Explain verses 23 and 24. 10. What is said of those who shall be ashamed of Christ and of His words? 11. What are the particulars of the Transfiguration? 12. What miracle was next performed? 13. Why did Jesus set a child by the disciples? 14. Explain verse 50. 15. State the peculiarities of the three men referred to in the close of the chapter.

CHAPTER X.

¹ Christ sendeth out at once seventy disciples to work miracles, and to preach: ¹⁷ admonisheth them to be humble, and wherein to rejoice: ²¹ thanketh his Father for his grace: ²³ magnifieth the happy estate of his church: ²⁵ teacheth the lawyer how to attain eternal life, and to take every one for his neighbor that needeth his mercy: ⁴¹ reprehendeth Martha, and commendeth Mary her sister.

Our Lord having finally withdrawn His rejected ministry from Northern Palestine, and having arrived at the northern boundary of Judea on His last setting His face in that direction, proceeds to perform, in the midst of apparent dejection, a public symbol of future triumph, by selecting a body of *seventy* to perform a mission of heralding His name and preaching through city and country.

AFTER these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.—Matt. x. 1; Mark vi. 7.

Of the commissioning the seventy Luke gives the sole account, and his narrative is limited to three paragraphs. We do not know the names of any of these disciples. Their subsequent history has not been revealed to us. The seventy were probably selected from the *messengers* mentioned in the last chapter, from the candidates so well sifted in its closing verses, and from some of our Lord's friends in Judea. But why the precise number *seventy*? The most common opinion is that as the number twelve had a reference probably to the number of the Patriarchs intimating the Lord's provision for His Israel, so seventy may have reference to the Elders chosen by Moses to aid him in the government of the people. (Num. xi. 16, 25.)

After these things. What precedes in the narrative. *Appointed.* The Greek word so translated is only found in one other place in the New Testament (Acts i. 24), where it is rendered "*show*." It signifies, "to mark out, or appoint to an office by some outward sign;" and as ministers were so *set forth* or *publicly inducted* into their office, the word becomes synonymous with *ordain*. *Other seventy also*; more literally and correctly, *others, seventy* (in number). *Two and two.* It has been remarked that reformers in different ages seem to come in pairs: as Moses and

Aaron, Elijah and Elisha, Huss and Jerome, Luther and Melancthon. The disciples were sent forth, *two and two*, to make their message of more authority, and to encourage, strengthen and assist each other. Thus they went forth, heralding Christ's name, and preaching through city and country.

² Therefore said he unto them, ¹ The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

¹ Matt. ix. 37, 38; John iv. 35. ² Thes. iii. 1.

As seventy men were too few to instruct all those who were perishing through ignorance, Jesus commanded them to pray that God would send forth laborers into His harvest. Let it be observed, 1. That the world is an harvest-field. 2. That ministers are laborers in this field. 3. That it belongs to God alone to send forth laborers into His harvest. 4. That the number of faithful laborers is comparatively small. 5. That it is the duty of the Church to pray earnestly and incessantly to the Lord of the harvest to send forth an increased number of faithful laborers. The Greek word translated *send forth* conveys the idea of *urgency*. Literally signifying, as it does, "to cast forth," or, "send forth with a degree of force," it implies that nothing but God's powerful and constraining call will ever move men to become ministers and laborers in the Gospel harvest. This declaration of Jesus to His disciples loses none of its force in its application to the spiritual harvest, which is now in readiness for laborers in almost every portion of the world. How small the number of ministers and missionaries scattered over the world! When the Sabbath dawns, how few rejoice to see its beams! It is the duty of Christians to pray for an increase of laborers. For though it be the act of God to *send forth laborers*, He has been pleased to connect this with the prayer of man. Divine operation will not dispense with human co-operation.

³ Go your ways: ⁴ behold I send you forth as lambs among wolves.—⁴ Matt. x. 16.

Go your ways, literally, *depart*, take your various routes—a word of dismissal, with the slight additional notion of haste.

Behold, I send you. The Greek for "I" is here emphatically inserted, as if to show the dignity of the disciples' office. *As lambs among wolves.* In Matthew (x. 16), the word *sheep* was used. Either word is a most impressive image of the contrast between the meek messenger of the Gospel and the persecutors by whom he will be surrounded; helpless, unarmed, undefended, and, to all appearance, his only destiny destruction. This prophecy of persecution had a special reference to the life-time of those to whom it was spoken. We see its fulfillment in the many persecutions described in the Acts of the Apostles. But the spirit to which it refers still exists, and ever will, as long as the Church stands. Christians must make up their minds to be hated, persecuted and ill-treated by those who have no real religion. (1 John iii. 13; 1 Peter iii. 8.)

4. "Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way."

*Mark vi. 8; Luke ix. 3. †2 Kings iv. 29.

Notwithstanding the dangerous character of their mission, the disciples were commanded to make no provision for their necessary wants. *Purses*—the folds of the *girdle* served as a Jewish purse to carry money. *Scrip* was a wallet slung by thongs upon the person, to contain provisions or other necessities. They are merely the skins of kids stripped of wool, and tanned by a very simple process. *Nor shoes.* In Mark (vi. 9) it is stated that when the Apostles went forth, our Lord commanded them to be "shod with sandals," which were a less expensive and luxurious thing than shoes—the sandal only covering the sole of the foot, and being fastened about the foot and ankle with straps, whilst the shoe covered the whole foot. In the passage before us the prohibition is only against shoes, and not against sandals. In this fearless reliance upon Divine support and protection, the disciples were to go forth, deterred by no danger, nor depressed by the apparent power of their enemies.

Salute no man by the way. In their salutations on meeting, much time is often consumed by the Orientals in mutual inquiries and compliments, manual and oral. That our Saviour did not intend to intimate any objection to proper salutations

of civility and respect, appears clearly enough from the courteous salutation enjoined in the next verse. At the same time, whilst ministers and all Christians are to obey the command, "Be courteous" (1 Peter iii. 8), they are not to waste their time in useless and empty ceremonies, as others do who have nothing better to do with their time. On the contrary, they are to beware of allowing the world to eat up their time and thoughts. They are to remember that care about money, concern about external comforts, and excessive attention to what are called "the courtesies of life," are mighty snares, into which they must take heed lest they fall. They must show to the men of the world that they find life too precious to be spent in perpetual feasting, and visiting, and calling, and the like, as if there were no death, or judgment, or life to come.

5. "And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house." 6. And if the Son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.—Matt. x. 12.

The disciples, when they entered any house, were to salute those who resided in it, in the customary manner among the Jews, wishing that the peace and blessing of God might be communicated to them, and proposing the Gospel of peace and salvation. And if the family, or any person in it, was so disposed to receive the truth, as to be worthy of the salutation with which the disciples entered the house, then the blessing would permanently abide on him (Phil. iv. 7), and the messengers of Christ would further instruct and pray for him. But, where this was not the case, the prayers and endeavors of the disciples would return in blessings on themselves. The conclusion of verse 6 is like the expression in the Psalms, "My prayer returned into mine own bosom." (Ps. xxxv. 13.)

7. "And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house."

*Matt. x. 11. †1 Cor. x. 27. ‡Matt. x. 10; 1 Cor. ix. 4, &c.; 1 Tim. v. 18.

The disciples were to abide in the same house which they had entered, partaking of such entertainment as their host might give them. *For the labourer, &c.* This is the great principle on which they were to freely partake of the hospitalities of those for whose good they were ministering.

This expression is a proverbial one. It is remarkable as being the only expression in the Gospels which is quoted in the Epistles. Paul uses it in writing to Timothy, in connection with the expression, "the Scripture saith." (1 Tim. v. 18.) *Go not from house to house*, be content with such lodgings as have been provided for you, and be not hard to please either in the matter of bed or board. Spend not your time in convivial feasts. Show the people that you are seeking *them*, and not *thems*. Not ministers alone, but all believers are here reminded of the necessity of simplicity and unworldliness in their daily life. We must beware of thinking too much about our meals, our furniture, and our houses, and all those things which concern the life of the body. We must strive to live like men whose first thoughts are about the immortal soul, and who realize that they are pilgrims and strangers in the world.

8. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: 9. ¹And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, ²"The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." 10. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, 11. ³"Even the very dust of your city which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." Luke ix. 2. ⁴"Matt. iii. 2, iv. 17 and x. 7." ⁵"Matt. x. 14; Luke ix. 5; Acts xiii. 51 and xviii. 6.

Our Lord concluded His instructions by denouncing woes upon the three favored cities in Galilee, Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum. Why did He speak to the seventy concerning the guilt of those cities? To remind them how He Himself, the Son of God, had been rejected by the cities in which He most frequently preached, and thus to prepare them for similar treatment. Our proud hearts are ready to rebel when we find that our instructions produce no effect upon the hearts of men. But can *we* repine at want of success, when we remember how our *Lord*, in general, seemed to toil in vain? (See notes on ix. 1-6.)

12. But I say unto you, that ¹"it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city." ²"Matt. x. 15; Mark vi. 11.

According to the common conception, the judgment of retribution has already smitten Sodom, and Gomorrah, which is added by Matt. x. 15. The two places are generally named in connection. According to the steady teaching of the New Testa-

ment, on the other hand, this judgment, terrific though it was, is only a foretaste of that which is to be expected at the end of days. Compare, for instance, Jude, verse 7, where it is affirmed that the miraculous fire by which these cities were destroyed for their sins was but a symbol of eternal wrath, by which they were set forth as *suffering the vengeance of eternal fire*. The terrible judgment, moreover, with which the Lord here threatens those who reject His servants, is an unequivocal proof of the high rank which He ascribes to them, compared with the most eminent men of God, and indirectly, at the same time, a striking revelation of His own self-consciousness that He was Divine.

More tolerable, because *that city* was more highly favored with spiritual privileges. From this verse, in which our Lord is not threatening the innocent bricks and walls, but the guilty inhabitants of the cities which reject His Gospel, it is evident, 1. That there shall be a day of judgment. 2. That then some sinners shall fare worse than others. 3. That sinners are not to be annihilated, for then how could it be "more tolerable" for some than others? Where there is no consciousness there can be no degrees of suffering. 4. That there will be degrees of guilt and suffering among the lost. 5. That of all sinners, the condition of those will be the saddest at the day of judgment, and beyond, who, living under the Gospel, die after all in impenitence and unbelief.

13. ¹"Wo unto thee, Chorazin! Wo unto thee, Bethsaida! ²"For if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes." 14. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you." ³"Matt. xi. 21." ⁴"Ezek. iii. 6.

Chorazin. This place is nowhere mentioned but in this and the parallel texts, and in these only by way of reference. It would seem to have been a town of some note, on the shores of the lake of Galilee, and near Capernaum, along with which and Bethsaida its name occurs. *Bethsaida* was in the same region with Chorazin. It was the birth-place of Andrew, Peter and Philip. (Mark xiv. 70; John i. 44.) *Tyre*. This celebrated city, the commercial emporium of ancient Phenicia, was founded two hundred years before the time of Solomon. It stood on the eastern coast of the

Mediterranean, about midway between Egypt and Asia Minor. It was one of the wealthiest and most celebrated cities of antiquity. *Sidon*, or *Zidon*, was a still more ancient Phenician city, standing on the same shore, about forty miles north of Tyre. It was situated within the limits of the tribe of Asher, but was never conquered by Israel. It was celebrated for commerce and manufactures. Against these two cities Ezekiel prophesies. (Ezek. xxxviii.) They are now little better than ruins. There must, undoubtedly, have been so many miracles performed as well at Chorazin as at Bethsaida, that the judgment here denounced against them was fully deserved, and yet the Evangelists relate nothing whatever of them, a proof certainly that they have been rather frugal than lavish in writing their accounts of miracles. (Comp. John xxi. 24, 25.) Of the precise position of Chorazin and Bethsaida no infallible account can be given, as no certain traces of them now exist.

They had a great while ago repented, &c. Here is confessedly a difficulty. It is affirmed elsewhere, that "Jesus is exalted to give repentance," and that "no man can come to Christ except the Father draw him," and yet it is said in this passage, that if the miracles done in certain cities had been done in other cities, the inhabitants of those cities would have been led to repentance. Would the mere miracles have been able to produce this effect? And if repentance could thus have been produced in those cities, why was it not? We are not competent to solve these difficulties. It suffices, that Christ knew the hearts of the impenitent Jews to be more hardened in rebellion and enmity, and less susceptible of suitable impressions from His doctrines and miracles, than those of the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon would have been, and therefore their final condemnation would be proportionably more intolerable.

15. *And thou Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shall be thrust down to hell.
 *Matt. xi. 23. *See Gen. xi. 4; Deut. i. 28; Isa. xiv. 13; Jer. li. 53. *See Ezek. xxvi. 20 and xxxii. 18.

Thou Capernaum. It is noticeable that the Saviour, among the towns whose judgment He denounces, does not speak

expressly of Nazareth. This, say some, was to avoid the appearance of a personal revenge. But may we not rather suppose that it was a manifestation of human tenderness for the home of His mother and of His own childhood? Of the precise position of Capernaum, as of Chorazin and Bethsaida, no certain traces now exist. It was a prosperous city, where Christ had chiefly resided after His entrance upon His public ministry; and as it had, by His presence, preaching and miracles, enjoyed privileges far above other places, so, by reason of its misimprovement of those privileges, its condition would be far sadder than that of those who had never heard of a Saviour. The words *heaven* and *hell* are here to be understood in a literal sense, as the abode of the blest, or that of the cursed. The figure, if there be any, is in the *exaltation*.

Learn hence: 1. That the enjoyment of Gospel ordinances is a great honor to the obscure people and place. 2. That Gospel ordinances enjoyed, but not improved, provoke God to inflict the sorest judgments upon a people. 3. That man is accountable for his belief, and that not believing the Gospel is a sin which leads to hell as really as not keeping the ten commandments. 4. That the clearness of the light against which sin is committed aggravates the guilt. The higher a people rise under the means of grace, the lower they fall if these means are not improved. They that have been nearest to conversion, being not converted, shall have the greatest condemnation when they are judged. 5. It is not alone the seeing of miracles that is necessary to convert souls. 6. Cities are difficult fields for the spiritual laborer to cultivate. Even Jesus, whilst He met with eminent success in preaching in numerous country villages, and among the hamlets of the poor, yet encountered peculiar obstacles in Capernaum, Bethsaida, Chorazin and Jerusalem. Far stronger is the likelihood, humanly speaking, that the mind will be led to receive the truth, and to live in communion with God, in the quiet village where there is time for meditation and worship, and where nature is constantly exerting her elevating influence upon the heart, and calling it to adore its

bountiful and benignant Creator, than in the city, where vice extensively prevails in its producing causes and sad effects, where business presses with unremitting demand, where pride and poverty both have their strongest temptations, and where the whole system of things strongly tends to hurry and hollowness, to superficial acquaintance with one's self and with others, and to the subordination of the eternal future to the life that now is.

16. "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me."

*Matt. x. 40; Mark ix. 37; John xiii. 20. †1 Thess. iv. 8. ‡John v. 23.

The vital and indissoluble union, subsisting between Christ and his followers, rendering every act of love or hatred exercised toward them the same as done to Him, is here asserted in the fullest and most explicit terms. The union also between Christ and the Father, affirmed in Matthew (x. 40), is here reiterated, as a ground of assurance in times of peril and persecution, and as giving dignity and authority to the message, which the disciples were to convey to their fellow-men. Men may think it no great matter to slight or neglect the message and messengers of Christ, but that contempt extends beyond them to Christ Himself, who gave them their commission, and beyond Him to God the Father, who gave Him His commission; accordingly ministers are called God's mouth (Jer. xv. 19), their message and their mission being both from Him.

There is probably no stronger language than this in the New Testament about the dignity of a faithful minister's office, and the guilt incurred by those who refuse to hear His message. It is language, be it remembered, not addressed to the Apostles, but to seventy disciples, of whose names and subsequent history we know nothing. It is one thing to regard the minister's office with idolatrous and superstitious reverence. It is quite another thing to despise it, and regard his warnings and exhortations as of no importance. Both extremes are wrong.

17. † And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.—Verse 1.

The exact period of the return of the

seventy is uncertain. It would seem that their mission was of short duration. They returned at short intervals, one after another. *With joy.* They were jubilant at their success according to their Master's commission, but especially in the subjection of demons to their authority. It may not be denied that, in comparison with the conversion of souls, or any permanent gain they brought to the kingdom of God, they gave undue prominence in their joy to the new power given to them over demons. Hence it was, our Lord deemed it necessary to caution them against making this a principal source of their joy. (Verse 20.) It is right and commendable in those who work for Christ, to long to see Satan's kingdom pulled down, and souls converted to God. But let them remember that success, no less than failure, in the good work, carries with it danger. There is such a thing as "being lifted up with pride." (1 Tim. iii. 6.) We are all inclined to sacrifice to our net, and burn incense to our own drag. (Hab. i. 16.) In the midst of our triumphs, let us cry earnestly, "Lord, clothe us with humility."

Even the devils. Rather *demons*, which in Greek is properly a different word from *devil*. The word *devil* is seldom used in the original in the plural, and commonly signifies Satan, the prince, while all the inferior evil spirits are *demons*. The *demons*, it was, who *possessed men*. *Are subject unto us.* Not merely cast out, but *subjected*, subdued and tamed. *Through thy name*, literally, *in thy name*, i. e., clothed with thy authority. They confessed that it was only in Christ's name they could do such a work. The laborer for Jesus may rejoice in the happy effect of his efforts, if he ascribe the glory to his Master, and not to himself.

18. And he said unto them, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."

*John xii. 31 and xvi. 11; Rev. ix. 1 and xii. 8, 9.

It cannot be doubted that this verse, as a triumphal declaration, of which the report of the seventy was suggestive, is to be regarded as setting forth the total downfall of the prince of darkness, as it passed before our Lord's prophetic sweep of spiritual wisdom, and is destined to go on and be consummated in the future history of the Church. *Beheld*, here, is in the Greek

imperfect, *I was beholding*, embracing the past as well as the future, the entire downfall of Satan from the loss of his first estate, to his future overthrow in the great contest of heaven and hell on earth. *I was beholding*, the verb grammatically describes the action as *going on* while another action is being performed. We may properly call the whole inner life of Jesus a continuous spiritual beholding of the discomfiture of the kingdom of darkness, one which is to be restricted to no particular time. By Christ's words the seventy would understand that they had by no means deceived themselves, since He, accompanying them in spirit, had seen the downfall of Satan, whose servants the demons were. It will be observed that *Satan* is here referred to as a real and personal being. The words, *as lightning* (see Zech. ix. 14), express not only the suddenness of his fall, long since, but the fact that he was an angel of light. The words, *from heaven*, may refer to his original state of glory and bliss, or the greatness of his fall from such a height of power and glory. From this verse we are to learn, that the powerful and efficacious preaching of the Gospel is the special means ordained and appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ for the subversion of Satan's kingdom in the world: as the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to them that believe and obey it, so it is the power of God unto destruction to Satan, and all that fight under his banner against it.

19. Behold, ¹I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

²Mark xvi. 18; Acts xxviii. 5.

Power to tread on serpents and scorpions. Are these words to be interpreted figuratively or literally? In favor of the literal view, may be placed our Lord's promise in Mark xvi. 18, and the fact that Paul took up a viper and was unharmed. (Acts xxviii. 56.) In favor of the figurative view, may be placed the fact, that Satan is called the "old serpent," that his agents partake of his nature, and that there is a promise in Gen. iii. 15, that "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," in which all Christ's members are interested. (See also Ps. xli. 14.) The probability is, that both interpretations are true. (See Acts xxviii. 56.)

Serpents are the well-known emblems of Satan's power, and part of the curse in the animal creation. *Scorpions* (poisonous insects about four inches long, with a sting in their tails, and found in tropical climates) are often put figuratively for crafty, wicked and malicious men. (Ezek. ii. 6.) The disciples were to go forth under the promise of Divine protection, assured that neither strength nor stratagem should overcome them. They were not only to be unharmed by poisonous reptiles (Ps. xci. 3), but to cast down all might in the spiritual world which exalted itself in hatred against Christ.

Over all the power of the enemy. This shows that spiritual evil is mainly referred to, it is supplementary and explanatory of what goes before, and includes every form of evil. *And nothing shall by any means hurt you, literally, in any respect.* The form is intensive. Neither the power, presence, nor protection of God shall be wanting to any of Christ's ministers or members, who go forth in His strength against the spiritual enemies of their salvation. Nothing shall really hurt them. Faithful Christians will be enabled by God's powerful grace to tread unharmed on the evil things of this life, and perform its secular business, which bite other men and kill them. To such faithful ones will be fulfilled the promise, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James iv. 7.)

20. Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you: but rather rejoice, because ¹your names are written in heaven.

²Jex. xxxii. 32; Ps. lxi. 28; Isa. iv. 3; Dan xii. 1; Phil. iv. 3; Heb. xii. 23; Rev. xiii. 8, xx. 12 and xxi. 27.

In these words of our Saviour to the seventy, there is something corrective, and something directive. The corrective part lies in the first words, in which Christ checks their excess of joy for victories gained over evil spirits. *In this rejoice not, &c.* Let not your hearts too much overflow with joy upon this occasion. The negative is not absolute, but comparative. Christ does not forbid, but only qualifies and moderates their joy. One might cast out devils, and yet himself be still a child of darkness. (Matt. vii. 22.) Then, again, that joy must of necessity be ill-founded and defective, which arises solely from the success that attends labor for Christ. It might easily and unconsciously be joined

with self-seeking and pride. It must, too, be fitful and irregular in its exercise, rising high with every external indication of success, and depressed to an equal degree when unsuccessful in the object of pursuit. Our Lord, therefore, gave a better direction to the joy of His disciples. He called upon them to exercise that spiritual joy which springs from an assurance of personal acceptance with God, which will always be permanent, well-regulated and productive of all the Christian graces, and in which there is no selfishness, inasmuch as to rejoice in one's own personal union with Christ, is to rejoice in everything pertaining to a profession of His name, the salvation of men, the progress of truth, and the downfall of error. *But rather rejoice*—let this be your chief rejoicing—it is a far higher privilege to be converted and pardoned men, and to have your names written in the register of saved souls, than to be allowed to cast out devils. *Because your names are written in heaven.* It was the ancient custom that citizens in every commonwealth should be enrolled in a book, and when any were admitted to the rights of citizenship their names were registered on this list. "Our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven." (Heb. xii. 23.) The seventy knew undoubtedly, as we also do, the beautiful figure of the Old Testament, which depicts to us the Eternal One with a book before His face, wherein are recorded the names and deeds of His faithful servants. (Ex. xxxii. 33; Mal. iii. 16; Est. v. 1, 2; Ps. lix. 28; Dan. xii. 1. See also Phil. iv. 3; Rev. iii. 5, xiii. 8, xx. 12.) The assurance to them was: "You are registered in heaven as citizens of God's kingdom, and persons who by God's eternal love have been brought to salvation through Christ, pardoned, accepted and saved." Thus they were given to understand that their own deliverance from the power of the devil ought to dispose them far more to thankful joy than their most glorious triumph over His disarmed servants.

In this verse the important difference between grace and gifts is presented. Gifts, such as mental vigor, vast memory, striking eloquence, ability in argument, power in reasoning, are often unduly

valued by those who possess them, and unduly admired by those who possess them not. These things ought not so to be. Men forget that gifts without grace save no one's soul, and are the characteristic of Satan himself. Grace, on the contrary, is an everlasting inheritance, and, lowly and despised as its possessor may be, will land him safe in glory. Our Lord declares that many in the solemn day of final account and retribution, even of such as have preached the Gospel, prophesied in His name, wrought miracles, cast out devils, will be rejected by Him. Not only one Balaam who prophesied, or one Judas an Apostle, will be condemned, but *many* will plead in vain their profession, gifts, and services, and the miracles which they have wrought in the name of Christ. He will then, before commanding them to depart from Him, disavow all knowledge or approbation of them, as His disciples and servants, saying, "I never knew you."

21. ¶ *In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.*—Matt. xi. 25.

In that hour—at the season of that transaction. If from the preceding words (verse 20), it might appear as though the Saviour did not wholly share the transport of His disciples, and regarded the joy which they reaped in their work with less satisfaction than they themselves, we see here the contrary. *Rejoiced in spirit*, literally, *exulted*, the word being expressive of the most intense joy. (See Acts ii. 26; 1 Peter iv. 13; Rev. xix. 17.) Three times we are told in the Gospels that our Lord Jesus Christ wept. Once only are we told that He rejoiced. And what was the cause of His joy? It was the conversion of souls. It was the manifestation of the abundant grace of God, in gathering around Him this little band of disciples, as the messengers of His love, and endowing them with such power against the adversary. It was the reception of the Gospel by the weak and the lowly among the Jews, when the "wise and prudent" on every side were rejecting it.

We might learn to know ourselves better than we do, if each would inquire, "What are the things that please and grieve me

most?" We shall find that we are by nature selfish—that we are too much concerned about the events that befall *ourselves*, and too little about those that befall our fellow-creatures. Above all, we are naturally indifferent to the glory of God. None, except those who are converted, care in the least degree whether souls are saved or not, or whether God is honored or despised. But all such, in this respect, sympathize with Jesus.

I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, &c. Christ addressed the Father as the proprietor and governor of the universe, who "doeth whatsoever pleaseth Him," in heaven and on earth. And He *thanked* or adored Him, and professed an entire acquiescence in His wisdom, equity and goodness, which were worthy of all adoration, in that He was pleased to conceal the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven from some, and reveal them to others. The two classes of persons intended to be described were not the *really* "wise and prudent," but those who called themselves so, and who, for this world, might be called so—men with a swelling conceit of their proficiency in wisdom, but whose proud and carnal hearts, however sagacious in carnal things, were not favorably disposed toward, and understood not the things of the Spirit—not only the statesman, the general and the prince, but the scribe, the Pharisee, the rabbi, the priest and the pontiff. Not *really* "babes," either, but such persons as, being humble, modest, and having a low esteem of their own wisdom, gave themselves up to the Divine wisdom, and being free from carnal and worldly affections, were fitted to embrace it when it was revealed.

That thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. We are not to understand that God did, by any *positive influence*, hide the proofs of Christ's mission from the wise and prudent. They had the Scriptures in their hands; they saw or heard of His miracles, and heard, or might have heard, His doctrine, but they were blinded by pride and carnal prejudices, and He was pleased to give them up to be judicially blinded. God did not put darkness into their minds, but He left them to their

own darkness, or denied them that light which they had no desire to see.

Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. This God had done for wise and gracious reasons, which He was not pleased to assign. (See Eph. i. 9-12.) It *seemed good*—it seemed right to the Infinite Mind. As though Christ had said: "Father, thy choice pleases me, as being the choice and good pleasure of thy wisdom." The truth which this verse embodies is deep and mysterious. "It is high as heaven, what can we do? It is deep as hell, what do we know?" Why some around us are converted, and others remain dead in sins, we cannot fully understand. Why America is a Christian country, and India buried in idolatry, is a problem we cannot solve. We only know that it is so. We can only acknowledge that the words of our Lord Jesus Christ supply the only answer that mortal man ought to give, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." At the same time, it should be remembered that God's offers of salvation are free, wide, broad and unlimited, and that the same God who does all things according to the counsel of His own will, always addresses us as accountable creatures—as beings whose blood will be on their own heads, if they are lost. We cannot understand all His dealings. We see in part, and know in part. Let us rest in the conviction that the judgment day will clear up all, and that the Judge of all will not fail to do right.

22. "All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him."

"Matt. xxviii. 18; John iii. 35, v. 27 and xvii. 2. John i. 18 and vi. 44-46.

This verse expresses the Divine correspondence between the Father and the Son which had been implied by the thanksgiving of the previous verse. It is a very remarkable declaration of our Lord's personal and mediatorial dignity. The Father *had delivered all things unto Him*—the whole system of salvation, all power, authority and judgment over all creatures. None knew Jesus as the Son of God, but the eternal Father; even as none knew the Father, except the Son; neither could any man truly know the Father, except as the Son revealed His

nature and glory to Him; for this was committed to Him as Mediator, in respect of all the sinful race of men. This represents Christ as co-equal with the Father, and is an argument for His Divinity. (See Matt. xi. 25, 27.)

23. ¶ And he turned him unto *his* disciples, and said privately, *Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see:* 24. For I tell you, *that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.*
1 Matt. xiii. 16. 2 1 Peter i. 10.

Thus far the face of Jesus has been toward the face of the seventy, but now He so turns as to address the disciples who had gathered around, *privately, i. e., separately.* He congratulates *them* particularly on the blessedness of the Gospel revelation to them in connection with the seventy. This is one of our Lord's sublimest utterances. He proclaims Himself as Him in whom alone not only the expectation of the earlier time is fulfilled, but in whom also the ornament and crown of mankind has appeared. *Blessed are the eyes, &c.* Your blessed eyes see not only the outside shell of truth, but the inner kernel. *Many prophets,* as Moses, Isaiah and Daniel, and many *kings,* as David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Jehoshaphat and Josiah, and the other Old Testament saints represented by them, to whom the times of the Messiah, His character and kingdom were all a matter of profound interest, had earnestly longed to see and hear the things which the disciples and Apostles were seeing and hearing, but were denied the privilege. The men of old saw them only by faith in types, shadows and dim intimations, but the disciples saw them with their bodily eyes, as living and present realities. *They* looked forward to the Redeemer who was in due time to appear, and rested their hopes on Him; they had their light from this Sun, before He arose above the horizon, and they longed to see Him already risen, but this was reserved as a peculiar blessing for the Apostles and disciples, whose light was proportionably more distinct and clear. The word *kings* is here substituted for *righteous men*, in Matt. xiii. 17, and this was probably done to give emphasis to the sovereign grace of God, in revealing these great truths to those of lowly condition; also to magnify

the dignity of those to whom the revelation of the Son in the flesh is vouchsafed.

We have probably a most inadequate idea of the enormous advantages enjoyed by believers who have lived since Christ came into the world, compared to those of believers who died before Christ was born. It is the difference of twilight and noonday, of winter and summer, of the mind of a child and the mind of a full-grown man. The humblest Christian believer understands things which David and Isaiah could never explain. Let us see that we make a good use of our high and holy privileges, never forgetting that in proportion to our advantages will be our responsibility.

25. ¶ And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, *Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*—1 Matt. xix. 16 and xxii. 35.

At some pause in our Lord's discourse, while the multitude still remained on the spot, expecting further instruction, a *certain lawyer*, or one who devoted himself to the study of the law of God, who was watching his opportunity, interposed with the demand, *Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?* Of all questions this is infinitely the most momentous for every man; and the wonder is that men generally can let so many far less important questions agitate and vex them, whilst this one is regarded with indifference. Though it is said that the lawyer *tempted Christ*, yet to *tempt*—as when it is said that God tempted Israel, which, in a bad sense, we know He could not do—is simply to *try*; and by the law of charity, which thinketh no evil, as well as from regard to his answers and whole bearing, this man is entitled to a favorable construction both of his motives and object. He had heard of Him whose fame filled the whole land, and to ascertain whether He was as great a teacher as fame—prone to exaggerate—reported, to measure His ability, perhaps to try His soundness, he tested Him by this fair and momentous question.

26. He said unto him, *What is written in the law? how readest thou?*

This reply of our Lord is as much as to say, the question you ask is already answered. What need to make further inquiries, when the answer is contained in the words of that very law of which

you profess to be a searcher and expounder? What is written there concerning this great question? A very strong testimony to the excellence and perfection of Scripture is found in the simple fact, that the Author of Scripture ever appealed to it for answers to all questions that were addressed to Him. The Bible, then, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, should be the rule of our faith and practice. Holding this principle we travel upon the King's highway. The road may sometimes seem narrow, and our faith may be sorely tried, but we shall not be allowed greatly to err.

27. And he answering, said, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

*Deut. vi. 5; Heb. xiii. 10. †Lev. xix. 18.

That the lawyer should at once quote, as he did, the great commandment, from Deut. vi. 5, in connection with Lev. xix. 18, proved that he was superior to the common range of his countrymen. This reply was an answer to his own question. For there is no entrance into life, or inheritance in heaven for an unloving spirit. Whatever be the means by which that love to God and man is to be produced, one thing is clear, that unless it does exist, there can be no eternal life, for "God is love," and to love God is to live.

28. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right this do, and without shalt live.
*Lev. xviii. 5; Neh. ix. 29; Ezek. xx. 11, 13, 21; Rom. x. 5.

In the view just given, our Lord's answer here is to be accepted in all simplicity as the great universal cardinal truth in the case. Life was offered at first, and life is offered still, as the reward of obedience. It is not safe, it is not needful to apologize for this statement, or to explain it away. It is not in any sense contrary to evangelical doctrine. It is really true that the fulfilling of God's law will secure His favor. Nor is this a thing merely to be admitted in its own place when it comes up. It is the truth that lies at the foundation, and on which all other truth leans. The basis of all is, obedience deserves life, and disobedience deserves death. Mankind have disobeyed; we all have sinned, and are, therefore, all under condemnation. Nothing but a perfect obedience can gain God's favor. Hence the covenant, and

hence the incarnation and sacrifice of Christ; hence the substitution of the just for the unjust. The Gospel is not an exception to the law, "This do and thou shalt live." The Gospel is founded on that law. This law Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfill. In these words, *Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live*, there is concealed the secret charge, that the lawyer was more concerned about knowledge and book-learning than to exercise himself unto obedience, and that he had almost wholly neglected this. *This do*, which is as much as to say, *Lo, thou hast never done or fulfilled it; this do, and thou shalt live*, as though Christ had said, "Your knowledge is correct and admirable, just convert it into action. You have plenty of light, now let it shine and glow through every act of your life and every utterance of your lips. Your answer is admirable; only let your head and your heart, and your hand be in perfect harmony, and the whole law will attest that you have fulfilled it. If you do perfectly fulfill it, you shall live; but this cannot be done by you, nor by others, and therefore life must be sought elsewhere." Well is it for those to whom the law, by convincing them of sin and misery, and teaching them their inability to obtain salvation by its works, has been a school-master to bring them to Christ.

29. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?—*Luke xvi. 15.

Much as he might have deceived himself as to his loving God, he knew and remembered—as we all do—many cases in which he had not loved his neighbor as he loved himself. How could he escape from the dilemma in which he was placed? He wished to *justify himself* in regard to these violations of law, and remove the blame from himself, on the ground that it might be laid upon the law itself and its Divine author, who had not sufficiently explained what He had meant by the term *neighbor*, and had hence given occasion to disobedience against this command. He knew that if he could confine the term *neighbor* within very narrow limits, he might evade the difficulty pressing upon him, and though he had failed doing to many what he would have wished them

to do to him, still satisfy himself that he had kept the whole law—hence the question, *Who is my neighbor?*

30. And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

A certain man, evidently a Jew. It could not have been said of a Samaritan, who was not permitted to go to Jerusalem, that he was departing thence to another place. Besides, unless we suppose this man to have been a Jew, having acknowledged claims upon the kindness and protection of the priest and Levite, the point of the parable is lost, namely, the striking contrast between the hard-hearted selfishness of these persons, and the great benevolence of the Samaritan. Indeed, the whole complexion of the narrative assumes that this unfortunate sufferer was a Jew, and we think his nationality is not stated precisely because it could not be mistaken. *Went down*, or, "was going down," not merely because Jerusalem, from the height of the mountains on which it was built was considerably more elevated than Jericho, which stood in the vale of the Jordan, but because the going to Jerusalem, as to the metropolis, was always spoken of as going up. (See Acts xviii. 22.) The distance between the two places was eighteen miles. Jericho was at this time an important city. Indeed, it would seem from *Josephus* to have been next in consequence to Jerusalem itself.

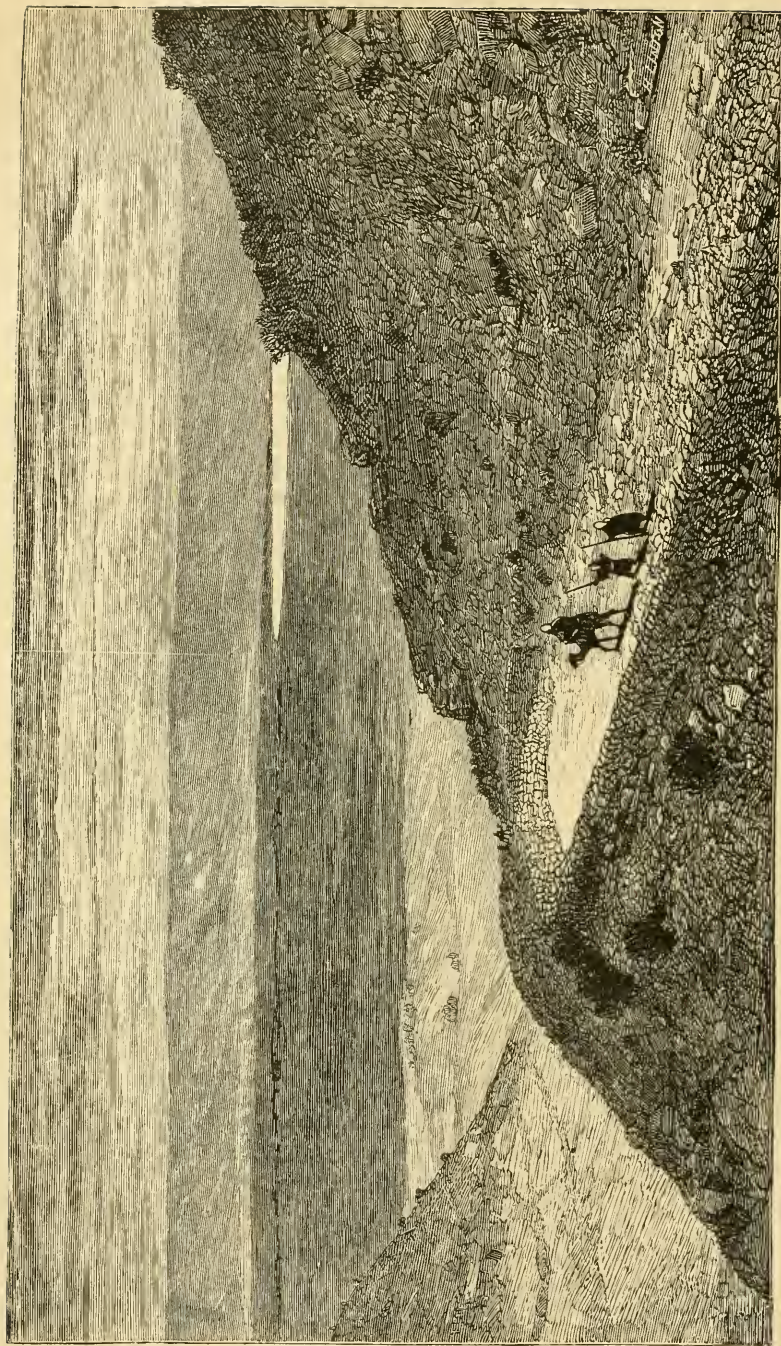
How fitly the road from one of these cities to the other was made the scene of this interesting story, will appear when it is understood that this road has always been infested by numerous daring and desperate robbers. *Fell among thieves*, not merely robbers, but men whose trade it was to take life with as little compunction as they would take money. *Which stripped him of his raiment, i. e.*, despoiled him of everything he had on or about his person, and because, perhaps, he made some slight resistance as they were despoiling him, or out of mere wantonness and cruelty, "*wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.*"

31. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.—Ps. xxxviii. 11.

And by chance. This is an unfortunate

translation. Strictly speaking, nothing happens by chance. It was not by chance that the priest came down by that road at that time, but by "coincidence," that is, by that *concurrency* of events which is so often to be seen distinguishing the acts of God's providence. Many good opportunities are concealed under these events which appear to be *fortuitous*. If we happen to come in view of a man in distress, that is just the intimation of God that we must help him as much as we can (Matt. x. 30), and not to regard such an intimation is not the humane and child-like disposition which our Lord so highly praises. Twelve thousand priests and Levites were stationed at Jericho with a view to the rotation of service at Jerusalem. Hence the peculiar propriety with which our Lord introduces the priest and Levite as passing this way. Whether the priest was traveling to discharge his office, or returning from the performance of its duties, we are unavoidably led to expect, on account of his standing and office, that he would be disposed to manifest a compassionate feeling. (Mal. ii. 6, 7.) But although he was a man consecrated to the service of God, and even now on his way from his turn of office in the temple, the sight of his countryman and fellow-worshiper moved in him no compassion—he passed by cold and unconcerned without so much as coming near to help or even console the unhappy sufferer.

He passed by on the other side, marks an intentional turning away and going past on the other side, in order not to permit himself to be moved by a nearer view, or to suffer any sort of detention. We are not informed what his excuses were, but we may be quite sure he had plenty, and that they were very good. Those who seek a good excuse for neglecting the labor of love always find one. He was alone, he could neither cure the unfortunate man there, nor carry him away. To make the attempt might bring the robbers down from their fastnesses upon himself, and thus he should throw away a good life after a damaged one. Love saw no excuses for leaving the man lying in his blood, for it was not looking for them; but selfishness saw them at a glance, and would have



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created them in plenty if there *had been none at hand*.

32. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

Levites were a class who served at the temple, assisting the priests in sacrifices and other services. They belonged to the tribe of Levi, which was set apart to religion. (Num. viii. 5-22.) Priests were of the family of Aaron in that tribe. The Levites performed the humble services of the temple, as cleaning, carrying fuel, and acting as choristers. They were also writers, teachers, preachers and literati. This Levite was probably returning also from the temple service to Jericho, when he fell in with this wounded man. Curiosity led him near, to look upon the unhappy object, but though he obtained a more exact knowledge of his helpless position, he yet passed by without helping him, and thus manifested a still more inhuman heart, a still more criminal conduct, for whilst the first exhibited selfishness instinctively, the second did so upon calculation.

Thus did the priest and the Levite, who made their boast in, and were the express interpreters of that law, which was so careful in pressing the duties of humanity, that twice it had said, "Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again." (Deut. xxii. 4; Ex. xxxiii. 5.) Here not a brother's ox or his ass, but a brother himself was lying in his blood, and they hid themselves from him. (Isa. lviii. 7.) These men had not learned that God "will have mercy rather than sacrifice;" they had not yet felt that to pour oil into the wounds of the sufferer is nobler and more acceptable to God than to raise the richest incense, or to perform with the most mechanical precision all the rites and ceremonies of the temple worship. How prone is religion to become a religion of rites and ceremonies, of fasting and feasting, and not a religion of mercy, of love, and of good will! And how apt, as experience shows, are those, who, according to their office and calling, ought to be best, if they are bad, to be not merely in their depravity similar to others, but to go beyond and exceed all others.

33. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him. 34. And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him: Take care of him: and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

John iv. 9. Ex. xxiii. 4, 5; Prov. xxiv. 17; Rom. xii. 20; 1 Thes. v. 15.

God's eye was on the sufferer, and He raised up one who would look upon and pity him. *A certain Samaritan*. His name is not mentioned, but he has left a broad footprint on the sands of time. The Samaritans sprang from the mixture that took place at the time of the captivity, between the Jews who still remained and the heathenish Assyrians and Babylonians. National hatred kept them still apart, even at the time of Christ. (John iv. 9, 20.) That a Samaritan is here represented as the deliverer was directed against this national hatred, and was meant to teach that one often finds in men utterly despised, and from whom nothing was expected, more humane feeling and truer love than in hypocritical believers. (See Luke xvii. 11-19.) The force and appositeness of the parable is enhanced by contrasting the conduct of the despised Samaritan with men of such public reputation as a priest and Levite. How many excuses might this Samaritan have framed for neglecting the sufferer before him! He might have pleaded the traditionary enmity between the Jews and Samaritans, and alleged that he, instead of returning leisurely to his home in Jericho, was on a journey, and could comparatively ill afford the expense or loss of time to which his benevolence subjected him, and that he, as much as others, had reason to apprehend danger from robbers lurking in the vicinity, and that, whatever he did for the sufferer, he would get no thanks, for the man was a Jew, and *he* was a Samaritan, and that the sufferer was beyond the help of man, and that he who was found near him might be accused of having been his murderer. But, instead of doing this, conquering his prejudices and those fears for his safety which, amid such scenes, and with such a sight before him, were not unnatural, he hastes to the rescue. He first *saw* him at a distance, as lying in his blood, yet living, then *had compassion on*

him, then *went to him*, and bending over the bleeding form, applied such remedies as circumstances permitted and his skill suggested. He closed the lips of his gashes, and bound them up, doubtless with strips from his own garments, then *poured in oil and wine*, a common remedial application at that time for wounds, with which, as a traveler, he seems to have been provided (Isaiah i. 6), the wine probably to cleanse the wounds, and the oil to allay the pain. It was common with travelers in the East to carry oil with them, the expressed juice of the olive, that they might anoint and strengthen their limbs, wearied with continued heat. (Gen. xxviii. 18.)

There are many persons who, on beginning a good work, go at it at first with zeal, but lacking perseverance and loving change, they soon turn to something else. But the Samaritan stuck by the cause on which he had embarked. He did not bind up and anoint the wounded man, and then think that his work of benevolence was done, but he *set him on his own beast*, no doubt with great difficulty, *and brought him to an inn*, over rough and steep declivities, probably being obliged to sustain and support him, to prevent his falling, through weakness, from the animal, *and took care of him*. The residue of that day, and the whole of the following night, he attended to the wants of the wounded man, denying himself the usual repose so necessary to a traveler. The *inn* to which the patient was conducted must have been more than a khan built on the wayside, and left empty, a free shelter to each party of travelers who chose to occupy it for a night. It must have been something more nearly allied to our modern system, for there was a resident manager or landlord, who kept in store such provisions as travelers needed, and supplied them to customers for money. But the Samaritan was not satisfied with conducting the wounded man to the inn. Mark the beautiful climax. First, the compassionate heart, then the helping hand, next the ready foot, finally the true-hearted charge. About to depart, next morning, as business required, he leaves the unhappy man in rest. He takes out of a girdle, *two pence*, which, being the amount of a fair day's

wages, was more than as many dollars' worth in our time (Matt. xx. 2), gives them to the innkeeper, engaging him to take care of the sufferer, and pledging his credit for the balance, when he next came that way, if the expense should ultimately exceed the amount of his deposit. Thus was he wise as he was humane, provident as he was generous—qualities that commonly shine in conjunction.

36. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? 37. And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

Here the tables are turned upon the questioner. In his question (verse 29), the lawyer, or scribe, contemplated other people, and speculated upon who had the right to receive kindness: the answer of Jesus, on the contrary (verse 36), contemplates the scribe himself, and inquires whether he is prepared to bestow kindness. The point on which attention is fixed is not, Who, of all mankind, have a right to receive kindness? but, Are you willing to show kindness, as far as you have opportunity, to every human being who is in need? It will be noticed that in his answer the lawyer did not mention the name of the Samaritan, but adopted the circumlocutory phrase, *He that shewed mercy on him*. This answer, drawn by our Lord from him, was, virtually, *The Samaritan is my neighbor*; since, if this man's compassionate service to the Jew was such as to entitle him, in the lawyer's estimation, to be regarded as the Jew's neighbor, then, by a parity of reasoning, the conduct of the lawyer to a Samaritan should answer to the relationship which he had just acknowledged. In other words, the obligation and exercise of kindness was to be mutual. Hence, our Lord closes with the brief but pertinent direction, *Go, and do thou likewise*. Deal with a Samaritan as this Samaritan deals with a Jew, and so you will, Jew and Samaritan, be *neighbors*. And then the lawyer finds himself placed upon that high platform by which the Divine law of love, ignoring the divisions of race, nation and color, unites mankind into one neighborhood and brotherhood. It is not without propriety that Luke, a Gentile, should furnish this most beautiful parable.

In addition to the lessons drawn from

the parable, as the exposition of it has proceeded, let the following, which are plainly deducible from it, be considered :

1. It is perfectly possible to be acquainted with all the truths of Christianity, and not to feel them. 2. We need to know the requirements of the law, before we can appreciate the provisions of the Gospel. 3. We are to do good to all men as we have opportunity. We are not to ask querulous or small questions when we see objects which we know to be suffering with hunger, cold, &c. We are not to ask, Can you pronounce my shibboleth? are you a member of my sect, or party, or denomination? Not that we are to love less the truth, but that our love is to go beyond the limits of our sect, and to express itself wherever suffering is found. 4. And this love, which we are bound to cherish toward others, must not be in word and in tongue only, but in deed and in truth. Our love must be practical, entailing on us self-sacrifice and self-denial, in money, time and trouble. Our charity should be seen not merely in our talking, but in our acting—not merely in our profession, but in our practice. We should think it no misspent time to work as hard in doing good to those who need help, as others work in trying to get money.

In the vast mass and complicated relations of modern society, says an eminent divine, it is extremely difficult to apply right principles in the department of material benevolence. On the two opposite sides we are liable to err, and we ought on either side to watch and pray that we enter not into temptation. 1. It would be a mischievous mistake to give money, food and clothes to every importunate beggar who contrives to cross our path and present an appearance of distress. There are men, women and children in our day, who trade upon their sores, and even make sores to trade upon. To give alms indiscriminately, in these circumstances, is both to waste means and propagate improvidence. But, 2, it is not enough to resist importunities which may proceed from feigned distress. Shut your hand resolutely against the whine of trained, unreal pauperism, but, at the same time, diligently search out the true sufferers, and liberally supply their wants. If from defective knowledge errors

must sometimes be committed, better far that now and then a dime should be lost, by falling into unworthy hands, than that our hearts should be drained of their compassion and dried hard by the habit of seeing human suffering and leaving it unrelieved. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth;" it is better that his abundance should be diminished by an occasional excess of disbursement, than that love, in which his life really lies, should wither in his breast for want of exercise. "The milk of human kindness" this compassion has been called, but let us remember, that if no needy child is permitted to draw it, this milk will soon cease to flow.

It is a point worth considering, whether the modern method of allowing benevolence to vent itself in contributions for the support and comfort of the suffering, unaccompanied with personal visits to the distressed, and personal care for them, either bestows the best culture on the heart, or meets the demands of this parable.

33. † Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

‡ John xi. 1 and xii. 2, 3.

It is not quite clear at what period of our Lord's ministry, the history here recorded, comes in, nor what is the connection between it and the preceding passage. It has been suggested that one object is to supply a serviceable caution against the idea that active working charity, like that of the good Samaritan, was the only way to serve Christ, and to show that sitting still and hearing is just as useful in its season as relieving distressed people; that outward performance must be based upon an inner work.

He entered into a certain village. This was Bethany, on the south-east side of the Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem. It was the scene of some of the most interesting events of Christ's life. (Matt. xxi. 17, xxvi. 6; Mark xi. 11, 12, xiv. 3; John xi. 1-46 and xii. 1-3.) Our Lord did not often Himself enter a village, in the latter days of His ministry, when the increasing jealousy and hostility of His enemies rendered it prudent for Him to avoid the more public places.

And a certain woman named Martha re-

ceived him into her house. This is a common expression to denote a hospitable reception. (See xix. 6, ix. 53.) Martha, it is evident, not only from this place, but from her name being mentioned first in John xii. 5, was the housekeeper. Whether she was a widow or maiden lady we know not; we only know that she was mistress, if not proprietor, of the house. From the fact that Bethany is called the town of Mary and Martha (John xi. 1), it has been inferred by some that the sisters were large property-holders, and yet, though this may have been the case, all that is probably meant by this expression is, that they were permanent residents of the village. That the whole family was one of some consideration is evident from the fact that many persons came even from Jerusalem to console with the sisters after the death of their brother. (See John xi. 9.)

^{39.} And she had a sister called Mary, ^{which also} ^{sat} at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

¹ Cor. vii. 32, &c. 'Luke viii. 35; Acts xxii. 3.

A sister. Probably her only sister, *which also sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word.* May not "also" imply that Martha sat there too till household claims called her away? In the East it is the custom to sit upon the ground, or on low couches. Disciples sat near to the feet of the teacher or rabbi. So young Saul sat at the feet of Gamaliel. (Acts xxxii. 23.) There was, therefore, nothing unusual in Mary's posture, as she listened to the Saviour's instruction on things relating to His kingdom, and, possibly, to His approaching death. It will be noted that as soon as Christ entered this house, He began to preach. Whilst bodily food was being provided for Him, He was preparing spiritual bread for others. O that, in our place and measure, we might all imitate Jesus in this respect! Can we come into any house or company, and find nothing to say or do for God?

⁴⁰ But Martha was ^{cumbered} about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.—John vi. 27.

But Martha was cumbered about much serving. She was over-occupied, deeply absorbed (the Greek word means "was drawn about distracted") in efforts to make suitable provision for Christ and His

friends—prepare, what she supposed to be demanded, a suitable entertainment for so illustrious a guest and His disciples—make ready their lodging apartments, &c. Thus was she anxious to show her respect and affection for her Lord. Was there anything censurable in this? Certainly not. Jesus is entitled to the best we have. Our most valuable possessions must be laid at His feet. But there *was* something censurable in the spirit and manner in which Martha addressed our Lord. Perhaps, as we have hinted already, Mary had at the beginning, before the Saviour's arrival, also assisted in the domestic labors, but soon afterward had seen that she could now use the precious time more profitably, and therefore left her sister.

Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. As if Martha had said, "Is it right that both thyself and all this company should not be provided for? or is it reasonable that the whole responsibility and labor should devolve on me, whilst Mary sits still utterly neglectful of household duties? send her, therefore, back to her post, which she has left too early, since she can no longer be spared there." What infirmity and weakness intermix with the virtues and graces of the best Christians, especially when they give way to unhallowed passion! Here was fretfulness of temper, and may there not have been something of domestic vanity? Martha's anxiety to make suitable provision for her Lord was commendable, but that anxiety was excessive as her concern for the entertainment was, compared with that which she manifested for the Saviour's teaching at that time. This is evident, not only from the whole tenor of her complaint, but particularly from the fact that, instead of telling her sister she wanted help, she sought, in a difference with that sister, to win the Saviour as her confederate—using, indeed, a sort of two-edged form of speech, which bore with some almost rebuking force upon our Lord and Mary. It will be observed that Mary was silent under her sister's complaint. She did not defend her course, but left it to her Lord to answer for her. When we are complained of for well-doing,

it is our duty, and may it be our prudence to seal up our lips in silence, and to expect our vindication from above.

41. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

How contrary to her expectation was our Lord's answer to Martha! She thought that her sister would have been sent away with a check, and herself with thanks; but instead of this, and that, too, notwithstanding the provision she had made for His comfort, Jesus failed not to tell her of her fault. No obligations to any particular persons, even our best friends, should keep us from reproving their faults. The double utterance of the name, as also afterward, "Simon, Simon," "Saul, Saul," was meant to express the dissatisfaction of the Saviour, not so much with the act as rather with the disposition of Martha. *Thou art careful and troubled about many things*—thou art solicitous and disquieted (as the waters when agitated by a violent storm) about a variety of interests comparatively unworthy of regard. Christ condemns not her hospitality, but her solicitude and superfluity, her distraction and perplexity. O how prone we are to exceed in things lawful and necessary! Martha's entertainment of Christ was a noble service, but she was too anxious and solicitous about it. One duty is to be limited by another, and each is to receive its just proportion of interest and attention.

42. But one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

^vPs. xxvii. 4; John xvii. 3; Gal. v. 6; Col. ii. 10, 14; 1 John v. 11, 12.

But one thing is needful. The term *needful* in the Greek is a noun—*necessity*. "Of one thing, even of salvation, there is necessity." This is the thing which ought first and principally to be regarded by us—the well-being of our immortal souls. Other things are needful to *some*, this is so to *all*; other things are needful *in a measure*, this is *infinitely* so; other things are needful *occasionally* and *for a season*, this is so *always* and *forever*. And wherever this interest is properly attended to, all other matters will be used or pursued in subserviency to it. *Mary hath chosen that good part.* It is not affirmed that Martha's occupation was wrong, but that, for the

time, Mary's occupation was better than Martha's. The phrase, *that good part*, is a general expression, and meant to be interpreted with a reference to the conduct of Mary at the time when her sister interposed. She was choosing soul-benefit. She was seeking more grace. She was striving after nearer and closer communion with God and His Christ. This was the portion which she preferred to everything else, and to which she was willing for a time to postpone all earthly care. *That good part*, or *portion* of the heavenly inheritance which Mary was by faith in Jesus receiving into her soul, in comparison with the excellence of which nothing else deserved to be named. *Hath chosen* refers to Mary's own voluntary choice and agency in receiving the blessing. It was her wise and happy choice to "sit at Christ's feet, and hear His words." She was not to be drawn into a neglect of His instructions by any secular cares and encumbrances, and as neither life, death, nor eternity would deprive her of her interest in His salvation, so our Lord would by no means consent to her being deprived of her present satisfaction of listening to His discourse, in order to assist in providing a *needless* entertainment for its plenty and variety.

It will be observed that our Lord, in His declaration that Mary *had* chosen the good part, does not imply that Martha *had not* so chosen. Nor is there any reason to think that this was the case. On the contrary, the indication is quite clear that she was possessed at this time, as we know she was afterward (John xi. 27), of vital piety. She erred, but rather from a mistaken view of the true mode of honoring Christ, than from any real disrespect manifested toward Him. She committed a mistake, which was very natural in the circumstances in which she was placed, but which, when enlightened in reference thereto, she was doubtless ready to acknowledge and renounce with tears of penitence. Martha was a true believer, and did not, in her general conduct, neglect "the one thing needful." In the day of affliction her grace shone clearly and brightly. There is hardly any confession, in all the four Gospels of our

Lord's office, which will compare with that which she made in the eleventh chapter of John.

This interesting narrative suggests the following reflections:

1. It is possible now to sit at Jesus' feet. This may be done by thinking over His words in faith and prayer. Christ is not far from any one of us, and to the humble, waiting spirit will make known His love, though now enthroned above. *Mary sat*—she stayed a while, she waited on the Saviour's words. With open heart, like Lydia's, she listened, anxious to learn, and held her memory, like a golden vase, to catch each precious, fragrant drop of truth which came distilling from His lips. Many, alas, rush into the presence of Christ with steeled hearts, and ears half-closed, attention fast asleep and reason's eye filmed o'er by prejudice, and rush away again, and wonder they are not wise.

2. Let us not suppose that our Lord would not have persons attend to their own household affairs. It is a duty to superintend our domestic concerns with watchful care and diligence. And we can serve God in the family, as well as in the closet and sanctuary, if only we are actuated by the right spirit. We may and should commune with our Lord in our common employments. Thus will they be sanctified, and become to us means of grace. The great danger is from the cares of this world. They come insensibly to eat up our spirituality, and bring leanness on our souls. It is far more frequently an excessive attention to things in themselves lawful that leads men to eternal ruin, than open sin, or flagrant breaches of God's commandments.

3. We must take *temperament* into account in judging of religion. Looking at these two sisters, we might be tempted to infer that the care for eternal things existed in Mary alone. But it was not so. Both were friends and disciples of Christ.

As water is colored by the soil over which it flows, so religion is modified in its features and development by the peculiar temperament of the individual in whose heart it has found a place. Martha and Mary both loved Jesus, and Jesus loved both of them, but they were evidently of very different turn of mind. Martha was active, stirring and impulsive, feeling strongly, and speaking out all she felt. Mary was quiet, still and contemplative, feeling deeply, but saying less than she felt. It was the heartfelt pleasure of both to serve Christ according to their best ability, only each had her own idea how this must be done. With Martha, productivity, with Mary, receptivity, stands in the foreground. Martha is the Peter, Mary the John, among the female disciples of Christ. Martha's character was one-sided, in attaching too much importance to the external, to outward activity; Mary also would have had something one-sided, if she regarded every work of Martha without restriction, as unworthy of her attention and below her dignity. We must not expect all believers in Christ to be exactly like one another. We must not set down others as having no grace, because their experience does not entirely tally with our own. "There is one Spirit, but a diversity of operations."

4. The true Christian's possession shall never be taken from him. He alone, of all mankind, shall never be stripped of his inheritance. Kings must one day leave their palaces. Rich men must one day leave their moneys and lands. They only hold them till they die. But the poorest saint on earth has a treasure of which he will never be deprived. The grace of God, and the favor of Christ, are riches which no man can take from him. They will go with him to the grave when he dies. They will rise with him in the resurrection morning, and be his to all eternity.

1. What is said about "other seventy"? 2. What did our Lord say to them? 3. What directions did He give them? 4. What was spoken concerning Chorazin and Bethsaida? 5. What concerning Capernaum? 6. What did the seventy report on their return? 7. What did Jesus say to them? 8. For what did Christ thank His Father? 9. What did He say privately to His disciples? 10. Who tempted Christ? 11. How? 12. What question did the lawyer ask Jesus? 13. By what parable was it answered? 14. What is said of Martha and Mary?

CHAPTER XI.

¹ *Christ teacheth to pray, and that instantly: 11 assuring that God so will give us good things. 14 He, casting out a dumb devil, rebuketh the blasphemous Pharisees: 28 and sheweth who are blessed: 29 preacheth to the people, 37 and reprehendeth the outward shew of holiness in the Pharisees, scribes and lawyers.*

Prayer is one of the great laws of natural religion. That man is a monster, that never prays, that never gives glory to his Maker, nor feels His favor, nor owns his dependence on Him. One great design, therefore, of Christianity is to *assist us in prayer*, to enforce the duty on us, to instruct us in it, and to encourage us to expect advantage by it.

AND it came to pass, that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

As he was praying in a certain place. It is not easy to determine the time or the locality here referred to. The circumstance recorded may have occurred very soon after the domestic scene in the house of the sisters in Bethany, and since we know from other passages that the Saviour was especially accustomed to pray on the summits of mountains, we are almost spontaneously brought to think here of the Mount of Olives, the subsequent theater of His conflict and of His coronation. (Comp. chap. xxi. 37.) *When he ceased.* These words do not simply indicate that the disciples, instead of interrupting Jesus, waited until He had finished His prayer, but convey the idea that when He ceased praying, there was a profound silence. *Lord, teach us to pray, &c.* Teach us the body of blessings we may hope to receive, and therefore what object is right, and not presumptuous to ask. It was well in the disciple who offered this request, not only to attach importance to prayer, and to feel his own ignorance and insufficiency in the performance, but to address One who is always able and willing to hear and help us. None teach like Him. Four ways He teaches to pray: 1. By His word; 2. By His example; 3. By His providence; 4. By His Spirit.

² And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth."—Matt. vi. 9, on which see notes.

This was not the first occasion on which Christ gave "The Lord's Prayer" to the

disciples. It is embodied, with very slight variations, in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. vi. 9–13), which belongs to an earlier date. Twice the Lord God wrote the Ten Commandments on tables of stone. (Deut. x. 10, x. 4.) Twice the Lord Jesus delivered the Lord's Prayer. Why the repetition of this prayer? The disciples were defective both in understanding and memory, and the Master gave them "line upon line."

The existence of a progressive sequence in the prayer is seen, even on a casual view. At the outset the suppliant appears lost in the contemplation of the Being to whom his spirit ascends; next, he turns his thoughts upon himself and his own wants. Further, it is not difficult to recognize a progression in the three first petitions, and in the three (or four) last. The recognition of the name of God is the basis on which alone the kingdom of God can be established, and again, this kingdom is the sphere in which the will of God is fulfilled. Further, the prayer for the maintenance of the life of man precedes the prayer for the forgiveness of his sins; and again, it is only when the guilt of the past is removed that the thought is directed to the temptations of the future. The thoughtful reader, who has derived from other sources the knowledge of the Trinity, will also find a reference to that truth in the scheme of this prayer. The petitions of the first and second parts refer to God as Creator and Preserver, the second petition of either part refers to God as Redeemer, whilst the third of either part relates to God the Holy Spirit, by whom the Divine will comes to be fulfilled, and through whose power temptation is overcome.

When ye pray, say: (in Matt. vi. 9), "after this manner therefore pray ye." No rational man can think that it was our Lord's meaning that we should use these words exclusively. The prayer, as we suppose, was intended as a model rather than a mould. It was given rather as a specimen, by the spirit and order and proportion of whose several parts we should guide our own spontaneous petitions, than as a rigid and imperishable enclosure in

which all our pious acknowledgments and supplications should be compressed.

Our Father, &c. We have here grouped together the three principles which settle man's just relations to this and to the next world: 1. The *Filial*. We see in the Most High a Father. This representation of God as Father of those who worship Him, teaches us that He stands in a relation toward them similar to that in which a father stands to his children, and that He regards them in a manner similar to that in which a father regards and acts toward his children—really loving them, and disposed to bestow on them everything that is necessary to their true happiness. 2. The *Fraternal*. We come not with our private needs and vows alone, but with those of our race and brotherhood. "*Our Father.*" Believers, in all their prayers, should think of others as well as themselves. They should remember all their brethren in Christ, and all their brethren of mankind. 3. The *Celestial*. Though we are now of the earth, and attached to it by these mortal and terrene bodies, we are not originally from it, nor were we made to be eternally upon it. We are *of* Heaven, and *for* Heaven, for there and not here our Father is, and where He is our true *home* is. God, though omnipresent, has Heaven as His special residence. The clause, *which art in heaven*, directs our thoughts to the difference between earthly fathers and this Father. "We are to have no earthly thoughts respecting the heavenly majesty of God." The very commencement of the prayer assumes in the suppliant a spirit penetrated with reverence and love and confidence—a spirit which, like the Psalmist, thinks of God as the highest and best portion. (Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26.)

Hallowed be thy name. (See on Matt. vi. 9.) By the name of God, we are to understand His revealed character, and attributes—even all that is implied in the appellation by which He is known among men. (See Ex. xxxiv. 5-7.) The word *hallowed* is nearly synonymous with "sanctified," or "glorified." God's name may be hallowed by us in three ways: 1. In our hearts, by entertaining suitable conceptions of Him; 2 By our lips, when we

acknowledge His Divine perfections, and tell of all His wondrous works; 3. In our lives, when the consideration of these Divine perfections engages us to suitable obedience.

Thy kingdom come. (Ps. xxii. 28; Dan. ii. 44; see on Matt. vi. 10.) This petition implies an earnest desire that the kingdom of God may be set up in our own hearts, reducing all within us to entire subjection to Christ, our king, that it may be set up in the hearts of our children, relatives, servants, friends, neighbors, that the word of the kingdom may, in all nations, "be preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven," that Christian churches may be established in every region of our earth, and that "the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ," that every opposing power may be put down, and God be all in all. The final setting up of this kingdom has been long predicted. (Gen. iii. 15; Rom. viii. 22; Rev. xi. 15 and xxii. 20.)

Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. (Ps. xl. 8, ciii. 20; see on Matt. vi. 10.) God's will may be considered either as preceptive or providential. To the former, reference is here made, for God's providential will is done in earth, equally as in heaven. Or, if the latter is also referred to, that submission, acquiescence and satisfaction in it, which angels feel and express, may be intended. It ought to be the prayer and care, the study and endeavor of every Christian, that the commanding will of God may be done by himself and by all men on earth, as it is by the saints and angels in heaven, with entireness, harmony, cheerfulness, diligence, constancy and ineffable delight. (Hab. ii. 14; Heb. viii. 11.)

3. Give us *day by day our daily bread.

*Or, *for the day.*

Daily bread. (See on Matt. vi. 11.) The bread which is convenient, or sufficient for our daily subsistence. Bread is one principal part of the things which are needful for the body, and here, as is often the case, it is put for the whole. By the use of this word, therefore, we are taught to ask only things that are necessary, without craving superfluities, and to refer it to our Heavenly

Father to determine what things are necessary, according to our station in life, our families, and various other circumstances. We are to ask "day by day" the supply of the *needs* of life. Not being warranted to ask, even of the necessities of life, very large supplies, which may serve for weeks, months, or years to come, but as children, continually exercising the spirit of entire dependence on, and complete confidence in, our Heavenly Father's care. The "our" gives rise to two very important thoughts: It points to necessary *labor*, the true way of asking and receiving, according to God's original appointment for man, in Gen. iii. 19, independently of which we eat not *our own bread* (2 Thess. iii. 12; 1 Thess. iv. 11, 12), but another's. Similarly, it points to the obligatory communication and fellowship, since as we in "*our*" and "*us*," pray with and for one another, so we may not hold anything that we receive exclusively and covetously, for ourselves alone. (Isa. lviii.; break thy bread to the hungry—comp. 1 Sam. xxv. 11.)

4. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

And forgive us our sins. (See on Matt. vi. 12; Lev. xix. 18.) In this petition the following things are supposed: 1. That we are all sinners, and, as such, stand in need of forgiveness. 2. That we are obliged to pray every day for pardon, as we do for daily bread, for our sins are many and daily. That man is a sad self-deceiver, dreadfully ignorant of God's law, and of himself; who does not see that there is much, very much, both wanting and wrong in him, and that he needs to say every day, "forgive me my sins." 3. That since we are to pray for pardon of sin, it is impossible for us to ever satisfy the justice of God for sin. *For we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.* The willingness of the suppliant is by no means a ground upon which God can bestow on him forgiveness, but rather a subjective condition without which he has no boldness to entreat the forgiveness of his own sins. (Comp. 1 John iv. 18, 19.) This condition, or qualification, let it be observed, requires: 1. That our minds be full of charity, free from rancor and ill-will, and all desire of revenge and secret

grudge against another. 2. That we stand ready to help, and to do any office of love and service for him that has offended us. 3. That we admit our offending brother into friendship and familiarity, which is called a *forgiving him from the heart*; our heart must be toward him as formerly. It is a very striking consideration that this petition is so framed that, if presented in an unforgiving spirit, it is, indeed, an imprecation of Divine vengeance.

And lead us not into temptation. (Gen. xxii. 1; see on Matt. vi. 13.) "Temptation" means "trial." God never put evil into our hearts, or stirs it up there by any positive influence: in the former respect, "a man is tempted by his own lust and enticed," in the latter, by Satan or wicked men. But Providence may permit us to be brought into such circumstances as have a tendency to give our inward corruptions, and the temptations of Satan and his agents, peculiar advantage against us. This the Lord sometimes does, to prove the reality or power of our grace, the sincerity or hypocrisy of our profession, or the remaining prevalency of sin. This petition asks that God would graciously prevent us from being brought into circumstances of strong temptation, that He would not leave us to struggle with temptation in our own strength, that He would instruct us to avoid, that He would enable us to overcome our temptations. He who would honestly and acceptably present this petition, must guard against going into temptation.

But deliver us from evil. (Ps. i. 15; see on Matt. vi. 13.) This may mean, either from that which is evil, or from him who is evil—from the evil thing or from the evil one. We prefer the first sense as the more comprehensive one, and as including the second. It is a prayer to be preserved from everything that is really prejudicial to us, especially from sin, that evil in which there is no good. In this petition we confess that ever since the fall, the world "lieth in the wicked one." (1 John v. 19.) We confess that evil is in us, and about us, and near us, and on every side, and that we have no power to deliver ourselves from it. We apply to the strong for strength. We cast ourselves on Him for protection. It will

be observed that Luke omits the doxology appended to the prayer. (Matt. vi. 13.)

5. And he said unto them, which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves:

After giving to His disciples the form of prayer in verses 2-4, Jesus proceeded in this parable to urge very forcibly on them the duty, not merely of praying, but of praying urgently, importunately, yea, of never ceasing to pray until the prayer be granted. The picture refers to a simple, primitive condition of society, and reveals corresponding social habits.

He said unto them, intimating that much was said in the same current which is not reported, but the following parable was clearly recollected. *Which of you shall have a friend* In teaching how God will do, Jesus, at the same time, teaches how we should behave. The same argument is used here as in the parable of the *unjust judge*, one from the less to the greater, or, more accurately, from the worse to the better, with this difference, however, that *here* the narrow-heartedness and selfishness of man is set against the liberality of God, while *there* it is his *unrighteousness* which is tacitly contrasted with the righteousness of God. *At midnight*. This unusual hour is chosen to give force to the reluctance of the man to rise and supply the wants of his friend, and the power of continual entreaties to overcome such well-grounded reluctance. *Midnight* means the time of the greatest internal darkness and necessity. Intercession in behalf of others can never be of any avail, except in this day of gloom and thick darkness, but now may be made in circumstances the most discouraging. *Friend, lend me three loaves*. That he required three loaves for the use of his friend, clearly shows that the bread of the Jews was in very small loaves, or else in broad or thin cakes, according to the present custom of the East. That the applicant had no bread, or anything else in his own house to set before his friend, is to be accounted for by the fact that the Orientals generally only prepare sufficient of bread and other food for the current day; so that a person who arrives at night is more than likely to find the house bare of victuals.

6. For a friend of mine *in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.
*Or, out of his way.

He urges the grounds of entreaty, 1, the unexpectedness of the visitor; 2, his own inability. Of the words translated, "in his journey," the margin gives a very striking rendering, and, most probably, the true one—"out of the way." The benighted traveler represents the poor sinner "out of the way," walking on still in darkness, not knowing whither he goeth, and then obtaining help from one who is a fellow-sinner, and yet a believer, who asks for him from God the bread of life, which he is not himself able to furnish him.

7. And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

This person is meant to represent Him to whom the believer must go. *He from within*. This, in addition to referring to the person within, intimates that the door was not open, that he did not come forth to converse with his friend. God, from within His house, which is heaven, hears those who pray on earth. *Trouble me not*. He is short and sharp. He echoes not the honeyed word *friend*. We trouble God by our sins, but not by our prayers. *The door is now shut*, that is, fastened, barred and bolted for the night. The door of Divine mercy is always open during this life. *My children are with me in bed*. In the East whole families frequently sleep in the same room. The man excuses his disinclination by the disturbance and vexation it would cause to him and his household. *I cannot rise and give thee*. It does not necessarily follow that the children were in the same bed with their father, the meaning is that they would be disturbed and fretful, if he should rise and thus wake them at such an hour. The supreme rest and happiness which God enjoys in Himself with His saints, does not make Him insensible to our pains and miseries, and He need not quit the least part of that happiness in order to assist and relieve us.

8. I say unto you, ^bThough he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.
^bLuke xviii. 1, &c.; Rom. xv. 30.

The term translated "importunity" signifies freedom from the bashfulness which

cannot ask a second time. The shamefacedness which prevents a modest man from importuning a fellow-creature for a gift after the request has been refused, is out of place in the intercourse between an empty but believing supplicant and the God of all grace. If this Jewish countryman in his perplexity had been ashamed to ask a second time, he would have failed to accomplish his object, but because he was not so ashamed, or at least did not permit the shame to drive him from his purpose, he obtained at length all his desire—even more, not only the three loaves which he asked, but “*as many as he needeth.*” The case was similar to that of the Syro-Phœnician woman (Matt. xv. 21-28). It is not true, in the sense that many affirm it, that our prayers have an effect on *us only*, and *not on God*. As the same unchangeable sun softens the wax and hardens the clay, so does God, who is “without variableness,” sustain and save us in our penitence, and harden and condemn us in our obduracy. We are not to conceive of prayer as an overcoming of God’s reluctance to give; it is, in fact, a laying hold of His highest willingness, as we see illustrated in the case of the woman just referred to. Refusals to a believer are only trials of his faith, to prove his confidence in God, and make the gift, when bestowed, a suitable confirmation of that confidence.

9. “And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”
 *Matt. vii. 7 and xxi. 22; Mark xi. 24; John xv. 7; James i. 6; 1 John iii. 22.

The parable concludes with words in which the same duty of prayer is commended, and no longer in a figure, but plainly. The three repetitions of the command are more than mere repetitions. There is an ascending scale of earnestness. Each one of the words, “ask,” “seek,” “knock,” manifests increased importunity, so that each apparent refusal will add earnestness to the entreaty, until the required blessing is received. The man in the parable did *ask, seek, knock*, and it was *opened, granted, obtained* by him, according to the promise. So must all suppliants do. A man, in order to offer up a good prayer, must ask with the humility of a beggar;

he must seek with the carefulness of a good servant; and he must knock with the confidence of a friend. This three-fold command to pray is, indeed, a commentary on words of our Lord spoken at another time: “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.”

10. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Lest the strong but general assurance of the preceding verse should be neglected as a customary or unmeaning form of speech, it is repeated here in terms still stronger and more universal, not as a promise to be verified in future, but as a fact of actual experience. The change from the future to the present, therefore, is significant, and not to be neglected in the exposition. “I say, not only that you shall receive hereafter what you ask, but that, in point of fact, whoever does ask, does receive accordingly.” That is to say, believing prayer is never vain or unsuccessful, and the knowledge of this truth is among the most efficient antidotes to skeptical misgivings and excessive care. When we do not receive that which we ask, let us always believe either that we do not ask it as we ought, or that it is good for us not to receive it.

11. “If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?” 12. Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

*Matt. vii. 9. *Greek, *give*.

Our Lord now draws from the domestic circles of earth some precious arguments for confidence in approaching our heavenly Father. From that which the *friend* will do, the discourse of the Saviour rises even to that which one could expect of a *father*; from that which an imperfect earthly father does, even to that which the perfect Father in heaven bestows. *If a son shall ask bread, &c.* The phrase would be better translated, *when your son, &c.* In the original, the question has a negative form, which implies a negative answer. This is not the way you ever dream of dealing with your children who depend on you for their support. *Bread*. Probably the round cake now used in the East, and bearing some resemblance to a smooth, flat *stone*. The same resemblance may be traced between some kinds of serpents

and some kinds of *fish*. *Egg*. This third example is found only in Luke, the two others also in Matthew (vii. 9, 10). Old writers say that there was a white *scorpion* in Palestine, which, when folded up, resembled an egg. Now, if earthly parents will not mock their children, when hungry, by giving them that which is not food, and especially if they will not give them a noxious and a deadly thing instead of food, it may not be expected that God will refuse humble and earnest suppliants the good things which they ask. He will not give us a stone instead of bread, but we may ourselves, and we should fear lest we do, change the bread of God into a stone, by the hardness of our heart. When, too, we do not get whatever we ask, and when we ask it, we may be sure that, in our ignorance and short-sightedness, we asked a stone or a serpent, because they seemed beautiful—not knowing that the one was destitute of nourishment, and that the other would sting.

13. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

This is the formal argument or inference from the facts indirectly stated in the preceding verses. *If ye then, being evil*—not a comparison of the morally corrupt man with God, but rather a contrast. Men, notwithstanding their depravity, which blinds their judgments, and makes them defective in moral purity, and tends to make them weary through repeated provocations, and selfish, will satisfy the demands of their children, if possible. How then could it be that a holy God should not do that which even sinful man does? The argument of Jesus in this verse seems to derive its force from three considerations. 1. God is the Fountain of natural affection. From Him all the kindness, pity, compassion and love have proceeded, which have flowed through all the successive generations of the world. If, then, the love of offspring be so strong in our nature, how purely and how powerfully must it operate in Him, who tells us that the instinct which Himself has planted in our hearts, but feebly expresses the affection that is in His own breast to the family of mankind! 2. The reception of

the Holy Spirit has relation to our highest welfare. It concerns us in our spiritual and eternal interests. How, then, can it be, that He who blesses our bodies, and inclines our hearts to give our children what is requisite for their subsistence and comfort, will not give us, if we ask, the great blessing which is needed by our rational, depraved, accountable and immortal nature? 3. The influence of the Spirit can never fail of being intrinsically and eternally good. This is not certainly known of any gift which a parent bestows upon his child. But it is true of the Holy Spirit, His influence is absolutely and invariably beneficial. Will not God, then, willingly give the Spirit? It is a precious truth that this view of God, as so human, so paternal, is given us by one who knows what He affirms. "No one knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son may reveal Him." (Matt. xi. 27.) Nothing can exceed the kindness and grace which are thus represented as belonging to our Father in heaven. This great gift of the Holy Spirit, be it remembered, we may ask unconditionally and without limit, as we are permitted to supplicate for nothing else, at the throne of grace. But we must ask in the name of Him whom the Father heareth always.

14. ¶ And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.

• Matt. ix. 32 and xii. 22.

The connection between these verses and those which immediately precede them, is striking and instructive. In the preceding verses our Lord had been showing the power and importance of prayer. In the verses before us He delivers a man from a dumb devil. The miracle is evidently intended to throw fresh light on the lesson. The same Saviour who encourages us to pray, is the Saviour who destroys Satan's power over our members, and restores our tongues to their proper use. It was the *devil* who was dumb; it was the *man* who spake; the demon was the cause of the dumbness of the afflicted person. *And the people wondered*. According to Matthew they were "amazed," and on the point of publicly proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah. This culmination of enthusiasm awakened the strong reaction of the Phari-

sees, and led to the sudden and malignant accusation mentioned in the next verse.

15. ¶ But some of them said, "He casteth out devils through *Beelzebub, the chief of the devils."
 *Matt. ix. 34 and xii. 24. *Gr. *Beelzebub*; and so verses 18, 19.

Some of them—they were Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem. These persons, let it be noted, were unable to deny the fact of the miraculous healing, and therefore used the only other means at their disposal to discredit Him who wrought it, by malignantly accusing Him of impious collusion with the very demons whom He dispossessed. Thus their very charge against Him may be reckoned as involuntary testimony to the truth of His pretensions to a superhuman power. *Beelzebub*, or *Beelzebub*. *Beelzebub* means "Lord of flies," and was worshiped by the Philistines in earlier times at Ekron. (2 Kings i. 2.) This god was so called as protecting his worshippers from noxious insects; or as being himself worshiped under an insect form. This contemptuous description of a heathen deity is perfectly agreeable to Jewish usage, and its application in the case before us is a conclusive proof of the extremes to which these enemies of Jesus had carried their contempt and hatred of Him, when they chose the grossest nickname of a false god to describe the unseen power by whose aid He wrought His miracles. The preposition *through* denotes not mere assistance, but union and identification. *Chief* means one who goes first, takes the lead, presides or governs. There never was any person so good as not to be subject to censure and misconstruction. What a trial to the holy and innocent Jesus to be charged with familiarity with the devil!

16. And others tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.—*Matt. xii. 38 and xvi. 1.

The words, *from heaven*, show that it was a sign of Christ's Messiahship which these *others* demanded of Him. They appear not to have been satisfied respecting the expulsion of the demon, and now ask a *sign from heaven*, as opposed to a sign from hell, or one on earth, in proof of our Lord's pretensions. It is always one mark of a thoroughly unbelieving heart, to pretend to want more evidence of the truth of religion. To one who has a sincere faith, it is enough that God has once declared Him-

self. He who is not content with this, wants faith, not proofs.

17. ¶ But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them: Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.
 *Matt. xii. 25; Mark iii. 24. *John ii. 23.

Knowing their thoughts, by His omniscience. *Said unto them*. Notwithstanding the very awful and most flagrantly wicked charge preferred against Him by His enemies, Jesus, not in the least angry, but rather pitying the misguided men who had made the charge, reasons with them quietly and calmly as rational men, thus teaching us, that, however extravagant the charge may be that is made against us, yet, if we speak calmly and sensibly, there is something in human nature that will lead it to listen the moment we do so. *Every kingdom divided against itself*—in which there is nothing but divided council and separate action, making on one side, and unmaking on the other, setting up and pulling down, internal discord and civil war—is *brought to desolation*, or, as Mark has it (iii. 24), *cannot stand*, cannot be established, made to stand, by such a process. The same thing is true in a sphere still narrower: a *house* or family *divided against itself*, composed of hostile and discordant members, *falleth*.

18. If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.

If Satan also be divided against himself, as the Pharisees intimated, when they accused Jesus of casting out Satan by Satan's own power, *how shall his kingdom stand?* No. He is not so weak, so ignorant of what his strength is, nor so reckless of his resources. His bad power is yet a *united* power, and it will not be for lack of oneness of purpose and action that his kingdom shall at length fall. *Because ye say*. These words mean this, I put this question in order to show you the absurdity of supposing Satan to be thus arrayed against himself. The whole argument of Christ was this: "If Satan were to cast out Satan, he would commit suicide. Therefore, how can you suppose that he will help me to depress and put down that very kingdom which is his strength, glory and stronghold?" It is an unwarrantable calumny to endeavor to make it believed that a man is an enemy of the Church, because he is trying to es-

tablish truth of doctrine and promote holiness of life, and to cast out error and sin. We must not cease to serve the Church in the midst of all the oppositions of false brethren.

19. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? therefore shall they be your judges.

Here is a second refutation of the charge of the Pharisees: their objection, by parity of reasoning, would extend to their own exorcists, which they would not have been willing to admit. *Your sons*. That is, your disciples. That there were among the Jews *exorcists*, who at least professed to cast out devils, we know from the Apocrypha, from *Josephus*, and from Acts xix. 12-14. It appears, by the writings of the earliest Christian fathers, that this power of *exorcism* remained for some time in the primitive Church. *Therefore they shall be your judges*, to convict them of injustice and malignity in ascribing what Christ did, to demoniacal collusion, when they made no such charge against them and their real or pretended dispossessions. The corruption of the heart is the cause of the corruption of the understanding and judgment. Passion makes men frequently condemn in some that which they approve in others.

20. But if I ^kwith the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

^kEx. viii. 19.

So numerous and powerful had been our Saviour's works, that the Jews had ascribed them, not to a spirit of common order, but to the very *chief* of hell. But if they were as beneficent as they were powerful, why not ascribe them to the Prince of Heaven, and so conclude that the kingdom of Heaven had come? The argument here appears to be this: "If these miracles which I work are really worked by the finger of God (See Exod. viii. 19), and I am clearly proved by them One sent from God, then, whether you will allow it or not, the times of Messiah have evidently arrived. The kingdom of God has come down upon you unawares, and these miracles are signs that it is so." There was solemn irony in this suggestion to the leading Jews, that, in spite of their unwillingness to see or own it, the Messiah and His kingdom might be come after all. We cannot be assured that God reigns in a soul, but only when the lusts

and evil habits which possessed it are cast out, not by other lusts or evil habits, but by the love of righteousness and the hatred of sin, which is done by the finger of God—namely, by His Holy Spirit.

21. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace.—Matt. xii. 29: Mark iii. 27.

Strong man. This, the context clearly shows, is "the chief of the devils," Satan, the great rebel against God, and the great adversary of man. His *palace* are the world and the sinner's heart. His *goods* are the temptations of the world, and those lusts and passions of the poor, fallen soul, all those wondrous faculties which once followed hard after God, but are now alienated from him, degraded by reason of the vileness of the objects on which they now fasten. He allows nothing to mitigate their abomination, or change their character; they are in *peace*. The phrase *keepeth*, implies military vigilance. We have, therefore, three qualities brought to view—strength, completeness of the means of defense and watchfulness. Satan is, indeed, *strong*, by not only entering in, but now holding in complete subjection such a palace as he occupies. He "works in the children of disobedience," and that so constrainingly, that they are called his "children." He "carries them captive at his will," and "the whole world lieth in the wicked one." He is called the "Prince of this world." He is *armed*. He is well supplied with defensive armor, not to be overcome by slight assaults and feeble exertions. He is also well supplied with offensive weapons, never at a loss for means to injure the soul of man. He has snares of every kind, and engines of every description. He knows exactly how every temperament, rank, class, age, nation and people can be assailed with most advantage. We are all born under the dominion of this strong man armed, and have been his habitation by being born slaves to sin. Would to God we had never been so by our own will!

22. But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

^mIsa. liii. 12: Col. ii. 15

A *stronger*, literally, *the stronger*, that is, he who is stronger. That stronger one is

the Friend of sinners, Jesus, the Son of God. Mighty as the devil is, he was overcome by Jesus on the cross, when He triumphed over him openly. Christ can pluck the devil's captives from his hands, and break the chains which bind them. If this *stronger* than Satan undertakes to dissolve the terrible union between the evil one and the sinner's soul, nothing can keep Satan and that soul together. Power, irresistible power, dissolves the compact, severs the union and destroys the dominion. The steps of this deliverance are as follows: He (*the stronger*) enters into the soul, *comes upon* the usurper there, falls upon him in His might, *overcomes* him, grasps him by a hand which is "mighty to save," *takes from him all his armor, wherein he trusted*, makes the wondering soul fully aware of his subtleties, and unmask the secret of his power, so that it is no longer "ignorant of his devices," and *divideth his spoil*, "recovers all those powers and faculties of the soul, which before only sounded as voices from the pit, and tunes them to the melodies of Heaven, at one time causing them to burst forth in the grand swell of victory gained over the tyrant; at another, to join in the new song of praise, with all its sweet cadences of unutterable joy."

23. "He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth."—Matt. xii. 30.

This proverbial maxim, illustrative of the contrariety of Christ's own kingdom and that of Satan, as shown by the opposite works of the two, was addressed especially to such as, on the one hand seized with astonishment at the miracle, on the other hand struck by the blasphemous allegation of the Pharisees, did not know what they should think of Jesus, and were secretly inclined, at least for the moment, to remain neutral in respect to the two parties. These He gives to understand, that in the case of so intense a conflict of principles, such a neutrality was impossible, and at bottom was no better than open enmity. *He*—any one. *Not with me*—that does not harmonize with me in spirit and in action. *Is against me*—is opposed to me. *Gathereth . . . scattereth*. These two words allude to a *gathering* in harvest. Co-laborers gather in concert—

the ravager of their fields *scattereth* the produce. This aphorism, and that other which is the converse of it (Mark ix. 40), do not in the least conflict. The rule, "He that is not against me," must guide us in our judgment respecting *others*. The other, "He that is not with me," is applicable in judging of *ourselves*. The first warns us against bigoted exclusiveness, the other gives us to understand that entire neutrality in the Saviour's cause is impossible. Let it be the settled determination of our minds that we will serve Christ with all our hearts, if we serve Him at all. Nothing is so offensive to Christ as lukewarmness in religion. Let there be no reserve, no compromise, no half-heartedness, no attempt to reconcile God and mammon in our Christianity. Let us resolve, by God's help, to be "with Christ," and "gather" by Christ's side, and allow the world to say and do what it will.

24. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out."

—Matt. xii. 43. —Prov. iv. 16; Isa. xlviii. 22 and lvii. 21.

Sometimes an evil spirit *forsakes* his habitation. This devil having left his house, traveled through *dry* or desert places, but found no *rest*, no satisfaction and repose. It seems probable that in the course of his wanderings he found no opportunity of injuring souls. Our enemy, we know, walks about seeking whom he may devour. Sometimes there is a restraint laid upon him, and he *cannot* perpetrate the evil that he desires, for he can do nothing without the permission of God. Perhaps this devil had left the man, hoping to make new conquests, and to increase the number of his victims, but when disappointed, he thinks of returning to his old abode. He says, "I will return unto my house whence I came out." He claims the heart as his own property—"my house."

25. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished.

On his return he finds no obstacle to regaining possession of the soul he once inhabited. Nor is the house less acceptable to him because it is "*swept*." He is greatly satisfied with some appearance of reformation, certain significant tokens of

cleanness, for he knows that these are all for him. Had it been swept or cleansed for another, he would have fled from it with dismay and hatred, but as it is for himself, he exults over it with fiendish delight, as only making the habitation at length more thoroughly his own—and it is “*garnished*,” too. Many ornaments are found within. The soul has put forth some of its inherent powers. It has enriched itself from the stores of art, science and philosophy. It has shown rare skill in works of social benevolence. It has gained a good name for integrity and uprightness. And all this, too, is gain to the evil possessor, not to the rightful owner of it. All these he takes into his hand, and turns them to his own bad purpose of keeping the soul still further from God, and making use of it for the enlargement and increase of the dominion and the power of darkness.

23. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

John v. 14; Heb. vi. 4 and x. 26; 2 Peter ii. 20.

The unclean spirit will not re-enter weak and alone, but will take with him a strong reinforcement, so as not again to be ejected. He selects some *more* wicked than himself, seven in number, to be his associates, and *share his spoil*. The number seven is often used in Scripture, probably to denote great increase in number, or size, or quantity, or intensity. (Ps. cxix. 164; Prov. xxiv. 16; Matt. xviii. 21; Dan. iii. 19.) There are degrees of wickedness, even among *devils*, and no doubt pre-eminence in wickedness is their glory. It had been better for this miserable man if the first inmate of his heart had never quitted it. His last state was at least seven times worse than the first. How infinitely better would it have been for him, if, when the devil had left him, he had opened his heart to the gracious Saviour!

The case above described is not that of one outwardly going on in a course of vile pollution and rampant ungodliness, but of one in whom outward appearances are favorable, and yet, these very things, externally so fair and good, are turned, by the power and subtlety of Satan, into increased means of rebellion against God. As long as the soul is “*without God* in the

world,” no matter what it may be in other respects, in its outward manifestations, no matter what men may think of it, nor what it may think of itself, it is still the slave of sin, and the bond-slave of Satan.

27. ¶ And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, “Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.”—Chapter i. 28, 48.

A *certain woman*. She sympathizes with Christ as a great rabbi, but *especially*, we suppose, in His eloquent denunciations of that class who not only *blasphemed* Him, but *decoured widows’* houses. We are not told who she was, but that she was a mother appears from the nature of her felicitation. *Of the company*—out of the crowd or multitude. *Lifted up her voice, and said unto him*—her feminine voice overtopping all other sounds in the crowd. The scene is truly Oriental, it being the custom in those countries, even now, to implore blessings or imprecate curses upon the heads of the parents of friends or enemies. The words of this woman are to be attributed rather to wonder and astonishment at the sayings and doings of our Lord, than to a spiritual perception of the true excellence and glory of His character and mission. Hence, in His reply, He administered a gentle rebuke for her admiration of His words and miracles, unless accompanied by a lively and productive faith in the truth of God.

28. But he said, Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

*Matt. vii. 21; Luke viii. 21; James i. 25.

The Greek word here translated, *Yea, rather*, is only found in three other places, and in each is variously rendered: “Nay, but” (Rom. ix. 20), “Yea, verily” (Rom. x. 18), “Yea, doubtless” (Phil. iii. 8). Christ does not gainsay the woman’s utterance, but He rectifies it. “Very true, blessed,” &c.—an intimation to the woman not to let herself be borne along too much by transient impressions. Mary’s blessedness proceeded from having borne the Son of God in her heart, even before she bare Him in her womb. While our Lord admits the truth of the woman’s asseveration, He refers to a state or condition of blessedness enjoyed by the believer, compared with which the previously expressed cause of gratulation diminishes into insignificance. *Word of God*. Christ does not say *my word*,

but *the word of God*. He frequently turns the attention of His auditors from Himself to the Father who sent Him; not, however, intending to intimate thereby that they were other than one and indivisible, but only that in the work of redemption the Son is subordinate to the Father, and as such, makes it His supreme delight to honor and obey Him. (Comp. Luke i. 48, ii. 19-51; Matt. xii. 45, 48; Luke viii. 19-21.)

What a trenchant blow is here struck against the folly and sin of deifying the mother of Jesus for an honor, which our Lord Himself places below that which is conferred upon every believer in the spiritual relation which he sustains to God, as an obedient and devoted follower! We have reason to rejoice that this great and gracious privilege is not denied unto us now. Although we cannot see Christ, yet love Him we may; His bodily presence cannot be enjoyed by us, but His spiritual, gracious presence is not denied us.

29. ¶ And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, "This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet."
"Matt. xxviii. 39. "Matt. lii. 7; John viii. 44; Acts vii. 51, 52.

They sought a *sign*. They had a mob-like desire to see splendid shows in the sky, not unlike the excitement of the populace for fireworks on some day of public celebration. They wanted a miracle so far different from the other miracles of our Lord as this, that it was to be performed, not on men who surrounded Him, but on objects which were apparently elevated above Him, and was therefore to strike the eye so much the more strongly. *An evil generation*. Nothing shows more clearly the hardness and corruption of the hearts of that people, than their asking a new miracle—counting, it seems, all those as nothing which they had seen before. Heart unbelief always professes to want evidence. Our Lord, in view of their extraordinary perverseness, refuses any sign, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

30. For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.
"Jonah i. 17 and ii. 10.

The sign of the prophet Jonah was full of warning to the Jews. Jerusalem was the modern Nineveh; a living parallel to Jonah, greater than Jonah himself, was predicting its destruction. Jonah proph-

esied a destruction in forty days; forty years elapsed between our Lord's ministry and the destruction of Jerusalem. The days and nights during which Jonah was in the whale's belly, and his coming forth alive at the end of them, were typical of our Lord's being in the grave, and rising again the third day. This rising of Jesus should be for His cotemporaries a sign, but not from heaven; from the depth of the earth would this sign be given, yet it served for the condemnation of that unbelieving people. Christ's prophecy of His burial, after the manner of the swallowing of Jonah, was in itself a miracle of foreknowledge, and so a proof of His Messiahship.

31. "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth, to hear the wisdom of Solomon: and behold, a greater than Solomon is here."—1 Kings x. 1.

The allusion here is to the queen of Sheba. (1 Kings x. 1.) Her name is not known at all. *Sheba* (or *Saba*, of profane history) is a province in the northern part of Arabia, between the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. It was probably settled by Sheba, a descendant of Shem, and the inhabitants are called Sabæans. (Job i. 15.) *For she came from the utmost parts of the earth*—a hyperbole, found also in the best Greek writers, for a great distance. It may have been intended to suggest a difference of race and of religion. The queen may well be supposed to have had some traditional knowledge of true religion, and, in the commercial intercourse of her country with that of the Hebrews, might have heard much of the wisdom and piety of Solomon, and to see and converse with him she undertook a journey from what was then regarded as the uttermost parts of the earth. *To hear the wisdom of Solomon*. Solomon was the wisest man, and one of the greatest kings that ever lived on the earth. He exceeded the Orientals and Egyptians in wisdom and prudence, and his reputation spread through all nations. He composed, or collected, three thousand proverbs, and one thousand and five canticles. He was the greatest philosopher of antiquity, as well in natural history as in morals, being acquainted with the nature of plants and trees, from the cedar on Lebanon to the hyssop on the wall; also

of beasts, of birds, of reptiles, of fishes. He was favored with a remarkable promise of the Divine favor. (1 Kings iii. 12-14.) *And behold, a greater than Solomon is here.* In order to feel the power of this comparison, we must realize to ourselves what is written in the Old Testament regarding Solomon. (1 Chron. xxii. 9, 10; 1 Kings ii. 19, 27, 31, iii. 1, 9, 16-28, iii. 12-14; 2 Chron. ix. 29.) Here, and in the end of the next verse, the Greek word translated "a greater," is literally, "a greater thing." May it not be that the "thing" referred to is "the sign?" There is One here who is a sign of far greater moment than either Solomon or Jonah. The point in which the queen of the South surpassed the Jews of our Lord's time and put them to shame, was "faith." She had faith enough to come a long journey to hear a wise man. The Jews, on the other hand, had "the wisdom of God" actually in the midst of them, and yet they would not believe.

32. The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas is here.—Jonah iii. 5.

Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian empire. It was a very ancient city. It was built by Nimrod. (Gen. x. 11.) Its name denotes "the habitation of Nin," which seems to have been the proper name for that "rebel," as Nimrod signifies. It was, as we learn from Jonah (iii.) and profane authors, a city of nineteen miles in length and eleven in breadth, and from forty-eight to sixty miles in circumference. It contained a population of about six hundred thousand. It was surrounded by a wall one hundred feet high, and wide enough for three carriages to go abreast, and was fortified by fifteen hundred towers of two hundred feet in height. *Rise up in the judgment* does not mean to rise from the dead at the day of judgment, but stand at the bar to be tried. *With*—not against, but at the same time, or in company. *Condemn it*—not in words, but by example. *For they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold, a greater than Jonas is here.* The point here in which the Ninevites surpassed the Jews, and put them to shame, was repentance. They had among them for a short time a prophet, and a very weak and erring prophet, too. Yet they

repented and turned to God. The Jews had among them the mightiest and most faithful preacher that ever warned a people, and yet they would not repent. The sins of unbelief and impenitence are exceedingly aggravated from the means afforded by God to bring men to faith and obedience.

33. No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. Matt. v. 15; Mark iv. 21; Luke viii. 16.

This verse is very similar to Matt. v. 15, vi. 22, 23. The saying is a weighty one, repeated at various times for the sake of emphasis and illustration. In the present instance it may have been used for a two-fold purpose. 1. As a rebuke to the unbelieving Jews, who had the light, but would not use it. Our Lord intimates that if He worked a miracle among such an obstinate people, who were determined to disbelieve every evidence of His Messiahship, He should act as a man who lighted a candle, and then covered it with a bushel, which must prevent the accomplishment of the end for which it was lighted. 2. As a warning to our Lord's disciples, who believed in the light, that they ought not to conceal the light, but display it to the world. "Men light candles. God has lighted you for His candles to the world. Men are not so foolish as to light a candle to be covered up. So God is not so unwise as to light you for concealment. You are lighted that you may illuminate." *Candle*. A word denoting any movable artificial light, whether candle, lamp or lantern, though the first is entitled to the preference from long familiarity. *Secret place*, literally, in a *crypt, vault, a dark hole or corner*. *Bushel*. The fact that this measure really came nearer to our *peck* than our *bushel*, can have no effect upon the meaning of the passage, which would be the same if the word used had been *basket, box or bed* (as it is in Mark iv. 21). *A candlestick*, or, more exactly, the candlestick, i. e., the one found, of course, in every house. *Light*. Reference is here had both to the beauty and use of the light, a two-fold reason why it should not be concealed in the way here mentioned.

The truths of the Gospel are not to be

concealed nor held captive in unrighteousness, but the people are to be instructed in them. The Scripture, and particularly the Gospel, is our candle. It is the Spirit of God which has lighted and placed it on the candlestick of the Church, that the light of it might be seen by all. The neglect of this light will be a heavy charge against many at the last day. To forbid or discourage the reading of the Bible, or to oppose its circulation, is a heinous sin.

34. *The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when *thine eye* is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. 35. Take heed therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

*Matt. vi. 22. *Ps. lxxxi. 12; Prov. xxviii. 22; Jer. v. 21; Rom. xi. 8, 10; 2. Cor. iv. 4.

The Saviour fears that the here-indicated darkening is already found in part in His hearers, and warns them, therefore, to look to it that it does not become a total darkening. *Therefore*, since the safety and the comfort of the whole frame thus depend upon the singleness and clearness of the vision. *The light which is in thee*—not the light in general, but that part of the animal economy by which its blessings are secured to the whole body. *Darkness*—the correlative of *light*, and used in the same way, not to denote absolute privation, but any obscurity, caused by the diseased state of the organ. An irregular intention corrupts the whole action. A false light causes a man to fall into abundance of faults. It is one of the most dangerous for us to be unwilling to examine, according to Christ's direction, whether that by which we are led be not rather darkness than light.

36. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

The meaning of this verse appears to be as follows: "If the eye of thy soul is thoroughly healthy, and thy heart thoroughly right in the sight of God, so that thy whole character is enlightened and influenced by it, then shall thy whole character shine after the manner of a candle which enlightens thee by its shining. Thou shalt not only have light for thyself, but reflect light on others." The second expression, "full of light," should be read in close connection with the likeness of the candle which immediately follows. If thou art really full of light, thou shalt be like a lighted candle on a

candlestick. Thou shalt be a light to the world. The doctrine that is contrary to the Gospel may say, *Ignorance is the mother of devotion*, but Christ shows that there can be no devotion without heavenly light. Ignorance is the mother of superstition, but with this the heavenly *light* has nothing to do.

37. ¶ And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in and sat down to meat.

It is not known who this Pharisee was. It seems clear that he was not a disciple of Christ. *Besought him*, doubtless, in full concert with the set mentioned in verse 53. The invitation was given, not by interrupting the Saviour, but when He had spoken. *Dine*. The Jews made but *two* meals in the day; the first may be called their *breakfast* or their *dinner*, because it was *both*, and was but a slight meal. Their chief meal was their *supper*, after the heat of the day was over, and the same was the principal meal among the Greeks and Romans. As this was not the chief meal, it would appear that the disposition of the entertainer toward Christ was not by any means friendly. *Went in*. The form of expression conforms to the fact that He occupied no time in ablutions, between His entering the house and reclining at the table. *Sat down, lay down or reclined*, as was the custom of the ancients at their meal.

The conduct of our Lord, on this occasion, as on all others, is meant to be an example. Christ is our pattern as well as our propitiation. There are evidently times and occasions when the servant of Christ must mix with the ungodly and the children of this world, but he should converse with them with prudence and circumspection. There may be seasons when it may be a duty to hold social intercourse with them, to accept their invitations and sit down at their tables. Nothing, of course, must induce the Christian to be a partaker in the sins or frivolous amusements of the world. But he must not be uncourteous.

38. And when the Pharisee saw *it*, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.—^bMatt. vii. 3.

Perhaps Christ omitted washing (Mark vii. 3), because He had just accepted the invitation, or because He was wearied by

His work. It is more probable, however, that, knowing that the Pharisees imagined that washing of their hands before dinner rendered them holy, He purposely neglected to observe this custom.

39. "And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness." 40. "Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within also?" 41. "But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you."

"Matt. xxiii. 5. "Titus i. 15. "Isa. lviii. 7; Dan. iv. 27; chap. xii. 33.

Ye Pharisees. The class of Pharisees to which the host belonged. The figure here is very simple. It is that of a person who takes great care to make the outside of the vessels used at meals thoroughly clean, while he knowingly allows the inside of those vessels, with which, of course, the food he eats must be brought into contact, to remain foul and uncleansed. This is altogether different from "the form of godliness." There is a satisfaction with inward corruption, only so that the exterior is fair and plausible. *Your inward part, i. e., your heart:* the figure which began with the *outside of the cup and platter* is here dropped, and the heart or internal moral state is substituted for what, if the metaphor had been continued, would have been the *inside of the cup. Is full, literally, loaded. Ravening* is the same word rendered in Matthew, *extortion. Wickedness.* The word thus rendered is a general term for *excess*, found in the parallel passage in Matthew. Who can say that he is entirely free from this Pharisaical hypocrisy? Where is that person to be found who, by the inward purity of the motives of his heart, takes as much care not to offend the eyes of God as he does not to displease men by his outward behavior?

Ye fools, &c. The literal meaning of the Greek word translated "fools," is, "persons without mind or understanding." It is the same word that Paul used. (1 Cor. xv. 36.) Since God has created the inside as well as the outside, one as much as the other must be held holy; and it is not only evil, but foolish, to wish to separate, even in thought, to say nothing of act, that which, in the nature of things, is absolutely inseparable.

But rather give alms, &c. Some hold this to be ironical. Give alms, forsooth! and that is to make compensation for your ex-

tortions, a purification of all your guilt! If this is the right interpretation, as it seems to be, of course our Lord intended to cast no slur upon alms-giving, but upon using our alms-giving as a cover for sin.

42. "But woe unto you, Pharisees! For ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."—Matt. xxiii. 23.

Woe is a word of solemn denunciation of punishment. It implies, as here uttered, that calamities of the most awful nature are impending over its guilty objects from the Divine justice. *Tithe.* The law of *tithes* is found in Lev. xxvii. 31. The "tithe" of a thing is its tenth part. Of the yearly products of the land of the Israelites, the first fruits were deducted; out of the rest, the tenth part was taken for the Levites. (Num. xviii. 21.) *Mint and rue.* The herbs mentioned in this verse correspond mainly to those of the same name in Europe and America. The Pharisees pretended to such excessive scrupulosity about giving a tenth of all their possessions to the service of the temple and to the maintenance of the ceremonial law, that they were not content with tithing their corn, but even tithed their insignificant garden herbs. Yet all this time they *passed over*, did not enforce, or pay regard to, justice and equity toward all mankind and real love to God. *These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.* It is an admirable proof of the heavenly composure and impartiality of our Lord, that, whilst not abrogating the fulfillment of minor duties, or declaring it unimportant, He, on the other hand, permits and commands it, but then also insists on the performance of the higher duties. (Comp. Matt. xxiii. 23.)

The neglect of the distinction between that which is great and that which is small, first and second, essential and non-essential, has been the source of enormous evil in every age of the Church. It is a distinction which the never-dying school of the Pharisees is unable to draw. There are many now who are enthusiasts in the secondary things of religion, who know little or nothing of the great practical duties of humility, charity, meekness, spiritual-mindedness, Bible reading, private devotion, and separation from the world.

43. ^aWoe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.—^aMatt. xxiii. 6, xii. 38, 39.

Behind the pulpit, in the Jewish synagogues, were ranged high seats of honor, "chief seats," where the scribes and Pharisees loved to sit facing the people. They also loved *greetings in the markets*, that they might pervert the ordinary tokens of social respect to the purpose of establishing an abject submission on the part of the people, and a spirit of man-worship. Pride does not consist in being first or chief, but in loving the esteem and distinction which attend upon the first place, and seeking the advantages which accompany it. It is a misfortune to be exposed to them, because it is very rare not to be corrupted by them.

44. ^bWoe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.
^bMatt. xxiii. 27. ^cPsa. v. 9.

The allusion here is to the notion which existed among the Jews, that by walking over a grave a man contracted ceremonial uncleanness. And so here the hypocrite is represented as the means of defilement and pollution to others. Passers-by become, before they are aware, infected by him, and allured to evil. Thus Jeroboam set up the calves at Dan and Bethel, and said, "These be thy gods, O Israel," but his heart-purpose was simply, by this outward respect for God, to secure himself, as he thought, in the kingdom, and so, we are told (2 Kings x. 29), he "made Israel to sin." It is a dreadful judgment on hypocrites when God suffers them to conceal their corruption according to their hearts' desire. Their being exposed to public shame would be a step toward their conversion.

45. ^dThen answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also.

One of the *lawyers*, or doctors of the law. These Jewish lawyers, as our translators call them (though the term *lawyer* naturally suggests to us a modern idea of an office which did not at this time exist among the Jews), were the most considerable species of scribes, who applied themselves peculiarly to study and explain the law. Probably some of them were Pharisees, but it was not essential to their office that they should be so. This man considered himself and his brethren as superior to all

censure or reproof, and therefore wondered that Jesus should join the scribes with the Pharisees, in the preceding woe, and charged Him with reproaching so honorable a body.

46. And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.—^eMatt. xxiii. 4.

These words are a striking instance of our Lord's boldness in rebuking sinners. They added to the ceremonies of the law others of their own invention, which were not only burdensome and oppressive, but had neither reason, expediency, nor revelation to countenance them. Neither would they lighten them to those over whom they had power, not even touch them, that is, either to modify or repeal them, when they saw them to be burdensome and grievous. They would come in with *both hands* to dispense with a command of God, but not with a *finger* to mitigate the rigor of the unauthorized traditional observances which they imposed.

True charity is compassionate, willing to take upon itself the burden of others, and far from laying upon them one which is oppressive; whereas, hypocrisy aims at nothing but gaining to itself honor from the austerities which it imposes on others, without consulting their strength. Here is a word in season to all teachers of young people, masters of families, heads of households, fathers and mothers, and especially to all ministers of the Gospel, to beware of the inconsistency of telling others to aim at a standard which they do not aim at themselves.

47. ^fWoe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets; and your fathers killed them. 48. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. 49. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they shall slay and persecute. 50. That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation: 51. ^gFrom the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

^kMatt. xxiii. 29. ^{*}Joh xv. 6. [†]Prov. viii. 1: 1 Cor. i. 30. [‡]Matt. xxiii. 34. [¶]Gen. iv. 8. ^{||}2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21.

We are not to understand this as though any part of the guilt lay in the building or adorning the tombs of the prophets, considered in itself, but in their falseness in giving this testimony of respect to the prophets, whilst they were actuated by the spirit, and following the example of their

persecutors and murderers, insomuch that they appeared to erect those sepulchres, not to do honor to God's prophets, but to serve as monuments of the success of their progenitors in destroying them.

The word "*truly*" is a particle, denoting that this verse is an inference from the assertion contained in the preceding one. If the persons referred to had been of a better sort than their fathers, they would have erected no monuments of a damnable deed, which ought rather to be buried in the dust of oblivion.

It is a disputed question what the words, "*said the wisdom of God*" mean. Some regard them as merely referring to the wisdom of God speaking, in 2 Chron. xxiv. 18-22, of which Jesus here gives an amplification in the same spirit of Divine or avenging wisdom. They are, however, generally understood as denoting Christ Himself; and, as the words which follow are not found in the Old Testament, we may suppose that He meant, as the Word and Wisdom of God (1 Cor. i. 24), immediately to reveal to the hearers His wise counsels and purposes respecting them. In the parallel passage of Matthew (xxiii. 34), our Lord evidently spoke in His own person: "Wherefore, behold I send," &c. *Prophets and Apostles*. Prophets or preachers (for as the word of God is a great prophecy of the world to come, so he who preaches it truly prophesies), to reprove the people for their sins, and warn them of the judgments of God, and who should prove themselves Apostles, or messengers, sent from heaven, by signs, and wonders, and gifts of the Holy Ghost. Christ thus gave His enemies to understand that, though they builded the sepulchres of the prophets, yet such was their hostility to those, in their *own day*, that came to them in the *spirit* and *power* of those prophets, that as soon as they had an opportunity they would show that hostility by slaying and persecuting them. A large share of the first preachers, thinkers and writers of the Church, were martyrs.

That. In order that—a statement of the inevitableness of the result. *The blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation*. It may justly aggravate the

guilt of a criminal, if, though he have seen a long series of misdeeds punished, yet he has not even suffered himself to be deterred from similar delinquencies; and this, as it evinces a most incorrigible mind, so it is worthy of *severer* punishment. *This generation*. Both here and in the following verse, it seems probable that the word "generation" means nation or people, as in Matt. xxiv. 34. It is certain that the greater part of the men who were alive when our Lord said these things must have been dead forty years after, when the great inquisition for blood took place, at the destruction of Jerusalem.

From *Abel*, who was the first martyr. Abel is counted among the prophets, because he prefigured Jesus Christ by his innocence and death, as Cain did Judas, &c. *Blood of Zacharias*—the last of the prophets, whose martyrdom is, according to the arrangement of the Hebrew canon, recorded in the Old Testament. Jesus here couples the first and last of Old Testament martyrs. *This generation*—nation or people.

The number of those who have been put to death for the faith of Christ in every age of the world is exceedingly great. Thousands of men and women have laid down their lives rather than deny their Saviour, and have shed their blood for the truth. At the time they died they seemed to have no helper. The frequent triumphing of the wicked is perplexing. The frequent depression of the godly is a problem that appears hard to solve. But it shall be made clear on the judgment day. The great white throne and the books of God shall put all things in their right places. Then shall all the world see, that however they may die, "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." (Ps. cxvi. 15.)

52. "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye enter not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye ²bindered."

²Matt. xxiii. 13. ²Or, *forbade*.

Lawyers. (See on verse 45.) *Key of knowledge*. The doctors of the law are said to have been distinguished by the symbolic figure of a *key*, intimating that their proper office was to open and explain the Scripture, and to admit men into the knowledge of God, and of His truth

and will. The meaning would then be, "Ye have been by profession the instructors of the Jews in spiritual knowledge. Ye have, so to speak, carried the keys. Yet ye made no use of them yourselves, and allowed nobody else to use them. By your traditions ye have taken away the true method of interpreting the prophecies; ye have given a wrong meaning to those Scriptures which speak of the kingdom of the Messiah, and the people are thereby hindered from entering into it."

The sin here denounced is awfully common. It is the sin of the Romish priest, who forbids the poor man to read his Bible; of the unconverted Protestant minister, who sneers at the idea of conversion; of the ungodly, thoughtless husband, who dislikes his wife becoming "serious;" and of the worldly-minded mother, who cannot bear the idea of her daughter thinking of spiritual things, and giving up the gayeties and follies of the world. All such are bringing down on themselves our Lord's emphatic "wo."

53. And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things: 54. Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.—Mark xii. 13.

Began to urge him vehemently—they began to be furious. As they found themselves completely unmasked, they were indignant, and therefore questioned Jesus on a variety of points, and hoped, by the multitude and impertinence of their questions,

to puzzle or irritate Him, so as to induce Him to *speak rashly*, that they might find some ground of accusation against Him. The Greek word here rendered *provoke*, is applied to the practice among teachers of requiring the pupil to speak and answer accurately from memory. Hence it means that the scribes and Pharisees *put prepared questions*, and *required immediate answers*, in order to draw out expressions of hostility to Moses and the traditions, to the temple, or to the Jewish nation, or to Cæsar, so as to excite the hierarchy, the people, or the civil authorities against Him. *To speak of many things*, literally, to *extemporize*, that something inconsiderately uttered might be caught up. *Laying wait for him*—laying snares as for an animal, *seeking to catch*, or lay hold of, as in hunting, *that they might accuse him*, either to the civil authorities, as a seditious person, or to the people, as one who was a transgressor of the Mosaic law.

There is hardly an instance to be found, where hostility to Jesus appeared in a more deep-seated and diabolical form, than on this occasion. The vileness of the conduct of His enemies is enhanced by the fact that their efforts to effect His ruin were put forth while He sat at the table of one of their number, who, we can scarcely doubt, invited Him with hostile and crafty intent, and who was among the foremost to find wherewith to accuse Him.

1. What did one of our Lord's disciples say unto Him as He was praying? 2. What is said about the "Lord's Prayer?" 3. Explain the parable in verses 5-10. 4. What encouragement to pray does Jesus give us? 5. What charge was brought against Him as He was casting out a devil? 6. How did He reply? 7. What did Christ say to the people when they were "gathered thick together?" 8. Who invited Jesus to dine? 9. What objection was made to Him? 10. How did He answer it? 11. What effect was produced by His reply?

CHAPTER XII.

1 *Christ preacheth to his disciples to avoid hypocrisy and fearfulness in publishing his doctrine: 13 warneth the people to beware of covetousness, by the parable of the rich man who set up greater barns. 22 We must not be over careful of earthly things, 31 but seek the kingdom of God. 33 give alms, 36 be ready at a knock to open to our Lord whenever he cometh. 41 Christ's ministers are to see to their charge, 49 and look for persecution. 51 The people must take this time of grace 58 because it is a fearful thing to die without reconciliation.*

We have lately read the Saviour's warnings to the scribes and Pharisees, now we find Him addressing His own disciples. Many of the sayings here joined in a connected discourse by Luke, are related by Matthew as spoken on other occasions. These will be noted in their appropriate place.

IN the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, inasmuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, *Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.*

^aMatt. xvi. 6; Mark viii. 15. ^bMatt. xvi. 12.

In the mean time, while our Lord was reclining at the table of the Pharisee, and while the Pharisees were occupying themselves with ensnaring questions and plotting. *Trode one upon another.* The crowd was so great, that in their eagerness to see and hear Jesus, they well nigh trampled one another down. *Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.* The disciples doubtless were often exposed to the influence of the conversations of the Pharisees when our Lord was not present. They would, of course, stand on their guard against persons openly vicious, but they needed to be cautioned against Pharisees, who were great pretenders to devotion. *Leaven*, here, is used to denote false doctrine, because it spreads, works secretly and silently, and insinuates itself into and changes the whole character. Those who come under its influence are puffed up with pride, embittered with malice, and their service is unacceptable to God. *Hypocrisy* was the great sin of the Pharisees, the leaven of which permeated and converted to its own vile and odious nature their hearts, lives and conduct. Pharisaism lives still. Its principles are deeply engrained in human nature. It shows itself in attention to the *outward* in religion, whilst the *inward* is overlooked or despised. Let us *beware* of it, as a most

subtle and pernicious influence. Let us be real and true in our Christianity.

2. ^cFor there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. ^dMatt. x. 26; Mark iv. 22; Luke viii. 17.

Here our Lord suggests a powerful motive to guard the heart against hypocrisy—the discoveries and exposures of the judgment day. *Then* all that has been hid will be known. Not only will the mask be torn from the deliberate hypocrite, but the veil which has been cast over any part of the conduct of true believers will be lifted up. *Nothing*, good as well as evil, that which is greatest as well as that which is least. (Eccl. xii. 14; Rom. ii. 16.) In vain, when we are about to commit a sin, do we shun the sight of men, since we cannot possibly avoid that of our Judge. The darkness of the night, and the light of the day, to Him are both alike.

3. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets, shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops.

Closets—any close room for stealth, or chamber for privacy. *Shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops.* “At the present day,” says a modern traveler through Palestine, “local governors in country districts cause their commands to be thus published. Their proclamations are generally made in the evening, after the people have returned from their labors in the field. The public crier ascends the highest roof at hand, and lifts up his voice in a long-drawn call upon all faithful subjects to give ear and obey. He then proceeds to announce, in a set form, the will of their master, and demands obedience thereto.” The more a sinner endeavors to hide himself here, with the greater shame and confusion shall he be covered hereafter in the sight of all the world. That which constitutes the peace and satisfaction of a good man, is that he does nothing in secret of which he need be ashamed at the day of judgment, and that he shuns the eyes of men on no other account but only that he may not receive from them his reward.

4. ^eAnd I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. ^fIsa. li. 7, 8, 12, 13; Jer. i. 8; Matt. x. 28. ^gJohn xv. 14, 15.

How tenderly Jesus addresses those who would be called to suffer for His sake! *I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body.* He does not promise His disciples to preserve them from death, but He does promise to keep them from hell. *And after that have no more that they can do.* From these words it follows that the body may be dead, and the soul alive. Men can murder the body, yet the soul is still alive. *Body—soul.** We have here the two parts of man's compounded nature placed in contrast.

Fear him, as opposed to the sinful slavish fear of man, which was just condemned. The holy, awful and prudential fear of the omnipotent God is commended. The persons on whom this fear is enjoined are disciples and ministers, all the friends of Christ. They not only may, but ought to fear Him, not only for His greatness and goodness, but also for His punitive justice, as having ability and authority, *after he hath killed*, that is, after death has been inflicted, *to cast into hell*, or, as in Matthew (x. 28), “to destroy both soul and body in hell.” In these last words our Lord does not say *kill* both soul and body. To destroy is not to kill, still less to annihilate, but to *ruin*. Our Lord's words teach, not the dismissal of the soul from *existence*, but its catastrophe and ruin *in existence*. And this is an evil, a destruction which we are bound to *fear*, as a possible reality beyond our bodily death.

Into hell. Hell is represented by *Sheol* in the Old, and by *Hades* in the New Testament. The word is used by the sacred writers in several senses, which it is important to distinguish. The Hebrew word, translated *hell* in our Bible, sometimes means simply the *grave*, the receptacle of the dead, or the place of departed spirits, as in Job xi. 7-9; Ps. xvi. 10, cxxxix. 8; Isa. v. 14, xiv. 9; Amos ix. 2, 3; Acts. ii. 31; Rev. xx. 14. In other passages it denotes the place of future punishment, as in Ps. ix. 17; Prov. v. 5, ix. 18, xxiii. 14, which punishment consists, in part at least, in the eternal separation of the soul from God and from the presence of His glory, and in the suffering of inconceivable anguish and remorse forever and ever. In the New Testament, hell, as the place of final

punishment for sinners, is more distinctively indicated by the term *Gehenna*, or *valley of Hinnom* (2 Chron. xxxiii. 6), which is the word translated “hell” in the verse now before us; also in Matt. v. 22, 29, 30, x. 28, xviii. 9, xxiii. 15, 33; Mark ix. 43, 45, 47; James iii. 6. It is also distinctively indicated by such phrases as “the place of torment” (Luke xvi. 28); “everlasting fire” (Matt. xxv. 41); “the hell of fire,” “where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” (Mark ix. 44.)

6. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? 7. But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.—See Matt. x. 29.

The Saviour, in these verses, gives a third reason to His disciples for not shrinking from the execution of their great commission on account of the dangers which attended it. Not only was the power of their enemies restricted to the body, but their very bodies would be under God's protection. The little value of the sparrows is indicated by the market price, two being sold for an *assarion*, a coin intermediate in value between one cent and an English penny. The argument is this, that as God's protective care extends to the most insignificant and worthless of the feathered tribe, it must, and does, extend to man, and will especially extend to those who have been honored with a most important mission. *And not one of them is forgotten before God.* God's providential care extends over the minutest of His creatures. As nothing was too little for Him to create, so nothing is too little for Him to preserve. Of the providence of God over the least things, the heathen philosophers had no conception. They maintained that the gods regarded the universe in general, but not particular persons and things. *But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.* This is a strong proverbial expression for minute knowledge and exact care. The hairs are numbered for the purpose of protection and careful preservation, so that if one be wanting, it is missed and looked for. It would be impossible to frame in human language a more forcible description of unerring oversight and sleepless care. God's providence exalts, instead of debasing Him. He acts in

everything without growing weary, and is sufficient for everything, without multiplying Himself. *Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.* Here is a continuation of the argument from less to greater. *Thomson*, in his "Land and Book," speaking of the habits of this little bird, says: "When we see their countless numbers, and the eagerness with which they are destroyed as a worthless nuisance, we can better appreciate the assurance that our Heavenly Father, who takes care of them, so that not one can fall to the ground without His notice, will surely take care of us, who are of more value than many sparrows." *Ye are of more value.* None can estimate the value of a soul, for which Christ has given His blood and life. Did the poet intend to contradict Christ when he said:

"He sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A HERO perish, or a SPARROW fall."

How cold and meager is this shallow, deistical saying! That is, a *sparrow* is of as much worth in the sight of God, who regards (if we may believe the poet) things only in *general*, as an *immortal soul*, purchased by the sacrifice of Christ!

8. "Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: 9. But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God."
Matt. x. 32; Mark viii. 38; 2 Tim. ii. 12; 1 John ii. 23.

Whosoever, whether of yourselves who preach, or of those who hear your preaching. *Confess me*, that is, own Christ as Lord and Master, *before men*, in this present life. *Him shall the Son of man also confess.* The reciprocal act here ascribed to Christ is that of owning as His Apostle, disciple or follower. *Before the angels of God.* The time here referred to, as well as in the next verse, must doubtless be the day of judgment. The angels shall be specially employed on that day in gathering God's people, and separating the wicked from among them. *But he that denieth me before men*, more literally, "he that has denied," that is, disowned, *shall be disowned before the angels of God.* Let it here be observed: 1. That not to confess Christ is in His account to deny Him, and to be ashamed of Him. 2. That whosoever shall deny or be ashamed of Christ, either in His person, in His Gospel, or in His members, for any fear or favor of man, shall with shame be

disowned and eternally rejected by Him. Christ may be denied three ways: doctrinally, by an erroneous and heretical judgment; verbally, by oral expressions; vitally, by a wicked and unholy life. Those are guilty of this sin, who, from unbelief or indolence, or love of the world, or fear of man, shrink from confessing Him as their Saviour and their King.

10. "And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven.—Matt. xii. 31, 32; Mark iii. 28; 1 John v. 16.

The distinction here made seems entirely unaccountable, if made between the second and third persons of the Godhead, simply as such, without anything to qualify or specify the statement. This difficulty disappears, however, on observing that the person mentioned in the first clause is not the eternal Word or Son of God, but the Son of man, and this describes the Saviour in His humiliation, in the form of a servant, as He was while resident on earth. To *speak a word* against Him while His Godhead was thus veiled and as it were in abeyance, was a very different offense from *blaspheming against the Holy Ghost*. The sin of thus speaking against the Son of man was committed by those who did not know Christ to be the Messiah in the days of His humiliation, and did not receive Him, believe Him, or obey Him, but ignorantly rejected and crucified Him, and many of whom, so sinning, were pardoned, we cannot doubt, as, for example, on the day of Pentecost, after Peter's preaching.

The original meaning of the word *blaspheme* is simply to *reproach* or *slander*. At the present time it is applied almost exclusively in reference to the Supreme Being. It may, therefore, in general, be defined "to utter a presumptuous insult toward God." But as such a sin may be as truly committed in *thought* or in *act*, as in *speech*, it may rather be defined the *offering* a presumptuous insult to God. It is a great sin. Humanly speaking, there may be greater *crimes*, but there can be no greater *sin*. This sin of blasphemy *against the Holy Ghost*, regarded by Him as an *insult to Himself*, it is declared, *shall not be forgiven*. He resents the insult with a justice that knows no mercy. This sin was committed by those who, after the

day of Pentecost, and the outpouring of the Spirit, and the full publication of the Gospel, persisted in unbelief and obstinate impenitence, and were given over to a reprobate mind. These especially grieved the Spirit, and resisted the ministration of the Holy Ghost. That this was the state of many of the Jews, appears from several places in the Acts, and especially Acts xxviii. 25-28. See also 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16. This sin was the sin of the Pharisees who maliciously disavowed, blasphemed and resisted the operation of the Holy Ghost, at the very moment when they were most fully convinced that in so doing they were fighting against God. And it may now be committed by any one, in continuing to oppose the Gospel from deliberate malice, while at the same time the Holy Ghost has convinced the mind of its truth. The sin, therefore, to which our Lord here refers, seems to be the sin of deliberately neglecting God's truth, while the truth is clearly known with the head, and deliberately choosing sin and the world. It is a combination of light in the understanding, and determined wickedness in the will. *It shall not be forgiven.* So says He whose prerogative it is to forgive. Why it is so is sufficiently answered by the reply, because God has willed it so. No sin can be forgiven without repentance, but repentance is the gift of God, and as the blasphemer against the Holy Ghost drives from him the only person who could "give repentance" (Acts v. 31), he seals himself up, under final and total apostasy, until the day of doom. Such a man, indeed, will never seek to have his sins forgiven. This is exactly the root of his awful disease. He might be pardoned, but he will not seek to be pardoned. He is Gospel-hardened, and "twice dead." His conscience is "scared with a hot iron." (1 Tim. iv. 2.) That those who are troubled with fear that they have committed the unpardonable sin, are just the persons who have not committed it, is the judgment of all the soundest divines.

11. ¶ And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: 12. For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

1 Matt. x. 19, Mark xiii. 11; Luke xxi. 14.

Our Lord here informs His Apostles

that, for preaching His doctrine and professing His religion, they should be brought before all sorts of magistrates, and into all kinds of courts; but counsels them, when they should be thus brought, not to be anxiously thoughtful, or solicitously careful what they should say, for it should be suggested to them by the Holy Ghost what they should speak in that hour. The assistance promised should be so complete, that they would be mere instruments or organs of the Spirit. *How* relates to the form, and *what* to the substance, of their public defenses or apologies. Christ does not forbid all forethoughts what to say, but only distrustful thoughts; that they should not, like orators or advocates, strive to make studied pleas or rhetorical apologies for themselves. This is so far from being a promise of Divine assistance to unprepared and off-hand preachers, that it is not given even to the twelve indefinitely or forever, but expressly limited to one particular emergency, not only by the first words of verse 11 (*when they bring you*), but also by the words, *in the same hour* (verse 12). This promise gives the highest authority to all the apostolical defenses upon record, and precludes the supposition of unhallowed anger in such cases as that of Paul's reply to Ananias. (Acts. xxiii. 3.) The doctrine of inspiration is here stated in its strongest form. In the Apostles, in the moment of trial, the Holy Spirit would reside, and the words they spake would be His words. And if they were furnished with this inspiration in their momentary times of trial, how can it be doubted that, in recording their words for ages for the instruction of the Church and the conversion of the world, they should possess the same high qualification?

13. ¶ And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

One of the company. It seems that a contention had arisen between himself and his brother concerning their proper shares of their common inheritance, and he wished the matter to be adjusted. There was nothing sinful in this request that Jesus should act as an umpire or arbitrator, for if the half of the inheritance belonged to this man, or was bequeathed

to him by a legal and proper will, it was his duty, as it was his right, to require that half. (1 Cor. vi. 1-6.) The man's sin, therefore, lay not in asking for his rights, but in interrupting so importunately a discourse so precious, so beautiful, so instructive to the multitude, with a petition, purely, intensely and exclusively selfish.

14. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?—John xviii. 36.

Man. The word in the original has a shade of disrespect, there being another word for *man*, as a term of respect. *Who made me a judge or a divider?* This reply of our Lord is generally referred by expositors to Ex. ii. 14. The word *divider* is probably explanatory of *judge*, which means a *judge* or *umpire* to settle disputes. *Over you*, over mankind, men in general. *Who made me*, &c. Who constituted me a civil ruler, to judge or arbitrate between men, in regard to worldly matters of dispute? This is not my office. I was not sent into the world on such a mission. It is undoubtedly the duty of ministers of the Gospel to mark our Lord's conduct in this case, and as far as possible to walk in His steps. To this they are urged by the shortness and uncertainty of life, the state of the world, the worth of souls, and the immense importance and arduousness of their work. "Give thyself wholly to these things," is a sentence which they should never forget. It was eminently characteristic of the Lord Jesus Christ, during His ministry on earth, that He was a reformer of principles, a purifier of hearts; not a distributor anew of the mechanical and civil arrangements of society. He undertook to change men's hearts, not their circumstances, or rather to change their circumstances by first changing and ameliorating their hearts. He worked from the inward to the outward. He did not interfere with the laws, or the arrangements, or the polity of the world, but endeavored to implant in men's souls living truths, living principles, which should germinate and grow until the whole world should be overspread with that kingdom whose great elements are righteousness, and truth, and peace, and joy.

15. And he said unto them, Take heed and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

†1 Tim. 6 7, &c.

He said unto them, i. e., the multitude around Him, be on your guard against covetousness. The word in the original signifies *greediness, grasping selfishness*. It is derived from a concrete noun, denoting *one who has, or claims more than his share, one who has never enough*. Covetousness is avarice, the insatiable desire of more, springing out of ungodly love and too high an estimation of earthly things. It is not what a man has that makes covetousness, but it is the hunger after what he has not, and the concentrating all his thoughts upon it, and drawing from it the main elements of his joy, his comfort, his satisfaction, his repose. The desire of having wealth, in order to enjoy it, or the desire of having and adding to our wealth, in order to have more influence or more power, not to do more good—this is covetousness. *For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.* Christ here denies that our life consists in abundance, thus indicating the internal origin and fountain-head from which the mad desire of possessing issues. The word translated *life*, is to be taken in its two-fold meaning, according to which it marks a happy state of being, in time and in eternity, so that the sense is, riches by no means secure for us, of themselves, a life of satisfaction upon earth, nor do they insure us of eternal blessedness, or, real well-being is no necessary consequence of the possession of riches. It is not for ministers to meddle with the partition of estates, or with the differences in families, but they ought to teach the rules of true religion, and the means of avoiding all injustice. This vice still proceeds from covetousness, and therefore this is the thing which must be rooted up.

Covetousness is wide-spread and a fearful sin. It estranges from God, by putting something else in the heart in place of Him. It leads to a suspension of that Divine influence which is essential to nearness with God. It cripples confidence in God. More than any other sin, it *grows* upon men. It dishonors Christ. What must men of the world think of Christ's spirit, as they see it displayed by a covetous Christian? It injures the cause of Christ, being like a moth fretting a garment,

which, however costly and beautiful it may be, will, by degrees, be destroyed. Of all sins, it most assimilates the soul to Satan, whose heart is covetous, whose desires are inordinate, yet all terminate in himself, irrespective of the glory of God, thus producing the misery of this great but fallen spirit. It would be vain to decide positively which is the most common sin in the world, but it would be safe to say that there is none to which the heart is more prone than covetousness. The warning of Jesus in this verse is a word more in season for the members of Christian Churches than an exhortation to beware of theft.

16. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

This parable springs from the untimely and intensely earthly interruption of our Lord's discourse by one of the company that heard it. Thus the Saviour makes the covetousness, as well as the wrath of man, to praise him, and restrains the remainder thereof. *A certain rich man.* His name is not given. It is not a sin to be rich. We read of Gaius, who exercised hospitality to the saints. Joseph of Arimathea was a wealthy man, and yet he was a good man. *The ground* may denote a large territory, or property in land. *Brought forth plentifully.* The reference is to the crop of that particular season, which was so large that, if it could be well stored, it would suffice for the wants of many years to come, even if such rich harvests should never be yielded him again. On the fields of the covetous man the rain fell and the sun shone. God makes His sun to shine on the evil and the good. We cannot judge of what we are by what God's providence does to us, but must judge by what God's word says respecting us. Yet many persons reverse this rule, and judge that they are good because they are successful in business, and that others are bad because their property is swept away. Let the means be noted by which this rich man became richer. It was not by craft, dishonesty and fraud. He was a *farmer*—one of the most harmless ways of becoming rich. It was important to our Lord's purpose that such a case as this should be selected, for He was not aiming

His rebuke against what is regarded as fraudulent between man and man, but to illustrate the case of one who, by no unfair or improper means, was increasing in riches, but who, as they increased, had "set his heart upon them," and neglected God.

17. And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

The expression, that this man *thought within himself*, implies mental excitement and anxiety. He was perplexed, not as other men, to *get* wealth, but to *dispose* of it. And surely the fact that riches and cares are inseparably wedded together, ought to go far to reconcile the poor to their poverty, whatever the pains, and mortifications, and inconveniences of that condition in life. This expression means more: it shows that the man was eminently *selfish*; he thought *in himself*, and *to himself*, as is indicated not only by the words "*my fruits*," but also by the words, *what shall I do?* which were in all probability not the utterance of one brought to sore straits and difficulties through the abundance, for the sake of which others were envying him, but of a worldling's heart, rejoicing over his abundance, and realizing to the very letter the making "provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof." It means still more: it shows that the man was too reliant upon his own judgment in a matter in which his judgment was likely to be warped in his own favor; he ought to have gone to God, who seems not to have been "in all his thoughts," but of whom it is said, "in all thy ways acknowledge him; and he shall direct thy paths." (Prov. iii. 6.) *What shall I do?* How many answers might have come back, if only time had been given, from many an object of compassion, many an orphan, many a widow, many an ignorant family, many an avenue for doing good! But no such answer was wanted by this man, as many do not want them now.

18. And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

This will I do. The words are expressive of a well-formed and final determination, after full consideration. "*I will*" pull down, *I will* build up. *I will* bestow my goods. He is the only party, in his own

opinion, capable of devising or executing any plan in reference to the storing and preserving of the property. He does not say, "If God permit;" he has no reference to God, but full confidence in himself. "*All my fruits and my goods.*" Persons of that sort call riches *goods*, not simply from falling into the popular mode of speaking, but because they consider these the chief good. *My fruits and my goods.* His language is full of pride, vanity, folly and atheism. *Pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow,* &c. Here was the turning point in the poor man's history—determining to do this thing. As God's goodness was showered upon him in such abundance, he should have opened his treasures and permitted them to flow: for this end his riches had been bestowed upon him. But self was the man's pole-star: he cared for himself, and for none besides. Hence the proposal to enlarge his barns, in order to hoard his treasures.

19. And I will say to my soul, Soul, *thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.*

¹Eccles. xi. 9; 1 Cor. xv. 32; James v. 5.

The dialogue which he had commenced before, proceeds; the man has something more to say to his soul: *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years.* Because he has *much* to enjoy, he flatters himself with the hope that he shall have *long* to enjoy it, and promises himself a great age; in his folly he thinks as little of the possible loss of life, as of his goods; nay, he looks upon his riches as conveying a sort of right to a long life. He also speaks of his *goods*—as if the fruits and stores of earthly things had any thing in common with the *soul*, so as to be capable of satisfying that. However praiseworthy frugality is, as not suffering any of God's gifts to go to waste (John vi. 12), it does not render less blameworthy the purpose here expressed, of applying everything for one's self, in the gratification of selfish desires. *Take thine ease.* From the very torture of anxiety and care, he feels how sweet rest is, which he is unable to provide for himself. "Cease to gather and be careful any more, withhold thyself from any further pains and applications." So must it ever be with the covetous—poor in the midst of their overflows, they

enjoy it not, for they think with anxiety on some possible future want, and hence strive and labor without getting satisfaction. This rich man, however, is not of such a covetous disposition, as desires only to have, and keep, and handle wealth or other possessions; he is bent upon enjoyment, he has been working only for future satisfaction; now he counts himself quite sure of attaining his end, and hence he goes on to say, *eat, drink and be merry.* The man stupidly imagines that he could lay up in a barn an adequate and satisfying portion for his soul. The prophet's words are applicable to him. "He feedeth on ashes, a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" (Isa. xlv. 20.) What a mockery it is to address the soul, whose food and sustenance alone can be the knowledge, love and fear of God, in such terms as these, and yet it is just what thousands and thousands are doing practically every day. Every one in whom is the love of the world plays this trick with his soul, and eagerly covets one thing or another, in the vain and delirious hope that he is laying up "*goods for his soul for many years.*"

20. But God said unto him, *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?*

²Or, *do they require thy soul?* ³Job xx. 22 and xxvii. 8; Ps. lii. 7; James iv. 14. ⁴Ps. xxxix. 6; Jer. xvii. 11.

It is not necessary to inquire in what way God spoke to the man: whether by a sudden presentiment of approaching death, by some strong alarm of conscience, by some mortal sickness at this instant falling upon him, or by what other means. *Thou fool.* Literally, *fool!* The deep scorn of the epithet being weakened by the unnecessary pronoun in our English version. The Greek word so translated means, literally, without mind, or sense, or understanding. It is the same word as in Luke xi. 40. This epithet was applicable to the man: 1. As conveying God's estimate of him, as opposed to the opinion he entertained of his own wisdom. 2. For saying "*my soul,*" as if he had made it, redeemed it, could command its presence, and determine the hour of its separation, as if it were like his fruits and goods, part and parcel of the stock or prop-

erty which belonged to him. 3. Because he put off his comfort, in his abundance, till he had compassed his projects concerning it. 4. Because he made such strong calculations on an uncertain future, forgetting how soon he might be parted from his property. 5. Because he counted on *certain* ease, from his abundance, whereas there were many things that might make him uneasy in the midst of all his abundance. 6. Because he made no other use of his plenty than to *eat*, and *drink*, and be *merry*, never thinking of distributing the overflowings of his granary among the poor—thus robbing God, and failing to “lay up in store for himself a good foundation against the time to come.” 7. Because he believed that his *soul* would be satisfied by the abundance of things he possessed. What a mistake! Everything which God has made requires a good suited to its nature. The bird seeks, and must have, its native air; the fish exists, and only can exist, in the water; the beast craves a plentiful provision for its body, and is satisfied therewith; the human body cannot subsist on ideas, but must have earthly food; the mind must receive suitable nourishment: so the soul thirsts for some higher enjoyment than this world can afford.

This night, stands opposed to *years*, in verse 19. It is here implied that it was in the night, the usual hour of repose, that the rich man formed the determination expressed in verse 19. His great and unexpected wealth threw him into such a state of restless, feverish anxiety, as to the disposition for safe-keeping which he should make of his treasures, that he lay awake, planning and revolving one scheme after another, until he came to the conclusion stated in verses 18, 19. One commentator remarks, that night is the time for Divine revelations to men (Job xxviii. 20), and also of sudden deaths. *Thy soul*, which thou hast debased to the mere sensual enjoyment of the brute. The man had formerly addressed his soul, and now he is addressed about his soul. It is not the whole man, but only his soul that is wanted: his body will be left behind. But the body, though left behind, cannot claim, cannot use the goods. The treasure that was not improved, and over which the man

claimed a monopoly, shall be recalled. *Shall be required of thee*. Here is the announcement of the sudden termination of the man's course. He was given to understand that he was on the verge of the eternal world. He was like the unconscious mariner, who is whistling at the helm, and only thinking of the many months of his pleasant voyage, when suddenly he sees that he is approaching the rock on which he will be wrecked and ruined. The man has received the summons; and in obedience to it, he must arise and go; he can neither resist nor delay. He may weep, tremble, rage, but he must go, and go on the instant. The child of God yields up his soul to God; commits, commends it to God and the Father of spirits, willingly, joyfully bids it depart and be with Christ; but the sinner who has enfolded his soul, and embodied it, and made it earthly, has prepared to render its divulsion from the body most hard, and hence it is said *to be required* of him as a disobedient debtor, that is delivered to pitiless exactors. *Then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?*—those fruits, those enlarged barns, this accumulated property—whose shall it be? What will it do for thee? Will it encounter death and conquer him? Will it follow thee to the judgment seat, and prevail with the Judge to acquit you? The obvious scope of the inquiry is, that these things should not be his after death, and could therefore furnish no happiness to his soul beyond the grave. (Eccl. ii. 18, 19, 26, v. 15; Job xxvii. 16, 17; Ps. xxxix. 6, xlix. 16–20.)

21. So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

*Matt. vi. 20; verse 33; 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19; James ii. 5.

Such a fool is every one who thinks and acts after the manner of this rich man, whose accumulations have no aim but the gratification of the selfish desires and appetites; since he is not rich in God, he is much more to be pitied than to be envied, and notwithstanding his riches in the account of the world, he is still poor in the eyes of God. (Rev. iii. 17, 18.) *And is not rich toward God*. In respect to God and Divine things, these riches consist in the imperishable blessings of faith, love and hope. (Eph. i. 3.) Those are not rich toward God, who give nothing to God's

glory—neither money, affection, time, nor interest.

Let us strive to be rich toward God. Those are truly rich who have faith in the Lord Jesus, a faith which is accompanied with good works. God has declared that some of the *poor* in this world are *rich* in faith. (James ii. 5.) Faith is the gold that Christ offers to bestow on all that ask it. "I counsel thee to buy of me *gold* tried in the fire, that thou mayest be *rich*." (Rev. iii. 18.) If faith is in our hearts, we shall never hear the summons, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." But rather, shall we hear, in God's appointed time, a voice saying to our spirits, "Come up hither." (Rev. iv. 1.) And when we ascend to heaven, we shall find a treasure—an inheritance which death cannot snatch from us, which is incorruptible, and fadeth not away. (1 Cor. iii. 23.) How dreadful must be the approach of death to him who, having pampered his body, has starved his soul—lived for the present, and had no supreme and controlling regard to the endless future!

"How shocking must thy summons be, O Death,
To him that is at ease in his possessions,
Who, counting on long years of pleasure here,
Is quite unprovided for the world to come!
In that dread moment, how the frantic soul
Raves round the wall of her clay tenement,
Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help,
But shrieks in vain! How wishfully she looks
On all she's leaving, now no longer hers!
A little longer, yet a little longer—
Mournful sight!

Her eyes weep blood, and every groan
She heaves is big with horror. But the foe,
Like a stealthy murderer, steady to his purpose,
Pursues her close through every lane of life,
Nor misses once the track; but presses on,
Till, forc'd at last to the tremendous verge,
At once she sinks to everlasting ruin."

22. ¶ And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat: neither for the body, what ye shall put on. 23. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.—Matt. vi. 25.

Therefore, in consequence of the danger and vanity of earthly riches. *I say unto you*, as my disciples, with the authority belonging to me as your Master, *Take no thought for your life*. *Life*, a word which properly denotes the vital principle or living substance. It is sometimes used to distinguish the *soul* from the *body*, as in Matthew x. 28. *Take no thought*, be not anxious or excessively solicitous. Our Lord does not here forbid what His Apostles elsewhere enjoin—the use of lawful means to obtain for ourselves and those who depend on us the necessities

of life—nor that exercise of thought which is requisite for this purpose—but He does forbid us, while we use these means, or after we have used these means, to be anxious and fearful as to their being effectual for the purpose for which they are intended. *What ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on*. Our Lord's meaning is, "When, in prosecuting your great object—the heavenly happiness—the attainment of the necessities of life for yourselves and your families, be not anxious, God will provide for you. He has given you life; He has given you a body, and, while it is His will that you should continue to possess this life and this body, He can and will take care of them." *The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment*. Here is an argument from greater to less. Surely He who gave life can give food; surely He who gave you a body can give you clothing for that body. And, as to give life is a far greater favor than to give food, to give a body than to give clothing, surely He who has given the more valuable blessing will not withhold the less.

24. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap: which neither have storehouse nor barn: and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?—Job xxxviii. 41; Ps. cxlvii. 9.

Consider. This means more than a superficial view, rather an observing and studying. *The ravens*. The ravens are specially mentioned in Psalms (cxlvii. 9) and Job (xxxviii. 41), as objects of God's care. In the history of Elijah, the Holy Ghost shows us the ravens providing for others, as well as for themselves. (1 Kings xvii. 6.) Of this miraculous history of the prophet, there is, perhaps, an indirect reminiscence here. *For they neither sow nor reap, &c.* They do not even use the means which man is bound to use, and does use, but are wholly dependent on their instincts and the bounties of their Maker. Sowing, reaping and ingathering, are three stages of agricultural employment and provision for the food of man, all of which are here denied in reference to the birds, which is equivalent to saying that they use no means at all for the production of their own food. *And God feedeth them*—provideth for them. *How much more are ye better than the fowls?* The reason—

ing is made more pointed and popular by being compressed into a question instead of being stated as a formal proposition. You are much better than the birds. As men you occupy a far higher place in the scale of being. You are creatures of a nobler order than they, and designed for a higher destiny. You are created in God's image—you are acknowledged as "his offspring." He has taught you more than the beasts of the field, and made you "wiser than the fowls of heaven." (Acts xvii. 28; Job xxxv. 11.)

25. And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? 26. If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

The word *cubit* signifies primarily the human arm, from the elbow to the end of the longest finger. This part of the human frame (like the *foot*) became, very anciently, a *measure* of external objects. The ancient Egyptian cubit was six handbreadths, or two *spans*, a span being the measure from the end of the thumb to the end of the little finger of the extended hand. These are somewhat variable measures, but the cubit was about eighteen inches. *Stature* would be more properly rendered *life*. The word here relates to *time*, and not to *corporeal growth*. *With taking thought*, i. e., caring, being anxious; *can*, is able; *add*, or put to. As thus explained, our Lord's words contain a strong argument why we should not be anxious about life or food. It serves no purpose; no anxiety of ours can protract life. If we cannot by all our anxiety secure that object for which a supply of food is chiefly desirable—the lengthening out of life—why should we be anxious for that which is valuable, only because it is fitted to gain this object?

27. Consider the lilies, how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 28. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

See on Matt. vi. 28.

Consider. The original means, to learn thoroughly, and then, as a necessary means, to study closely, to observe attentively. The idea is, that what is thus proposed is not a mere indulgence of the taste or curiosity, but a moral lesson to be learned by studying the works and providence of God, a method of instruction practiced

long before by Solomon (see Prov. vi. 6-8, xxx. 24-31), to which there may be here an intentional allusion, as his name is introduced just afterward. *The lilies*. Dr. Thomson, in his "Land and Book," says: "The Håleh lily is very large, and the three inner petals meet above, and form a gorgeous canopy, such as art never approached, and king never sat under, even in his utmost glory." *How they grow*, &c. They neither practice the labors of husbandry to procure the materials of clothing, nor engage in the processes of art to form them into raiment, and yet they are clothed in garments of beauty far surpassing anything which the wardrobe of royalty can display. *Solomon*—in the estimation of a Jew the most illustrious of sovereigns, Solomon—in *all his glory*, decked out in purple, and gold, and jewels, was not arrayed like one of these. *If then*. "If God so clothe" such short-lived, and such comparatively useless vegetables; if God so clothe "the herbage of the field"—for the word rendered "grass" signifies herbage generally, including the lilies of the field—the flowers which grow up among the grass; if God so clothe this herbage, "which is to-day in the field" flourishing in all its beauty, and "to-morrow is cast into the oven," employed as fuel—for, in Eastern countries, where fuel is scarce, herbage is often employed to heat the ovens and baths—"how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?" From the appellation, *O ye of little faith*, it is obvious that those to whom our Lord addressed Himself were in a state of mind like that of Nicodemus, when he came to Jesus by night—persons disposed to admit His Divine mission, yet afraid of the consequences of acknowledging this, and delivering themselves entirely up to be guided by Him—disposed to lay up treasures in heaven, yet not quite sure about abandoning all hope of the treasures on earth, which they had long so fondly anticipated.

29. And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. 30. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and these things do the Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

*Or, live not in careful suspense.

A practical application of the argument of God's care of inferior creatures. *Seek*

not. A strong expression for anxious desire. *Neither be of doubtful mind*, refers to the vacillation between hope and fear, which characterizes those whose confidence is not fully reposed in the protecting care of God. The expression is probably one borrowed from ships out at sea, which, especially when seen from the shore, appear lifted up, tossed to and fro, and restless. There are here two additional reasons why those whom Christ addressed should not be anxious. 1. *For all these things*, all worldly goods and earthly treasures, *do the nations of the world seek after*. Such anxieties were characteristic of the nations of the world, Gentiles, heathens—the world outside of the Jewish nation. 2. The other additional reason is, “Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.” He has made us, He knows our frame, and if we regard him as our Father, who, we know, is able to bestow them, can we imagine that they shall be withheld from us when He knows that we need them?

31. † But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.—Matt. vi. 33.

But rather seek ye—*seek* is emphatic, opposed to the *seek* in the preceding verse. The phrase in the parallel passage in Matthew is, “seek ye first:” as the Gentiles *seek* “all these things,” first and supremely, so do ye seek first and supremely *the kingdom of God*, that is, the dominion or supremacy of God—the kingdom, as then about to be erected, and the cause which they were bound, as Christ’s disciples, to promote. Make the attainment for yourselves and others, of the holy spiritual happiness which that kingdom—the new spiritual economy—secures to all its genuine subjects, your great object. Subordinate and sacrifice everything else to it. In doing this, *all these things shall be added unto you*, everything really necessary and useful shall be secured to you, *added*, given over and above the spiritual good directly flowing from devotion to God’s service. (Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 12; 1 Tim. iv. 8; Rom. viii. 28.)

The great, important lessons taught for every age in these sayings of our blessed Lord, are, 1. Confidence in God. Whilst using the means for earthly support, and shunning negligence and sloth, yet we are

not to be unduly anxious about it, nor rely on our own industry, care and labor, but, having God as our Father, we are to trust to His wisdom, power, love and tenderness. 2. We are to make it the chief business of our lives to secure a place in the number of saved people, to have our sins pardoned, our hearts renewed, and ourselves made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

32. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.—Matt. xi. 25, 26.

To banish inordinate cares, our fears must be suppressed. Therefore Jesus uttered these words of consolation and encouragement. *Little flock*, or, literally translated, *very little flock*. This is what some term a double diminutive. Though this expression refers solely to the Apostles and first believers, of whom it was *literally* true, yet we may say that the number of genuine believers *has* been, and *is* still, small, in comparison with *heathens* and *false Christians*. Jesus Christ is here referred to as the great and good Shepherd of His Church, which is the *flock*; the love and care, the compassion and tenderness, the guidance and vigilance of a good Shepherd are found in Him. (John x. 1–18.) *For it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom*—the kingdom of heaven, mentioned in the last verse as the object of those who seek it. *Your Father’s good pleasure to give*, literally, “well pleased.” It is the same expression used in Matt. iii. 17, xvii. 5; Mark i. 11; Luke iii. 22. It is your Father’s benignant purpose to *give*, not of debt, but of grace. Special stress is here laid on the fatherly relation of God to all believers, as an antidote to over-carefulness and anxiety.

33. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

† Matt. xix. 21; Acts 3. 45 and iv. 34. † Matt. vi. 20; Luke xvi. 9; 1 Tim. vi. 19.

Sell that ye have, a strengthening of the admonition which in Matt. vi. 19–21, appears in another form. Rather than wait wherewith to relieve those that are truly *necessitous*, sell that which you have *superfluous*, all that you can spare from the support of yourselves and families, and give it to the *poor*. *Sell that ye have*, if ye find it a hindrance, or incumbrance, in the

service of Christ. Thus giving *alms*, the treasure *laid out* shall be as *laid up* for yourselves and families in heaven. This *purse* shall not *grow old*, and this *treasure* shall not decay. The *thief* represents sudden and violent loss, the *moth* gradual and silent waste or exhaustion. The lesson here taught is, not that a man must literally sell all his possessions (Acts v. 4; 1 Tim. v. 8), and distribute the avails to the poor, but that he must give liberally, and cherish such a whole-hearted benevolence, that he would be willing to part with all his possessions, if the cause of his Redeemer and the interests of his fellow-men demanded the sacrifice, and thus giving he will lay up imperishable treasure in heaven.

31. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

There is here indicated the deepest knowledge of men. The principle stated is the obvious but momentous one, that what men value they will love, and that the two things cannot be divided in experience. Whoever constitutes his god of gold, his heart becomes as cold and hard as metal; whoever takes flesh for his arm, or makes it his idol, becomes more and more sensual, and takes on the properties of that which he loves above everything; but whoever has invisible treasures keeps spontaneously eye and heart fixed upon the invisible world. Our Lord condemns no true earthly good, no true earthly enjoyment; He simply claims that in these shall not consist our *treasures*, and that all their value shall consist in their enabling us to be better servants of God, and winners of the true happiness. Happy is that person who has nothing on earth which detains and fixes his heart there.

35. *Let your loins be girded about, and *your lights burning: 36. And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding: that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

*Eph. vi. 14: 1 Peter i. 13. *Matt. xxv. 1, &c.

We have here the case of certain servants to whom is intrusted the care of their master's house during his absence from it. He has gone forth, and is expected to return from his marriage, bringing his bride with him. They are to have *their loins girded about*, in allusion to the long,

flowing robes of the Orientals, which were drawn up and held fast by the girdle when active exercise is demanded; they were to be in continual readiness for active duty. They were to have *their lights burning*. (Matt. xxv. 1, &c.) They were to "wait for their Lord." They were to be in their right place, not taking advantage of his absence to be out of the way, but remaining at home, ready, as soon as the master came and knocked, to open unto him immediately, just at the moment when they heard him, to open the door. Thus we are taught what believers ought to be in their present condition—their Lord being absent from them, and faithlessness abounding in His professing Church. They ought to be "waiting" for Christ. As the Apostle has it, "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ." This means steady, calm endurance even to the end, not moved by "evil tidings," or "casting away confidence," but kept in perfect peace, having "the mind stayed on God."

37. *Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

*Matt. xxiv. 46.

Encouragement is here given to the disciples, by announcing the reward to be bestowed upon the faithful and watchful servants. *Verily I say unto you*. (See Matt. v. 18, xxiv. 46.) *He shall gird himself*, &c. At the Roman Saturnalia, the masters put on the servile dress, and waited on and served their servants. As our Lord bases this parable upon the ancient relation of master and servant, so He uses this custom for an image to express the great honor He will confer upon the servants at the judgment day, when all the blessings accruing to His followers, from His ever having worn "the form of a servant," will then be conferred by Him. Wonderful promise! Some think there will be a literal fulfillment of it, and that our Lord refers to this when He says at the last Supper, "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come." (Luke xxii. 18.) A reference to the same literal fulfillment is supposed to exist in Isaiah xxv. 6. What a joyful view is here given of the coming of Christ!

33. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants.

Anciently the Jews divided the night into *three* watches, consisting of *four* hours each. The *first* watch began at six o'clock in the evening, and continued till *nine*; the *second* began at *nine*, and continued till *twelve*; the *third* began at *twelve*, and continued till *three* next morning, and the *fourth* began at *three*, and continued till *six*. The first watch is not mentioned in this verse, because the wedding-feast took place during that time. Neither is the fourth watch mentioned, because the return at so late an hour was improbable. *Find them so*. That is, in such a state of readiness to receive Him. *Blessed are those servants*, &c. An emphatic repetition of verse 37. The Christian must look upon every hour as that which may possibly be his last. He must not only believe in Christ, but look and long for His appearing.

39. [†]And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

[†]Matt. xxiv. 43; 1 Thess. v. 2; 2 Peter iii. 10; Rev. iii. 3 and vii. 15.

The *good man of the house*, that is *householder*, simply. The word *good* implies here no moral character. There is here a modification of the figurative language, in which those who had hitherto been represented as servants now, during the pre-supposed absence of their lord, are compared with the master of the house, who has to take care that his goods be not stolen. *Had known what hour the thief would come*—had been warned, as you are warned, especially if he had known the precise hour the thief would come, he would have kept watch against his approach, *and not have suffered his house to be broken through*—be digged through, for the walls of the Eastern houses are often of clay, and the house would be attacked by excavation. It is noticeable how frequently the coming of the day of the Lord is compared, in all manner of forms, with the coming of the thief. (1 Thess. v. 2, 6-8; 2 Peter iii. 10; Rev. iii. 3, xvi. 15.) Life is the time of probation. It is the watch time in which we are to be on the alert for the coming of the Son of man. How unlike is this parable to that which precedes it! The

reason of this difference is, that our Lord intended to teach that while some have reason to *rejoice* at the expectation of His coming, others have reason to *tremble* at the thought.

40. [†]Be ye therefore ready also; for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

[†]Matt. xxiv. 44, xxv. 13; Mark xiii. 33; Luke xxi. 34-36; 1 Thess. v. 6; 2 Peter iii. 12.

Be always on your guard, that you may not be taken unawares. We are kept uncertain concerning the precise time of our Lord's coming, that we may be always ready. The coming here referred to is the second personal advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, at the end of this dispensation. To apply the expression, as some do, to death, is an entire perversion of Scripture. The coming of the Lord is one thing, and death is another.

41. [†]Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

Some of the foregoing directions appeared to be of such general application, that Peter wished to know whether they were intended for the Apostles alone, or for all Christians. *This parable* means all the cautions, directions and illustrations contained in verses 32-40. It is worthy of remark, that this question was proposed by that very Apostle who afterward most of all needed the admonition, and so sadly forgot it. (Matt. xxvi. 41.)

42. And the Lord said, ^{*}Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?—[†]Matt. xxiv. 45, xxv. 21; 1 Cor. iv. 2.

Who then is that faithful and wise steward—whoever, and whenever, and wherever he is? As the *steward* was burdened with the care of the whole domestic establishment, his post was in the fullest sense one of confidence, and therefore faithfulness in every respect was required. *Over his household*. The construction of the original refers to a constant and vigilant oversight, as though his authority and supervision rested upon his charge continually. "To give *them* their portion of meat in due season." The family is here properly the Church of God, considered as a great congregation, through all ages, waiting for the coming of Christ. It is that Church of all ages to whom He said of the Lord's supper, "Ye do show forth the Lord's death until He come." The *servant* seems to be more specially the *ministry* of Christ through the

ages, to whom He said, "Lo, I am with you until the end of the world."

43. Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. 44. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. ^aMatt. xxiv. 47.

Blessed (Rev. xvi. 15), *when he cometh*—cometh to the judgment, the same *coming* as in verses 37, 38, 39, 40—*find so doing*, referring to the specifications of duty previously made; *ruler over all that he hath*, simply the image of his master, drawn from the custom of appointing a competent or favorite servant to be head steward, as was Joseph in the house of Potiphar. The more extended sphere of action is represented as the reward of fidelity.

45. But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken: 46. The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. ^bMatt. xxiv. 48. ^cOr, cut him off, Matt. xxiv. 51.

If that servant, the same servant in whom the lord had placed so much confidence, and whom he had set over others, *say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming*: the speech of folly which believes the day of reckoning and judgment to be far distant, only to abandon itself to the more unrestrained indulgence of its lusts. It is remarkable that every mistake on the subject of Christ's coming hitherto made, arises from requiring it to be *too soon*. *And shall begin to beat the men servants and maidens*, laying claim in arrogance and hard-heartedness to a right belonging to the lord. *And to eat and drink, and to be drunken*, revelling upon that which has been withdrawn from others, and, at the same time, wickedly squandering the goods of his lord. *Cut him in sunder*: false security sees itself confounded by the unexpected arrival of the lord, and is severely punished. *Cut him in sunder* means quarter him, the image of a very hard punishment. This was the punishment at that time threatened against a villain who first appeared to be faithful, but who afterward manifested himself as unfaithful. *Appoint him his portion with the unbelievers*, hypocrites (Matt. v. 51), that is, he shall have the same fate. It is here taught that the Lord will judge His servants according to the condition in which He finds them, and that no earlier manifested faithfulness can deliver them if they

afterward, in view of the delay of His coming, shall fall into negligence and unfaithfulness. Let it be observed also, that it is *after* the punishment of being split into pieces that the unfaithful servant has his part appointed with the hypocrites, and yet he is represented as still living.

47. And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. 48. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

^aNum. xv. 30; Deut. xxv. 2; John ix. 41 and xv. 22; Acts xvii. 30; James iv. 17. ^bLev. v. 17; 1 Tim. i. 13.

Which knew his lord's will, either actually by an open and express command, such as Jesus was then giving His disciples, or, virtually, because Divine revelation was within his reach. *Prepared not himself*, literally, *did not hold himself in readiness to execute his lord's command*. *Neither did according to his will*, i. e., his declared will and purpose. *With many stripes*. Although the fixed number of stripes, according to the Mosaic jurisprudence, amounted to forty (Deut. xxv. 2, 3), it is of course understood that such determining of the number in this case would be in conflict with the spirit of the parable. But the same principle which is expressed (Deut. xxv. 2), namely, that a righteous relation must exist between the greatness of the offense and the punishment, is also emphasized here by the Saviour. (See Num. xv. 30; John ix. 41, xv. 22; Acts xvii. 30; James iv. 17.) *But he that knew not*. This refers to comparative and not absolute ignorance. In Rom. ii. 14, 15, it is clearly shown that none are absolutely devoid of the knowledge of God's will. God has not only bestowed on men the light of a special revelation, but also the light of conscience. Ignorance itself is guilt, and hence even sins committed in ignorance are punishable. All the subjects of a kingdom are under obligation to make themselves acquainted with its laws; and misconduct, arising from neglect, is punishable guilt. Few expressions in the Bible are more unfavorable to the heathen who die in ignorance of the Gospel than this. In Rom. i. 20, the heathen are declared to be without excuse for sin, in consequence of the abundant knowledge of God, derived from the works of crea-

tion. *Did things worthy of stripes.* His acts of disobedience may have been even more glaring than those of his fellow-servant, who knew his lord's will, but his sins being comparatively unintentional, his punishment will be less severe, "he shall be beaten with *few stripes.*" The discrimination here drawn, though in one view merciful, yet, in another, is full of terror, for whatever may be the case respecting past, forsaken and repented sins of ignorance, no man is entitled to take comfort to himself from this passage respecting his present or future course of life; the very thought of doing so proves that the person entertaining that thought has sufficient knowledge to place him beyond its favorable operation. We may infer from this passage, as well as from the grades of bliss and glory in the rewards of the righteous (1 Cor. xv. 41), that there are different degrees of punishment among the lost. Here, also, is evidence that the souls of the ungodly are not *annihilated*, for, if they receive stripes, they must *know* it, and they must know also whether they are receiving *many* or *few*.

For unto whomsoever much is given, &c. In this sentence our Lord lays down a great principle in His kingdom as an appropriate conclusion to the parable He has just been speaking. From it we learn, 1. That whatever we receive from God is both a gift and a talent. 2. That every one has received some gift or talent to improve for God. 3. That God's gifts or talents are not given to all in the same measure. 4. That, whether we receive little or much, all is in order to an account. 5. That, answerable to our present talents will be our future accounts. The greater opportunities a man has of knowing his duty, and the greater abilities he has for doing good, if he do it not, the greater will be his condemnation, because the neglect of his duty in this case cannot be without a great deal of willfulness and contempt, which is a heinous aggravation. If our gifts are few and feeble, the less we have to account for; if they are greater than those of others, God expects we should do more good than those others. This principle of God's government is the principle on which *men* judicially act. It accords with

the universal conscience and common sense. And if *men* universally know the principle, it is right that they should be judged as knowing it.

49. ¶ I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?—Verse 51.

We are disposed to think that the true, literal meaning of the passage is, "I am come to set the earth on fire—I am come to produce a general conflagration." If this be admitted to be the literal meaning of the terms, there can be very little difficulty in fixing on their spiritual signification. They indicate that His religion, His doctrine, accompanied by His Spirit, should rapidly, and at length universally, overspread the world, diffuse itself among mankind, and either thoroughly impregnate with its own spirit, or utterly consume all human institutions—purifying whatever will submit to purification, and destroying what is incapable of purification. "Fire" is, in Scripture, the emblem both of the word and of the Spirit of God. "Is not my word a fire and a hammer, breaking the rock in pieces?" The cloven tongues of fire, the forked lightning flames, which sat on the heads of the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, were appropriate representations of the rapid dissemination of the doctrines they were to propagate, and the powerful destructive energy with which they were instinct, against all the varied forms of evil. (Acts ii. 3.) *And what will I, if it be already kindled?* These words express desire rather than exultation. *What will I*, or, "What do I wish? But that it were already kindled," or, "What do I wish? O, that it were already kindled!"

50. But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!
 *Matt. xx. 22; Mark x. 38. *Or, *pained*.

How am I straitened till it, that is, my baptism of suffering, be accomplished! *How am I straitened*—compressed and grasped as if by a pressure enclosing on every side. The words, so far from denoting only a pressure of longing and desire, or merely oppression by anxiety and fear, mean both these states of feeling. They express the feelings with which we look forward to an event, in itself extremely disagreeable, absolutely inevitable, and which, when taken in connection with its

consequences, we do not wish to avoid. We may be assisted in forming a conception of the Saviour's state of mind at the moment He used these words, by endeavoring to realize the feelings of an advanced Christian in the immediate prospect of dissolution—dissolution likely to be the result of agonizing suffering. He instinctively shrinks from pain and death for their own sakes, but he knows that there is no entrance for him into heaven, to be with Christ, and to behold and share His glories, except through death, and the assured hope of obtaining this great honor and blessedness makes him more than willing to die, desirous "to depart, to be with Christ, which is far better." Still this desire has a very peculiar character, easily distinguishable from the desire of unmixed good. He is, as the Apostle says (Phil. i. 23), "in a strait betwixt two," even when desiring to depart. So Jesus, whilst realizing the dreadful agony through which He would pass, in bringing forth His Church by His pains, washing her in His blood, giving her life by His death, and establishing the kingdom and the glory of the Father by the sacrifice of Himself, was more than willing to suffer and to die. "For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame."

51. "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division." 52. "For from hence forth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three." 53. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.
 54. "Matt. x. 31; verse 49. 55. Mic. vii. 6; John vii. 43, ix. 16 and x. 19. 56. Matt. x. 35.

Suppose ye. The words imply a disposition to so think, or imagine, and to act accordingly. "If, from the meekness of my character and my Gospel you imagine that I am to send *peace*, not only in *spirit*, but in *result*, among mankind," "I tell you, Nay; but rather division." Is not the Lord Jesus called the Prince of *Peace*, and did not the angels join in chorus at His birth, saying, "*Peace on earth, good will to men?*" How, then, are we to understand the expression that *He came to give division*? We must distinguish between the intentional aim of Christ's coming, and the accidental effect of it. Christ's intentional

aim was to plant, propagate and promote peace in the world; but, through the lusts and corruption of men's natures, the issue and event of His coming is war and division, not that these are the genuine and natural fruits of the Gospel, but occasional and accidental only. Because Christ is the Sun of Righteousness, it cannot but be that torches of strife and funeral pyres should be kindled by its fiery glow. When the Holy One of God comes into personal contact with an unholy world, a shock and strife is inevitable; and that not only against Him personally, but also among men themselves, inasmuch as these begin to distinguish themselves into adversaries and subjects of His kingdom. (See Luke ii. 34; John ix. 39.)

The expression, *five in one house divided*, &c., and the expressions in the following verse, are not to be pressed too literally. In some houses there are not five persons; in others, there are more than five. In some families, where the work of conversion begins, the father and son are entirely of one mind, and so also are the mother and daughter. The expressions are manifestly proverbial. The plain lesson they are meant to convey is this, that the Gospel will often produce divisions in families; and that even two persons who are most nearly related may become estranged from one another, in consequence of one being converted and the other not. That this is constantly the case is well known to all who know anything of true religion. So faithful Abraham was divided against his father, the idolatrous Terah. So religion sets the pious child in opposition to the impious parent. So temperance sets the sober child at variance with the drunken father. So piety divides the fashionable, godless mother or mother-in-law, against the pious daughter or daughter-in-law, or the fashionable, frivolous daughter or daughter-in-law against the devoted mother or mother-in-law. We find in the *Acts of the Apostles*, that wherever the Gospel came, persecution was stirred up; *it was everywhere spoken against*, and there was no small stir about that way. The disciples of Christ, therefore, must not promise themselves peace on earth. They must also hold themselves ready to break any

union, how close and natural soever it may be, when faith and the interests of God are in question. And those ministers whose preaching is marked by a carnal peace and a sensual repose, should earnestly inquire how far this effect may be attributable to their failure to proclaim the truth in all its plainness, purity and power.

54. ¶ And he said also to the people, when ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. 55. And *when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass.—Matt. xvi. 2. *Job xxxvii. 17.

Having addressed His disciples, Christ now addresses *the people*, the immense multitude who surrounded Him, and who were pressed so closely together that they trode upon each other. *When ye see a cloud.* The cloud which rose out of the west, on the side of the Mediterranean sea lying on the west of the whole Jewish territory, was regarded as a sign of approaching rain (1 Kings xviii. 44), while the south wind from the great wilderness of Sinai and hot deserts of Arabia, lying to the south of the Jewish territory, was considered as a sign of heat to be expected (Job xxxvii. 17), and the people accordingly either housed their hay and corn or threw it abroad, and equipped themselves for a journey, according as they foresaw the weather would be.

56. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time? 57. Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?

Our Lord here rebuked the multitude for not discerning *this time*, as the time of the Messiah's appearing, and He called them *hypocrites*, that is, dissemblers or deceivers, a term entirely appropriate to them, as men who could foretell the changes of the weather by its dubious and variable signs, and yet were not able to discern that the time had come when the Messiah long promised in the Scriptures and expected by the people should appear. All this, too, in face of the facts, that Daniel's seventy weeks of years were drawing to a close, at which time the Messiah was to appear, and the scepter was departing from Judah, at which time their predicted Shiloh was to come, and the harbinger of the Messiah had appeared and warned them all with his warnings, and Herod, alarmed by a sign from the

sky, had summoned the Sanhedrim to inform him of the place of the Messiah's birth, and there was a general presentiment prevalent through the East that the great *One* was about to appear, and *He* was now before them, as *One* who, by their recorded pedigrees of the line of David, was proving by miracles—miracles which they confessed were such as no power less than the highest spiritual agent could perform—that *He* was the Messiah of prophecy. *Yea, and why even of yourselves, &c.* Our Lord does not here mean to say that the Jews could understand spiritual things, and see the kingdom of God by their own unassisted judgment, and without the teaching of the Holy Ghost. His meaning is, "Why do ye not of yourselves, by simply observing what is going on around you, form a right judgment about my claim to be received as the Messiah, and a just decision upon the matters in dispute between me and your teachers, the scribes and Pharisees?" Righteousness and truth seldom find admittance into the minds of men, unless some interest open their eyes, or grace work this miracle.

58. ¶ *When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, *as thou art in the way*, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison. 59. I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite.

*Prov. xxv. 8; Matt. v. 25. *See Ps. xxxii. 6; Isa. lv. 6. *See Mark xii. 42.

When, that is, *for instance when.* *Adversary*, a plaintiff at law, to whom a debt, or payment of penalty, is due. *Magistrate*, "*as thou art in the way*," to the place of trial, an allusion to the Roman law, by which the plaintiff himself seized the defendant and drew him before the court for trial. *Give diligence*, take pains, do thine utmost, *that thou mayest be delivered from him*, rescued from his demand, *lest he hale thee to the judge*, by prosecution or complaint, *deliver thee to the officer*, by passing sentence, and ordering the ministerial attendants to execute it, and those attendants *cast thee into prison.* *Thou shalt not depart thence*, thou shalt not be freed from incarceration, *till thou hast paid*—though it implies the possibility of paying, at the same time suggests the debtor's hopeless capacity to make it—the *very last mite*. The coin mentioned is of much less value than our cent, and therefore was adapted to

convey what is here the essential idea, that of an infinitesimal residuum. The whole is a symbolical representation of Divine judgment. The *adversary* stands for the law of God, under the condemnation of which we are, on account of our sins, a condemnation from which nothing but the intervention of the Saviour could deliver us; *the way* stands for the brief period of our probation; the *judge* is the Son of man, at His coming; the *officer* is the judicial agent (Matt. xxv. 31); the *prison* is hell. The attempt to sustain the doctrine of purgatory from the words, *not depart thence, until thou hast paid, &c.*, is vain. Such an argument would prove

many absurdities, if applied to other texts where the expression "until" is used. (See Ps. lxxii. 7, ex. 1, and Matt. i. 25.)

It is of immense importance that we seek reconciliation with God before it be too late. His law is against us, and contrary to us, and its demands must be satisfied. We are moving on to the judgment. There is not one moment to be lost, since we cannot be certain of one moment. We ought, therefore, to be in the greatest earnest in seeking pardon and forgiveness through the blood of Christ. When we are once out of the way of repentance and mercy, what can we expect but the rigor of an inflexible justice?

1. What did Christ say unto His disciples first of all? 2. In what verses is a particular providence taught? 3. What is said of confessing Christ? 4. What of denying Him? 5. Explain verses 11, 12. 6. What are the main points of the parable of the rich fool? 7. For what purpose is reference made to the ravens and the lilies? 8. What is said of watchful servants? 9. What is taught in verses 47 and 48? 10. Explain verses 51-54. 11. What is said about hypocrites? 12. What is meant by "adversary?" 13. What by "way?" 14. What by "judge?" 15. What by "officer?" 16. What by "prison?"

CHAPTER XIII.

¹ *Christ preacheth repentance upon the punishment of the Galileans, and others.* ⁶ *The fruitless fig tree may not stand.* ¹¹ *He heareth the crooked woman.* ¹⁸ *He showeth the powerful working of the word in the hearts of his chosen, by the parable of the grain of mustard seed, and of heaven.* ²⁴ *Exhorteth to enter in at the strait gate,* ³¹ *and reproveth Herod and Jerusalem.*

At the solemn close of the discourse of the last chapter, the assembled myriads broke up their congregation, but a lesser circle remained round our Lord, with whom a colloquy now ensued. The incident with which this chapter opens is connected with the foregoing discourse by the words, *at that season* (more literally, *on that same occasion*). Some persons who, perhaps, had arrived lately from Jerusalem, reported the slaughter which had just been committed there by Pilate, of certain Galileans. Perhaps they wished to get Christ's judgment on the matter, and thus lead Him into a snare. This led to the solemn admonition which Jesus uttered.

THERE were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

Galileans. There were two eminent sects among the Jews in our Saviour's time, namely, the Herodians and the Galileans. The former stood stiffly for having tribute paid to the Roman emperor, whose subjects the Jews now were; but the Galileans (so called probably from Judas of Galilee, mentioned Acts v. 37) opposed this tribute, and often raised rebellion against the Roman power. The heads of this party, Judas and his coadjutor, Sadduc, were put down by the Romans, and measures of active opposition suppressed; but the party still survived, and it is fair enough to conclude that the Galileans here mentioned belonged to this party, and having by some acts or declarations made their principles known, were slain by Pilate, when they had proceeded to Jerusalem to worship at the temple. *Mingled with their sacrifices.* An arrowy shower of death upon the Galileans would cause the blood of the sacrificers and of their sacrifices to blend in the same stream. This massacre, besides being

intrinsically a heinous crime, had its hideousness increased by being perpetrated where and when it was.

2. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? 3. I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish,

From these verses we learn: 1. That a violent and sudden death is no evidence of God's displeasure. 2. That people are more ready to talk of the deaths of others than their own. A murder, a sudden death, a shipwreck, or a railway accident, will completely occupy the minds of a neighborhood, and be in the mouth of every one you meet. And yet these very persons dislike talking of their own deaths, and their own prospects in the world beyond the grave. Such is human nature in every age. 3. That though no man suffers without being a sinner, *they* are not to be regarded as the greatest sinners who suffer most in this life. Whilst it is true that even temporal suffering is a penalty for wickedness, and that all mankind are sufferers because they are sinners, it is not true that the greater sufferings are proof of the greater guilt. It is only in the next world that God punishes with the view chiefly of inflicting punishment, and that His justice proportions the punishment to the sin. Here the punishment proceeds, either from His mercy, which would fain save the sinner, or from His holiness, which purifies believers, or from His Providence, which establishes the belief of His justice, or from His wisdom, which, by means of fear, puts a stop to sin. 4. To repent is not a matter of counsel, but of absolute necessity. He who defers doing it, hazards no less than eternity. He who dies without doing it, must perish eternally. This was to be the doom of the Judeans and Jerusalemites as *individuals*, however true it was also prophetically of the tremendous slaughter of the Jews by the Romans under Titus, which was to take place in a few years at the siege of Jerusalem, and it is true of every man. Repentance, beginning with knowledge of sin, going on to work sorrow for sin, leading to confession of sin before God, showing itself by a thorough breaking off from sin, resulting in a habit of deep hatred for all sins, and, above all, inseparably connected

with lively faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—this repentance must be ours, if we would escape the perdition of ungodly men. Without repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, no man can be saved.

4. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? 5. I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.
*Or, debtors, Matt. xviii. 24: Luke xl. 4.

The tower in Siloam. This tower, no doubt, stood near the pool of that name, which was the only one whose waters gladdened the city, and flowed at the base of Mount Moriah, to the south-east. These and other similar instances in which our Lord avails Himself of recent occurrences, which were doubtless the subjects of general conversation, to give point or illustration to His instructions, are of much interest, and must have made a strong impression upon His actual auditors. (See on verses 2, 3.) *I tell you, Nay, &c.* The repetition of this sentence shows the general importance of repentance. *Philip Henry* is represented as having said: "Some people do not like to hear much of repentance. But I think it so necessary, that if I should die in the pulpit, I should desire to die preaching repentance, and if I should die out of the pulpit, I should desire to die practicing it." The word *likewise* is not to be pressed to signify precisely the same kind of death which the *eighteen* suffered by the falling of the tower, although this was doubtless true of many who fell before the Roman sword, in the sanguinary scenes which followed; the similarity consisted rather in the completeness and awful nature of the ruin which was to come upon them, and the passage cannot be limited to the temporal judgments impending over the nation, but has a higher and more awful import in the judgments which will overtake the finally impenitent in the world to come. There is no medium: either repentance or damnation.

6. ¶ He spake also this parable: *A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard: and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.
*Isa. v. 2: Matt. xxi. 19.

And he spake also this parable. It should not be overlooked how significantly typical the fig tree was which was employed by our Lord to represent the rapidly approaching overthrow of the Jewish nation,

in righteous vengeance for their deep and wide-spread corruption, and their inconsiderate and obstinate impenitence, notwithstanding the many provisions made by God for their improvement. For though that fig tree, the Jewish nation, has been cut down, the *roots* are yet left in the earth, and the words of Job may be applied to that afflicted people: "There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branches thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof was old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground, yet through the scent of *water*, it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant." (Job xiv. 7-9.)

But whilst this parable referred to the Jews as a nation, it is not meant for them only. It refers to every individual in every age, and in every country enjoying the means of grace. Indeed there is a personal application made of the image which supplies the ground-work of the parable, by the Baptist (Matt. iii. 10), and of an image very nearly the same by Christ Himself. (John xv. 2.)

A certain man, that is God, *had a fig tree planted*. As the fig tree is a fruit-tree, which should bear fine fruit, and besides was planted in a vineyard and treated with special care, this represents the favorable circumstances and relations which the mercy of God had granted to Israel, His design to obtain fruit from the tree, and the just expectation of the same. In the Scriptures men are frequently compared to trees, and their work to fruit. (Ps. i. 3; Jer. xvii. 8; Luke vi. 43; John xv. 2, 4, 5; Rom. vii. 4.) *In his vineyard*. The introduction of this feature in the parable is evidently designed to show that the tree had a position in favorable soil, and where it was prominently exposed to the view of the owner, as he passed along through his vineyard inspecting its condition, and seeing what fruit was ripening for his use. Besides the life and faculties which they possess in common with others, those who dwell in Christian lands have spiritual privileges which are peculiar to themselves. Civil and religious liberty, the Scriptures, the Sabbath, the Church, place us in the position of the fig tree within the vine-

yard, while other nations, destitute of these privileges, are more or less like a tree rooted in the sand, or exposed on the way-side. *And he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none*. Here is a description of the ingratitude and impenitence of those for whom God has done so much. Long before, the prophets had upbraided their people with thanklessness and disobedience. And, at the time of Jesus, Israel was actually in the condition of deep moral corruption; excessive wickedness and hypocrisy reigned in almost every heart. God, who gives us our advantages, that we might bear fruit unto holiness, has His eye upon us, and expects this result, and has a right to expect it.

7. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?

The dresser, manifestly the Son of God, Himself, the Intercessor for men. (Job xxxiii. 23; Zech. i. 12; Heb. vii. 25.) *Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit, and find none*: a lively representation of the numerous attempts and movements of God to remind sinners of their obligation to comply with His gracious design. He comes always anew in His word, by means of conscience, and through other media. Along with this, however, we have here depicted the patience and long-suffering of God, which waits for the expected fruits. (2 Peter iii. 15; Rom. ii. 4.) *Three years* seems to have been selected as a number neither too great nor too small. A tree may for some reason remain barren for one or even two years. But if it be fruit-bearing, it will hardly remain barren the third year. Yet that, in extreme cases, this was so, is evident from the plea of the dresser, to spare it another year, in hopes of bringing it by extra culture into a productive state. *I come*. This is a verb of *continuity*. During the whole three years, again and again *have I been coming*. The visits of God are secret and unrecognized, though they be ever recurring. *Seeking fruit*. The Master seeks and seeks from season to season. There may be no fruit, there may be leaves, there may be the leafless branch; in either case He departs in sorrowful disappointment. *Cumbereth*, rather, *makes sterile*. The sinner can never sin by

omission alone. He will commit positive sin, and produce positive evil and destruction. Public chastisements, calamities and diseases are so many admonitions from God in order to our conversion, and threaten us with His wrath and indignation. They are the voice of God, and when we are deaf to them, it is He whom we refuse to hear. Life is conferred upon us to no other end but that we should serve God, exercise repentance, and work out our own salvation. He who does no part of this, well deserves to have it immediately cut off and taken from him.

8. And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: 9. And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

Let it alone. It is the voice of the Intercessor. No worth or worthiness in the sinner preserves him. He lives upon sufferance, and dies when the pleading voice becomes silent. *This year also*, seems to imply that it was not the first time the owner had threatened to cut down the tree, but was induced to let it remain by the entreaty of the dresser of the vineyard. *Dig about it*, &c. Three things were necessary to the cultivation of the fig tree—digging, dunging and watering, and especially the first. We are told that fig trees exhaust the soil. *If it bear fruit, well.* In that case there will be no occasion to remove the tree. *And if not, then after that*, &c. Future time is here specified, but it is left indefinite. One thing was certain, if the tree afterward continued unproductive, it was to be cut down. The decree had gone forth. Even He who was the impersonation of love, the Intercessor, had yielded so far as to say, *after that thou shalt cut it down.* *And if, and if not.* Upon these two *ifs* hangs eternity. The patience of God with respect to sinners is one of the most surprising things imaginable, when we consider what God and what the sinner is; and yet how few frequently think of this, adore it, render thanks for it, and co-operate with it! But this patience, though great and of long continuance, is wearied out at last, when it has no effect upon sinners.

10. ¶ And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.

Frequent reference is made to our Lord's attending the services of the synagogue on

the Sabbath days. These services consisted of prayers, reading the Scriptures, and preaching or expounding the law. We should make conscience of attending the house of God, as we have opportunity, and not think we can spend the Sabbath as well at home in reading a good book, for religious assemblies are a Divine institution. We must give our testimony to them, however small the number may be of which they consist. *Was teaching* denotes a continuing act. *He still taught the people knowledge.* He was in His element when teaching.

11. And behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

The woman was present, with the other worshipers, in the synagogue. *Spirit of infirmity.* Had we only these words, we might be doubtful whether Luke meant to trace up her complaint to any other cause beyond the natural causes whence flow the weakness and sufferings which afflict our race. But our Lord's words, *whom Satan hath bound* (verse 16), are more explicit, and leave no doubt of His meaning. The power of wicked spirits to produce disease is abundantly shown in the word of God. (Mark x. 1; Acts x. 38; 2 Cor. xii. 7; Job ii. 7.) Though this woman should be classed with those possessed by evil spirits, the type of her possession was much milder than that of most, as is shown by her permitted presence at the public worship of God. Her affliction had lasted for the long period of *eighteen years*. Her nervous energies were so weakened that she could not stand erect. She was *bowed together*, bent down to the earth, a situation equally painful and humiliating, the *violence* of which she could not support, and the *shame* of which she could not conceal. She could in no case stand straight, or look toward heaven.

Sin is the origin of all our diseases and afflictions. Had this never entered into the world, there had been neither pain, distortion nor death. Many persons are called to peculiarly painful and protracted sufferings. Can we look back to uninterrupted years of health and activity? What cause for thankfulness! The power of Satan binds the *souls* of sensual men to the earth. They are unable to look up to the

God above them. It is the power of the Redeemer that can loosen their bonds, if they apply to Him, and give them power to raise themselves up, and to use their tongues in praise of His strange mercy. How does the conduct of this suffering Jewess put to shame many strong and healthy professing Christians, that allow frivolous excuses to keep them away from the house of God! Souls that thirst after God spare no pains to get a refreshing draught from the wells of salvation.

12. And when Jesus saw her, he called *her to him*, and said unto her, *Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.*

She did not apply to Him for relief—perhaps she did not know that He would be at the synagogue, and as she could not lift herself up, she may never have seen His gracious countenance. But her heart and her distress spoke loudly, though her lips were silent, and, as she was thus calling for help, the Saviour called her to Himself that she might receive help. How must she have felt when she heard the Lord Jesus desire her to approach. If our Lord does so much for a person when unsolicited, how much more will He do for those who call upon Him in prayer! *And said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.* Satan's grasp had fastened and tied her down with stiffened sinews and muscles, but now she was LOOSED from her infirmity, the nature of her disease rendering this form of address appropriate. O, what a surprise, what a deliverance was this! How unexpected, how free! Her only merit was disease, but one word brings her cure.

13. ^bAnd he laid *his hands on her*; and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

^aMark xvi. 18; Acts ix. 17.

The hand of Christ's *holiness terrified*, and the hand of His *power expelled* the demon. The imposition of His hands may also have been intended to confirm the woman's faith, and rendered the cure, in the eyes of the spectators, palpable and unmistakable as to its source. *Immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.* She at once stood erect before them all, in the vigor of health, and free from the oppressions of Satan, and full of joy and gratitude, she broke forth in devout praise to God for her instant and wonderful cure.

It will be noticed that this cure was, 1. A *speedy* one—it was done in an instant. 2. It was a *perfect* one—the woman was made *completely* whole. 3. It was a *public* one—there were many to attest and render it credible. 4. It was a *stable* and *permanent* one—she was *loosed*, forever loosed from her infirmity. 5. Her soul partook of the good done to her body—*she glorified God.*

We need not doubt that this mighty miracle was intended to supply hope and comfort to sin-diseased souls. With Christ nothing is impossible. He can soften the hardest hearts, and bend the most stubborn will. He can enable sinners who have long been poring over earthly things, or wasting themselves in soul-defiling excesses, to look upward to heaven, and see the kingdom of God. Let us never, therefore, despair about the salvation of others so long as they live, but pray on, labor on, and faint not. Jesus is "able to save to the uttermost."

14. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day; and said unto the people, *There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.*

^cEx. xx. 9. ^dMatt. xii. 10; Mark iii. 2; Luke vi. 7 and xiv. 3.

There were some present who, instead of being touched by the sight of the woman's joy, were filled with indignation. *The ruler of the synagogue* was one of these. He had not dared to prevent the Lord from teaching in the synagogue, because he knew the admiration in which He was held by the people. But now he could no longer restrain his rage, and he angrily addressed the congregation loud enough for Jesus to hear him, saying, *There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.* The people had *not* come to the synagogue *in order* to be healed, they had come to worship God. The ruler knew this, but he only sought for some *pretense* to hinder the glorious triumphs of the Redeemer. *There are six days, &c.* The bitterness and sarcasm of this unhappy speech are very remarkable, and show that the wonderful miracle the man had just witnessed, instead of convincing him that Jesus was the Messiah, called forth the corruption of his heart. He affected to be hurt at what he chose to consider a desecration of the Sabbath, but the true

reason for his indignation was the fact that Christ was glorified. He feared the effect of the miracle which had just been wrought, and under the influence of this fear, he covertly and meanly endeavored to convey the impression that the cure performed by our Lord was not supernatural, but such as those effected by human agency, and not therefore to be distinguished from the common medical treatment of patients.

15. The Lord then answered him, and said, *Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?* 16. And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?—Chap. xiv. 5. Chap. xix. 9.

"*Thou hypocrite,*" literally, hypocrite! This caviling at healing on the Sabbath day was one of the stereotype tests of the hypocrite. The epithet, though severe, was spoken in love, and precisely suited the case, for the man was not disturbed because the Sabbath was violated, but because Christ was glorified, and besides, not daring directly to find fault with the Lord, he sought obliquely to reach Him through the people, who were now under His influence, and whom he feared less. *Doth not each one of you on the Sabbath, &c.* The Talmud states that a beast might be led forth to watering on the Sabbath day, so that it bore no other burden than its collar and halter. Indeed, it was held lawful to draw water for them and pour it into the trough, but it was not lawful to bear water to the beast, which must be led to the well, pool or river, and watered there. *And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, &c.* It is not easy to doubt that this woman was not only a natural descendant of Abraham, but his daughter by spiritual relation, in the highest sense of the term. (Gal. iii. 7.) Our Lord's reasoning was this: Is your loosing and watering the beast a work of necessity? much more is mine. Is yours a work of mercy? mine much more. Your compassion is to a beast, mine to a rational creature, to a woman, and that not a stranger, an heathen woman, but one of your own, a Jewish woman, a daughter of Abraham: nor this only; my work was one of far greater necessity, and more special mercy than yours, for the beast might live

a day without water and not be sick, but this woman was in sore distress for eighteen years—she was in the hands of the enemy of mankind, bound by Satan. Your work, moreover, is a process of unfastening and leading away to water, whilst I have but spoken a word and released a body from suffering. Was it not then a greater act of compassion and mercy, and is it not more lawful to loose this woman, *on this very sabbath day* (for so the original literally signifies) than to lead a beast? There will be noticed at the root of this argument, as of so much else in Scripture, a deep assertion of the specific difference between man, the lord of creation, for whom all things were made, and all the inferior orders of beings that tread the same earth with him, and with whom on the side of his body he is akin. He is something more than the first in this chain and order of beings, he is specifically different. (1 Cor. ix. 9; Ps. viii. 8.)

17. And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

The ruler of the synagogue had his party, but they were thoroughly put to shame. Their shallow and malignant hypocrisy had been so thoroughly exposed by Jesus, that they were conscious that they had forfeited the respect of the common people, and hence they were filled with a sense of shame and disgrace. But whilst Christ's *adversaries* were ashamed, the *people* were affected differently. They rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him. The view of the miracle which they had just witnessed renewed again the recollection of the former ones, wrought, as we have reason to believe, on the same day, and the continuity of this beneficent activity disposed heart and mouth to the glorifying of God.

18. ¶ Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? And whereunto shall I resemble it? 19. It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast it into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.—Matt. xiii. 31; Mark iv. 30.

The comparison which Christ uses, likening the growth of His kingdom to that of a tree, was one with which many of His hearers may have been already familiar from the Scriptures of the Old Testament. (Ezek. xvii. 22-24; Ps. lxxx. 8.) *Like a grain of mustard seed.* The

plant here spoken of was probably the "Kharda," or Turkish mustard (botanically, the *Salvadora Persica*), which, from a very small seed, grows to a tree with a wooden fibre, and to such a size that it can be climbed by a man, and so it truly becometh a tree. It produces numerous branches and leaves, among which birds may and do take shelter and build their nests. The peculiar aptness of the particular kind of seed mentioned by our Lord for His purpose, will be manifest, when it is remembered that the point of comparison in the parable is the greatness of the effect from so small and unpromising a beginning, and that the mustard seed was the smallest of domestic garden seeds in proportion to the size of the tree which it produces. The point presented by our Lord is, not greatness in itself, but the greatness of the tree when compared with the smallness of the seed from which it springs. By *the kingdom of God*, we may understand saving truth, living and growing great, either in the world or in an individual human heart.

Cast into his garden. The grain of mustard seed is here represented as sown in a good soil, and a select spot, a garden, and not a field. *And the fowls of the air lodged, &c.* Though this last circumstance may have been introduced to complete the image of a goodly tree, yet it is also to be recognized as a prophecy of the refuge and defense that should be for all men in the Church; how that multitudes should thither make their resort, finding their protection from worldly oppression, as well as the satisfaction for all the needs and wants of their souls. (See Ezek. xvii. 23.)

Like the mustard seed, the "kingdom of God" was at its commencement, to outward sense, *small and insignificant*. Behold the stable in Bethlehem, and that weak babe sleeping in the manger. In the quiet of domestic privacy the child increases; in His thirtieth year He comes forth into public, teaches three years, and then dies upon the cross. (Matt. xiii. 54, 55.) Fishermen and publicans, plain and unlettered men, having no countenance or support from the ordinary forces of the world, are His first scholars and messengers, and they gathered themselves to

Him only by degrees (John i. 35-51); besides the twelve, the whole multitude of disciples amounted to but one hundred and twenty (Acts i. 15). So small at first was the company of our Lord's followers; small also is the beginning of the heavenly kingdom in the human heart; it begins by a word of truth reaching the conscience, a ray of light from above finds its way into the darkness of the inner man, and perhaps some trifling circumstance gives rise to consequences infinitely important.

It grew, and waxed a great tree. The Gospel spread on all sides from Jerusalem, manifesting itself as an effect of the power given to the exalted Son of man, and of His blessed influence, since He accompanied the preached Gospel with the gracious workings of His Spirit. In spite of persecution, opposition and violence, Christianity gradually spread and increased. Year after year its adherents became more numerous. City after city, and country after country, received the new faith. Individual believers, also, experience only a gradual increase in faith, discernment, love, hope, humility, and all the Christian graces. Amid many storms, both of external and internal temptation, the new creature still grows, and the old more and more decays. (2 Cor. iii. 18.)

The kingdom of God is like the mustard seed in its great and glorious issue. The parable places before us in a lively and striking image such truths as these: "The earth shall be covered with the knowledge of the glory of God, even as the waters cover the sea;" "all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." The appearance presented by a heart which wholly belongs to Christ is in like manner great and glorious. What did not a John, a Paul, become? And all from the small beginning that the word of God had been implanted in the heart!

20. And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? 21. It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.—See Matt. xiii. 33.

To the agricultural analogy just given, our Lord added another borrowed from domestic life and female industry, as if to leave no part of every-day experience un-

employed in the elucidation and enforcement of religious truth. *The kingdom of God.* This phrase may be understood as denoting the reign of grace by which Christ rules in the hearts of men; also, and mainly, as relating to Christianity in its workings with the race. The following points are noticeable in the parable: 1. As "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," so our holy religion had a small and slight beginning in the world, and has also in the human heart, generally beginning by a word of truth reaching the conscience. 2. As this leaven was a foreign importation, so Christianity was not of earthly origin, and Divine grace is something introduced into the soul from without. 3. As leaven is of an assimilative nature, so the Gospel transforms society into the likeness of itself, and Divine grace makes the subject of it a new creature. 4. The Gospel, like leaven, is diffusive in the world and in the individual heart. 5. The Gospel and Divine grace, like leaven, work silently, gradually and outwardly. Beginning in the center, they reach an external development. 6. The Gospel and Divine grace, like the leaven, are destined to work until their saving power reaches the full completion of its design—until the whole mass is leavened. Their triumph is sure.

A woman took. In the Scriptures the Holy Spirit is frequently referred to in such terms as these: "As a mother comforteth her son, so will I comfort thee." "Under the apple tree (a name by which Christ was denoted), thy mother brought thee forth; there she brought thee forth that bare thee." "Ye must be born again." *Three measures of meal.* A measure was the third part of an ephah, and these three were the usual quantity for a baking. (Gen. xviii. 6; Judg. vi. 19; 1 Sam. i. 24.) *Till the whole was leavened.* There are some who see in the three measures the constituent parts of our compound being, soul, body and spirit. But it is more than probable that our Lord had not in His mind any of the various allegorical meanings which have been attached to His words. The Gospel is destined to conquer the world, and subdue it to itself. It is now spreading, elevating society, and it will

continue to do so, until at the mean of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. Nothing can prevent its progress and dominion. So with the grace of God in the heart, "The righteous shall hold on his way." God "will perfect that which concerneth us." The "good part" which has been "chosen" "shall never be taken away." "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

22. ¹And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.
²Matt. ix. 35; Mark vi. 6.

He went through the cities and villages. This is Luke's general heading for the *Peræan ministry of Jesus*. The cities and villages were those of the trans-Jordanic region, including Bethabara and the localities generally of John's baptisms. Jesus preached by His holy doctrine, but also by His exemplary life. Wherever Providence brings us, we should endeavor to be doing all the good we can. The pastor who instructs his people with care, visits his flock, and is continually intent on his duty, advances very fast toward the heavenly Jerusalem.

23. ¹Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, 24. ²Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.
³Matt. vii. 13. ⁴See John vii. 34, viii. 21 and xiii. 33: Rom. ix. 31.

Then said one. The time, place and person are not particularly stated. *Lord.* The respectful address, and the confidence of the inquirer in our Lord's ability to answer, show that he had some proper view of Christ's character, and render it probable that his question was not one of captiousness or curiosity, but grew out of some anxiety on the subject of salvation. *Are there few that be saved?* The question was much debated by the Jewish doctors, some maintaining that all Israelites are saved by birthright, others asserting that the saved will be few, just as but few of the original Israelites arrived in Canaan.

That the Saviour's instruction contains an answer—it is true, indirect, but yet satisfactory and powerful—to the question addressed Him, strikes us at once on comparing the two. *Strive.* The word used to denote those extraordinary efforts, made by the combatants in the Olympic games, to

gain the victory. It is that from which we take our English word "agonize." It is like our expression, *strain every nerve to enter in at the strait gate*. The *strait gate* was a wicket-gate in a larger one. *At* would be better translated "through." The idea is that of a struggle to press through the narrow entrance-way, to renounce the world and sin, accept the offered salvation through Christ, and press toward the kingdom with great earnestness and perseverance. Men may make devotion as easy as they please—they may widen the gate of heaven, and flatter themselves and others that their salvation is continually in their hands. The direct contrary is true; since truth itself assures us so. Salvation is neither for the slothful and idle, who will not strive; nor for such as will not enter in at the strait gate; nor yet for those who presume to the very last, either upon their own strength or upon the grace of God. God has His proper seasons, which we must by no means let slip.

For many, I say unto you, &c. We are to understand such a *seeking* as is in the wrong direction and at the wrong time. The word here translated "*seek*" is the very same which is used in the familiar promise: "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." It does not, therefore, mean faintness or feebleness of effort, but effort to enter, at the wrong time, and by the wrong way, into everlasting life, into which there is but one entrance-way, and that through the strait gate. We are not to suppose that many who are very anxious to be saved, may, notwithstanding, come short of salvation. But if men do not find eternal life, it is because they do not seek it in the way in which God hath appointed it to be sought. No man who thus seeks it shall seek it in vain. Neither are we to infer from this statement of our Lord anything discouraging as to the number of the human race that will be saved. The Scriptures inform us that there are to be "nations of the saved," and that they are to form "a multitude whom no man can number."

25. ¹When once the master of the house is risen up, and ²hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, ³Lord, Lord, open unto us: and he shall answer and say unto you, ⁴I know you not whence ye are; ⁵Ps. xxxii. 6; Isa. lv. 6. ⁶Matt. xxv. 10. ⁷Luke vi. 46. ⁸Matt. vii. 23 and xxv. 12.

When once, literally, from the time, the master of the house, the hospitable entertainer of his friends, is risen up, from his seat, in order to shut to the door. This expresses deliberate forethought and determination, after the exercise of patience and forbearance. *And ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, or, ye shall take to standing without and knocking, showing a change from carelessness to concern; saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.* This appeal implies earnestness and expectation; all they ask is an open door and a refuge. *And he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are.* The word "know" here is used in a somewhat peculiar sense. It is equivalent to acknowledged or approved—a sense of the term of not unfrequent occurrence in Scripture. "The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous" (Ps. i. 6)—He approves, and gives tokens of His approval, of their way. "I know"—acknowledge—"my sheep, and am known"—acknowledged—of mine. The words *whence ye are* should be given interrogatively, "Whence are ye?"

26. Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. They had, perhaps, partaken of His miraculous feedings with the five thousand. Jesus, doubtless, often ate and drank, and was on terms of friendship and social intercourse with those whom, as a public teacher, He addressed. It is eating and drinking before the Lord that is spoken of, without inward communion with Him. It was customary with Jewish doctors to teach in the streets. It will be observed that there is a striking climax in the earnestness of those who applied for admittance: first, standing some time without, then knocking, then calling, finally reminding of former acquaintance; but all in vain.

27. ¹But he shall say, I tell you, I know ye not whence ye are; ²depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

³Matt. vii. 23 and xxv. 41; verse 25. ⁴Ps. vi. 8; Matt. xxv. 41.

The words, *I know you not whence ye are*, are repeated, yet with still greater emphasis, showing that the judgment is inexorable. *Depart from me all ye workers of iniquity.* The word *workers* here signifies

hired operatives. He charges them, therefore, with being the paid fabricators and laborers of wickedness. The similarity between this expression and Matt. xxv. 41, appears to show clearly that the time described is the second coming of Christ, and the judgment day.

23. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."

"Matt. viii. 12; xiii. 42 and xxiv. 51. "Matt. viii. 11.

Those who by procrastination and inaction suffer the time of admission to the Gospel feast to pass by, and hence are excluded, are here represented as in the midst of night (hell.) Yet they are said to see heaven, thus showing that the lost shall see afar off the glory and blessedness of the saved, and the sight shall add to their misery, as they behold the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament participants of this joy, and they themselves as the children of those spiritual ancestors, *thrust out*. *Weeping and gnashing of teeth*, is a strong image of that utter despair, darkness and death of a soul excluded from God.

23. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

The word *many* is here omitted, which we find in the parallel passage in Mark viii. 11, 12. Probably this omission is to be accounted for by the fact that, by the repetition of that word here, the Saviour would have given a decided answer to the question (verse 23), which, however, was not in His intention, and was in conflict with His wisdom in teaching. *Shall come*, are to come hereafter: the reference is to the calling of the Gentiles of all nations, and people, and tongues, into the Church. *From the east*, &c. The points of the compass are given in their usual order, but it is something of a coincidence that they follow the course in which the Gospel seems in human history to proceed. It first took root in Syria and Asia Minor, then spread to the west of Europe and along the shores of the Mediterranean, then turned northward to the Scandinavian nations and Britain, and since that time has spread, wherever it has spread, toward the south, in Africa, Asia, South America and the South Pacific ocean. We must co-operate by our prayers, desires, cares and

acts of charity, to enlarge the bounds of the kingdom of God, if we cannot do it by our labors and ministry. *Sit down*, literally, lie down, or recline.

30. "And behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last."

"Matt. xix. 30 and xx. 16; Mark x. 31.

The idea here is, that, in regard to the Gospel feast, there shall be such a reversal of present relations, that many of those who seemed most likely to have been the favored guests will be excluded, while others whose prospects for such an honor were far less favorable will be selected as the recipients. The Gentiles, who were last, have become first; the reverse has been the history of the Jews. And so in the following chapters (xiv.-xvi.) the Pharisees and publicans are reversed from first to last.

31. ¶ The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence; for Herod will kill thee.

The same day—the day on which the question of verse 23 was answered—*there came certain of the Pharisees*, Herodian partisans among the Jews, flatterers and tools at the court of Herod Antipas. They were Pharisees in profession, but Sadducees in life and practice. *Saying unto him*, &c. Not only Galilee, but also Peræa, and the boundary district in which Jesus now was (verse 22), belonged to the jurisdiction of Herod.

32. And he said unto them, Go ye and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected."

"Heb. ii. 10.

The threats of Herod did not alarm the Lord. He showed His abhorrence of Herod's character by the name which He gave him, a *fox*. It adds much to the force, and points to the meaning of the message sent, to understand that our Saviour called the tetrarch of Galilee a "fox," in allusion to a proverb at that time current, to the effect, "Honor even the fox in the day of his power." A fox among the Jews appears to have been the emblem of a wicked ruler, who united cunning with cruelty, and was always plotting how he might aggrandize himself by robbing the people. *Behold, I cast out devils*, &c. Intentionally the Saviour speaks not of His words but of His miraculous deeds, because these had most strongly excited the uneasiness of Herod. (Chap. ix. 9.) *And the third day I shall be*

perfected. These words do not refer to bringing His works to a close on the third day, but to His death. "I shall continue my work, notwithstanding Herod's threats, and at the end of that time I shall be perfected or finish my course by death." (See Hosea vi. 2.)

33. Nevertheless I must walk to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.

This is an intimation by our Lord that He has nothing to fear from Herod, as long as His day of life endures, and that He united the fullest repose in the present with the clearest consciousness of His impending departure. *Walk.* This conforms to the itinerant ministry of Jesus, and is equivalent to, *I must proceed from place to place in the fulfillment of my prescribed duties. It cannot be, literally, it is not admissible.* As John the Baptist, to say nothing of other prophets, did not die at Jerusalem, the sense here must be, "It would be an unusual thing, an exception to a rule, for a prophet to die in any place but Jerusalem. When I do die, it will be at Jerusalem. But I am not there yet, but in Galilee." This was a rebuking irony upon guilty Jerusalem. Jesus assigns the time and place of His death, as having them more in His own power than those who were to inflict it on Him. The victim was not to be sacrificed far from the temple, the truth was to be accomplished near its types and figures, and Jerusalem to fill up the measure of her sins, in crucifying the Saviour of the world.

34. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee: how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!—Matt. xxiii. 37.

The prospect of Christ's death, with all its attendant horrors, did not excite angry feelings in His breast. Instead of expressing anger, He burst forth into these most tender lamentations over His murderers.

O Jerusalem. Jesus reiterated the same apostrophe, in fuller terms, at a later moment in Jerusalem itself, as His closing sentence before His retirement to the sacrifice of Himself for the sins of the world. (Matt. xxiii. 37-39.) *Killest the prophets*—identifying the Jerusalem of the

then present day with the Jerusalem of past ages. *How often would I.* The beautiful tenderness of this verse shows that the warnings of the previous verses are the language, not of human anger, but of terrible Divine justice. Love, deep love, may dwell in the breast of the judge who pronounces the sentence of death. *Would I . . . ye would not.* The Greek word in both these phrases is stronger than appears from our English translation. It is, literally, "I willed, and ye willed not." *As a hen, &c.* The emblem of "a hen gathering her chickens under her wings" is similar to what is used, with respect of JEHOVAH, in several places of the Old Testament. (Deut. xxxii. 11; Ruth ii. 12; Ps. xvii. 8; xxxvi. 7; lvii. 1; lxiii. 7; xci. 4.) Nor does all nature furnish a more apt emblem of the Saviour's tender love and faithful care of His redeemed people, but His *power* is also adequate to the confidence reposed in Him. *Ye would not.* Our Lord does not say, "thou wouldest not." By this mode of speaking He makes it plain that He charges the guilt of Jerusalem on its inhabitants, and the men and women who dwelt there, and specially on the priests, and scribes and Pharisees, who governed the city. They were neither willing to be gathered themselves into the kingdom nor allowed others to enter. Christ was willing, but they were unwilling. Most deplorably and inexcusably will they perish, who perish by their own willfulness and obduracy under the Gospel.

35. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

*Lev. xxvi. 31, 32; Ps. lxxix. 25; Isa. i. 7; Dan. ix. 27; Micah iii. 12. *Ps. cxviii. 26; Matt. xxi. 9; Mark xi. 10; Luke xix. 38; John xii. 13.

Your house is left unto you desolate. Jerusalem is pictured as from a future standpoint, as a person whose habitation has been completely desolated and abandoned to the pillager. The *house* may be an allusion to the temple. "Your temple (now not God's house, but *your house*), in which you glory, your holy and beautiful house, is now deprived of its glory. God has departed from it, and has no longer any pleasure in it." *Ye shall not see me.* In the word *ye*, Jesus still considers Jerusalem

as being the same historical and national person through all ages. *Till ye*—in your posterity in a future age. *Blessed is he that cometh, &c.* The language by which the children in the temple recognized Him as the Messiah. (Ps. cxviii. 6.) Some think that Christ here refers to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, when the fulfillment of all His predictions would oblige the Jews to confess that He was the Messiah. Others think that our Lord's words are not yet fulfilled, and that they refer to

the last times, when the Jews, after their last tribulation, shall "look on Him whom they pierced," and believe, at the time of His second advent in glory. Though Jerusalem be still desolate, and Israel scattered, the unseen person of Jesus is still on Zion, and His unseen *feet still stand on Olivet*. His ever preserving care perpetuates the race in its vicissitudes, waiting for the day when devoted Israel shall say, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*.

1. Who told Christ of the Galileans? 2. What did He say to them? 3. What parable did Jesus speak? 4. Explain it. 5. What miracle did He perform? 6. State the particulars of it. 7. How did our Lord answer the objection of the ruler of the synagogue? 8. Explain the parable of the grain of mustard seed. 9. Also that of the leaven. 10. What did Jesus answer to the question, "are there few that be saved?" 11. What message did Christ send to Herod? 12. State our Lord's lamentation concerning Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XIV.

2 Christ healeth the dropsy on the sabbath: 7 teacheth humility: 12 to feast the poor: 15 under the parable of the great supper, sheweth how worldly minded men, who condemn the word of God, shall be shut out of heaven. 25 Those who will be his disciples, to bear their cross must make their accounts aforehand, lest with shame they revolt from him afterward, 34 and become altogether unprofitable, like salt that hath lost its savour.

Notwithstanding the severe language of our Lord to Pharisees at their own table, these Pharisees were themselves very *apt to repeat the invitation*. It often happens that men return, again and again, to hear the preaching of ministers who offend them through a wounded conscience. At the feast, with a reference to which this chapter commences, our Lord is a central object for all eyes and ears, while He Himself is calmly at perfect ease.

AND it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him.

One of the chief Pharisees. As they had as a sect no chiefs in the common sense of the word, we are probably to understand here a Pharisee who, by his rank, learning, or influence, had obtained a moral predominance over those of his sect, like Nicodemus, Gamaliel, and others. *To eat bread on the Sabbath day.* The tables of the Jews, as their Rabbinical writings show,

were generally better spread on the Sabbath than on any other days, and that, as they themselves reckoned, on account of religion and piety. As the Saviour so often borrowed the images of His parables from that which was actually present before His eyes and the eyes of His hearers, and as He represented a certain man as having made a *great supper*, it would seem that this also at which He was now sitting was more than an ordinary entertainment. As inns and places of reception were doubtless far more uncommon in our Lord's time than they are now, and thus the duty of entertaining strangers often devolved on the chief man in each village or town, we may regard this Pharisee, though not a friend of Christ, as having done only what was customary for a man in his position in inviting to his table a stranger who was teaching religion, and whom some regarded as a prophet. *They watched him*, doubtless for the purpose of finding something of which they might accuse Him. Jesus went among sinners as a physician goes into the wards of a hospital, only because there is good to be done.

Those who cannot, like Christ, render a

Sabbath social gathering a profitable occasion, had better absent themselves. As the world takes notice of everything in Christians, what particular care should they exercise in all their actions!

2. And behold there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy.

Before him, as Jesus sat, perhaps, on the divan, before the company had taken seats at the table. There is the strongest probability that the man placed himself "before Christ" in faith, hoping that He would see and heal him. Any difficulty as to how the man without permission could have found entrance into a private house rests upon an ignorance of the almost public life of the East, and a forgetting how easily, in a moment of excitement, such as this must have been, the feeble barriers which the conventional rules of society would oppose might be broken through. The *dropsy* is a disease in which the body, or some part of it, is filled with water, most usually the abdomen. It is sufficient sometimes that our miseries be only exposed to the eyes of mercy. Mercy is of a preventing nature, and, without waiting for our solicitation, is disposed to do us good. Jesus did not omit any opportunity of helping and healing the distressed, though He knew that His enemies, the Pharisees, might carp and cavil at it, it being the constant guise of hypocrites to prefer ceremonial and ritual observances before necessary and moral duties.

3. And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?"—Matt. xii. 10.

As we are not told that anything was said or spoken by the *lawyers and Pharisees*, we are to understand that our Lord answered their *thoughts*. He knew their usual objection (Matt. xii. 11; Luke xiii. 15), and anticipated it by a question, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" Had they answered this question affirmatively, they would have sanctioned His miracle; had they answered it negatively, they would have betrayed their own want of love. It was not out of ignorance, but charity, that Christ asked this question, on purpose to give those men an occasion of reflecting upon their own thoughts, and by their answer to engage them in such as are good.

4. And they held their peace. And he took *him*, and healed him, and let him go;

They had been so often put to silence before the people, that, at this time, they feared to encounter Christ's arguments and rebukes, and hence kept quiet. Observing they were silent, He took hold of the man, healed him, and dismissed him from the assembly—perhaps, lest they should visit him with their malice, as they had lately done to the man born blind at Jerusalem. There is, in wicked persons, a silence proceeding from pride, malice, impotence, dissimulation and craft, but it cannot hide their hearts from Him who sees their inmost recesses, nor ought we to have any manner of regard to them, when an opportunity of doing good works presents itself. We should do nothing which can give occasion to the Lord's enemies to blaspheme. The thing is possible. By the grace of God it can be done. The haters of Daniel were obliged to confess, "we shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God." (Dan. vi. 5.)

5. And answered them, saying, "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?" 6. And they could not answer him again to these things.

^bEx. xxiii. 5; Deut. xxii. 4; Luke xiii. 15.

"You grudge that I should deliver this man upon this day from the water which is choking him, yet if the same danger from water threatened one of your beasts, *an ass or an ox*, you would make no scruple of extricating it on the Sabbath from the dangers which threatened it; how much then is a man better than a beast?" *And they could not answer him again to these things.* They were convinced, no doubt, but we read nothing of their conversion. The obstinate and malicious are much harder to be wrought upon than the ignorant and scandalous. It is easier to silence such men than to satisfy them; to stop their mouths than to remove their prejudices, for obstinacy will hold the conclusion, though reason cannot maintain the premises.

7. "And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them. 8. When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him; 9. And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. 10. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher; then shalt thou have worship in the

presence of them that sit at meat with thee. 11. ⁴For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

^cProv. xxv. 6, 7. ^dJob xxii. 29; Ps. xviii. 27; Prov. xxix. 23; Matt. xxiii. 12; Luke xviii. 14; James iv. 6; 1 Peter v. 5.

Chose out the chief rooms. In the East it is still the custom for guests to occupy seats that mark their degree of rank. The Pharisees showed a great anxiety to occupy the most honorable seats. Our Lord openly censured their conduct, and alluded to one of Solomon's proverbs (xxv. 6), an authority that they professed to revere. The sinner is bidden to enter the household of his Father, and to hold fellowship with that Father himself, and with all his family. Everything that is needful for his refreshment and comfort is spread out for him within the house, where he has been admitted. And having entered, he is in a very different position from what he was before he had heard or replied to that invitation. Formerly an outcast and an alien, now he is a recognized and welcome guest. Now the "table is spread for him in the presence of his enemies." But he must take good heed to himself. There is no room for self-exaltation here. He must not *begin to take the highest room*. The same spirit which led him to feel so unworthy of the least benefit from his Father—which led him to stand afar off, and hardly to dare to lift up his eyes unto heaven, must characterize him *still*. In other words, we are to obey the Divine command, "Let each esteem others better than themselves." The injunction is to take *the lowest room*—not to think of others at all, but to feel that to be admitted to sit down in such communion is sufficient, and the soul asks no more. Our Lord says that this conduct will be followed by the master of the feast calling the lowly one higher. He does not put forth this as a motive *why* we should take the lowest place, but merely to show that the whole ordering and arranging of these things are of the Lord. *He may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher*, or, He may not. You have nothing to do with that. It is enough for you to be at the feast—leave all the rest to Him—with this certainty, however, that *whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*. God will Himself, according to His own will, and in His

own way, establish this truth. We must honor Him by putting all this into His hands with real heartfelt humility. And He will take care just to give us that place by which He will be honored, and we ourselves made happy and *glorious forever*.

12. ^f Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. 13. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. 14. And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.—Neh. viii. 10-12.

To him that bade him. We must not even allow the hospitality of those who appear friendly to interrupt us in our duty, or induce us to be unfaithful, though the contrary conduct will probably, on some occasions, draw on us the censure of rudeness or ingratitude. *A dinner or a supper*. The inhabitants of the East generally, and as well the Greeks and Romans also, took a slight dinner, chiefly of fruits, milk, cheese, &c., about ten or eleven o'clock of our time, and then, on account of the burning heat of noon, deferred their principal meal till about six or seven in the afternoon. *Call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors*. These terms merely mean the higher classes of society, to which the host himself belonged. *A feast*. A general entertainment, or banquet. Some suppose that Christ alludes here to the festival of the second sort of first fruits (or the feast of weeks), at which Moses enacted that servants and widows, orphans and Levites, should be made free partakers. (Deut. xvi. 11-14, xii. 12-18) *For thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just*. We are not to understand here that resurrection is the special privilege of the righteous. It is hard to put any other sense on the expression than this: that there is a resurrection of which none but the just, or righteous, shall be partakers—a resurrection which shall be the peculiar privilege of the righteous, and shall precede that of the wicked. The last words, *of the just*, would have been purposeless if the Saviour had here had in mind the general resurrection which he describes, *e. g.*, John v. 28, 29. He distinguishes, like Paul (1 Thes. iv. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 23) and John (Rev. xx. 5, 6), between a first and a second resurrection. (Comp., also, Luke xx. 34-36.)

Our Lord, in these verses, gives no lesson against the interchange of hospitalities among friends. He does not deny that they have their healthful, social influence among men. The repayments of the social debts of life, performed in the right spirit, have the blessing of God upon them. He would be evidently condemning Himself in attending them, if He were rebuking the inviters. Neither did Jesus mean, absolutely and universally, to prohibit men from entertaining their wealthy friends, relatives and neighbors. Nor did He intend to encourage an injudicious, useless and profuse expenditure of money in giving to the poor. But the sentiment is simply this: that we are not to lavish our attentions upon those only from whom we may expect some favor in return, which is the very essence of selfishness, but are to expend them upon those rather whose condition in life forbids the hope that they can repay our kind attention. Only where one does something, not out of an every-day craving for advantage, but out of disinterested love, does the Saviour promise the richest reward. The venerable reformer and martyr, Hooper, of England, while he was Bishop of Gloucester, entertained a certain number of the poor every day, with a dinner of whole and wholesome meats, in his great hall, having first examined them in the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments; nor would he himself sit down to the table until his poor guests had been served. But though he had given his goods to feed the poor, and though at length he gave his body to be burned, so far was he from trusting in his good deeds for salvation, that, when brought to the stake, he was heard to pray thus: "Lord, I am hell, but thou art heaven; I am a sink of sin, but thou art a gracious God and a merciful Redeemer."

15. ¶ And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, 'Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.'

Rev. xix. 9.

The moment our Lord touched upon the resurrection of the just, one of the company laid hold of His words, as affording a welcome opportunity to turn the conversation into another channel, and expressed a great desire to participate in

the blessedness of that day, of which, however, his heart knew nothing, so that he only feigned this stroke of piety with his lips.

To *eat bread* is a well-known Hebrew phrase for sharing in a repast, whether it be at a common meal or at a sumptuous feast. *Kingdom of God*. By this the Jew meant a *resurrection kingdom*, when the Messiah should come. Perhaps he wished, in saying what he did, to end Christ's discourse, which contained nothing flattering for the host, and thus, with worldly covetousness, come to the help of the Pharisee who had invited him, and avert the threatening storm. At all events by what was previously intimated of the moral condition of the guests, and still more by the whole structure of the parable, in which it is manifested, by means of the guests first invited, how an earthly disposition and the love of this present world withhold so many from a blessed participation in the great supper, and how those only made their appearance there, in whose case no such hindrance existed, we are justified in thinking that the man's language was not expressive nor indicative of a real earnest desire for participation of the blessedness of the finally saved.

16. ¶ Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:—Matt. xxii. 2.

This parable, though there are some points of resemblance between it and that recorded in Matt. xxii. 1-14, is perfectly distinct from it. This occurred at a meal, that in the temple; this at an earlier period, that at a much later. At the time of Luke's narrative, the hostility of the Pharisees was not yet so intensely expressed, and there was some hope of softening down and winning to a better mind, and therefore all is gentle and persuasive. At the time of Matthew's narrative, the hostility and hatred of the Pharisees to the Son of man had risen to its highest possible pitch. There seems to have been left no hope, and therefore there is a tone of stern and unsparing severity.

A *certain man*, that is, the Saviour. In this case it is not a king, but a person in a private station, who provides the feast. And the occasion of the rejoicing is not

the marriage of the entertainer's son; it is an ordinary example of hospitality exercised by an affluent citizen. *Made a great supper.* The representation of the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, under the image of a feast, was very common (Isa. xxv. 6; Prov. ix. 1-5; Matt. viii. 11; also various passages in the Book of Revelation). As men's relish is so little, their desire so faint for the things heavenly, they are therefore presented to them under such inviting images as this, that if possible they may be stirred up to a more earnest longing after them.

The word translated *supper* was, in ancient times, employed generally to signify the principal meal, without reference to a particular period of the day; and, from the circumstances of this case, it would appear that the feast was a dinner at an early hour, not a supper in our sense of the word. The *supper* may be called *great*, as well on account of the abundance of the refreshing viands, as on account of its being intended to be celebrated by many. How rich and abundant the provisions which God has made in His Gospel for those who will come to His house, enter the Church, and become true members of it by repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ! For such there is refreshment in the discoveries and promises of the Gospel (Luke i. 78; Mal. iv. 2); in its privileges and blessings, such as the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins, the favor of God, regeneration, adoption, &c. (Matt. xi. 28); in the communications of grace through the Spirit, and the prospects of future glory and felicity. (Isa. lv. 1-6.) Provision is made in the Gospel for the sustenance or support of the Divine life in all penitent believers, namely, the blood and righteousness, or the merits, of Christ (John vi.), received and fed upon by faith; "this is the bread that came down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die" (verse 50).

And bade many. It was a custom existing among the Jews, in giving entertainments, first to issue their invitations to their guests generally, and then on the day appointed to send out again to them who were invited to call them to the feast.

The Jews, as sprung from Abraham, were invited to the feast, for to that patriarch was the seed promised through which the blessing was to come, and accordingly the prophets carried it forward, and showed the people that there was no failure in regard to the Lord's will concerning the glorious festival for which He had made all previous preparation, and pressed on them His invitations. At the opening of the Gospel dispensation, God sent the harbinger of the Messiah, John the Baptist, the Messiah himself, His son and servant, with His servants, the Apostles, first twelve and then the seventy, and by them invitations had been given. The invitation comes from the free grace and love of God; on the part of the invited there is found no worth or desert. The invitation is still always made through the proclamation of the blessed Gospel in churches, schools and families, by all who communicate its truth to others. The fact of many invitations being given, is evidence of the greatness and expensiveness of the feast, and renders the conduct of those refusing attendance more inexcusable.

17. And bade his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.—Prov. ix. 2, 5.

It was an Eastern custom to bid the guests a *second* time, by a messenger, who announced that they might come because everything was ready. *Servant.* When the fullness of time was come (Gal. iv. 4), John the Baptist and the Apostles went forth to say to those that were bidden, to the people of Israel, now is the time, come. *Servant*, however, is to be taken in a collective sense. It is the *calling voice of God*, as uttered through all His messengers. *Supper time*, literally, *at the hour of supper.* *Coming* denotes the necessary internal change and readiness for receiving what was prepared, just as corporeal coming implies a change of place. The *repeating* of the invitation manifests the earnest desire and gracious purpose of God to do everything on His part to bring men to a participation in the offered salvation, and at the same time, also, the utter invalidity of the alleged grounds of excuse, *for all things are now ready.* *Now* is indicative of the present time, in the New Testament. *All things are now ready.* All preceding

dispensations were a preparation for Christ. When He appeared in the flesh, those who had been all along brought up within the lines of the privileged people were invited to behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. This is repeated in the experience of every generation, and every individual that grows up within the circle of Christian ordinances, as soon as the mind comprehends the message of mercy. As each attains maturity, he is informed that all things are now ready—he is invited and pressed to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ that he may be saved.

It is a blessed truth that there is nothing wanting on God's part for the salvation of man. If man is not saved, the fault is not on God's side. The Father is ready to receive all who come to Him by Christ. The Son is ready to cleanse all from their sins who apply to Him by faith. The Spirit is ready to come to all who ask for Him.

18. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it; I pray thee have me excused.

They began to beg off; they did not give a plain and flat denial, but "made excuse," thus acknowledging themselves the necessity of an excuse in some manner plausible, and thereby indirectly establishing the fact that they were under obligation to appear. It is to the honor of Christianity that so few deny its claims, and only ask to be excused from yielding to them.

With one consent. There is no reason to believe that they met together and framed a plan to insult their entertainer. The servant saw them separately and received their answers; the meaning is, with one spirit or accord, unanimously. We must not suppose that our Lord meant *absolutely* that all the leading men among the Pharisees begged off, for there may have been some exceptions, such as Nicodemus, for example.

The first said unto him, &c. He alleges he had bought the land without seeing it, being thus a type of the folly of worldly men, who spend their time, thoughts and strength on things of which they do not know the real worth. *Must needs: I am under the necessity of going away from home.*

He wished to see his possession that he might glory in it, as Nebuchadnezzar gloried when he walked in his palace and said: "Is not this great Babylon that I have built by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" (Dan. iv. 30.) *Have me excused*, not only now, but always. This entreaty to be excused is an acknowledgment of the groundlessness of the pretext, the worthlessness of the excuse, the impropriety of remaining away, the guiltiness of the man's conduct, and hence shows the greatness of his perverse, worldly state of mind.

19. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

The number *five* has no special significance. *To prove*, test their strength, endurance and docility. *I go; am going even now*—he has only just time to add, "I beg thee," while he already desires to be with the oxen.

20. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

Married a wife, &c. The other two, even when they plead their excuses, are themselves conscious that they are hardly valid, hence pray to be excused. This man makes no such request, seems to regard his excuse legitimate, and declares it in a tone of self-confidence which does not even deem an excuse as necessary. The greater peremptoriness of his refusal shows that the force of his temptation lay in the difficulty of reconciling conflicting duties. Attendance upon the feast, however, would not have involved the violation of any duty arising out of his new relation, but simply the holding it of inferior importance on a given occasion.

Here we have a vivid picture of the reception which the Gospel is continually meeting with wherever it is proclaimed. It is not avowed dislike to it which is so much to be feared. It is that procrastinating, excuse-making spirit, which is always ready with a reason why Christ cannot be served *to-day*. Let the words of our Lord on this subject sink down into our hearts. Infidelity and immorality, no doubt, slay their thousands, but decent, plausible, smooth-spoken *excuses* slay their tens of thousands. No excuse can justify a man in refusing God's invitation, and not coming to Christ.

In relation to the excuses of the men in the parable, let the following things be noted:

1. They were frivolous. They did not constitute a real hindrance. Neither sickness nor the death of friends detained them at home—they could have *foreseen* those events; but it showed great contempt to purchase land or oxen, or to contract a marriage at the time they had agreed to come to the feast. It would have been far better to have refused at *first*, than to accept the invitation, and then to make excuses when the feast was prepared and the master was waiting. 2. They were the same. Though variant in *form*, they were identical in *origin* and substance. They all manifest the same perverse state of heart, only the object of the sinful love is not uniform. 3. The excuses were all based on things *lawful in themselves*. The abuse of lawful things ruins many souls. 4. There was an ascending scale of contumacy in these men. The first pleaded *necessity*; the second did not plead necessity, but went to prove his oxen; the third gave a rude, point-blank refusal—"I cannot come." 5. All these excuses were probably false, for it is not likely that the first two would buy ground and oxen before seeing and trying them. As to the third, see on verse 20. 6. If these excuses were not false, they were *falsely applied*. Men often give a reason different from the *real* one, for not being Christians.

21. So that servant came, and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

Ministers must lay before their Lord their good or bad success. They must do it now at the throne of grace, going to God with thanksgivings, if they see the fruit of their labor, or with complaints, if they labor in vain. They will do this hereafter at the judgment seat of Christ, witnesses against those who persist in unbelief and perish, to prove that they were fairly invited, and witnesses for those that have accepted the call. (Heb. xiii. 17.) *Being angry*. God is not liable to the passion of anger, as the giver of a feast whose feast is despised. Yet these words are meant to teach us that unbelief and rejection of the Gospel are very provoking to God. At

the same time that they indicate the righteous displeasure of God toward the conduct of the guests; they show once more His earnest desire for their welfare, the unsatisfactoriness of all their excuses, and the justness of His expectation, that the invited would accept the invitation.

Quickly, in haste, soon these offers must cease, this opportunity shall have passed away. This second sending forth of the servant refers to the commission given to the Apostles of Christ to preach the glad tidings of His Gospel, and invite sinners to the feast of salvation. By the terms of this commission, they were to "*begin at Jerusalem*." And so here it is "*the streets and lanes of the city*" to which the servant is sent. *The poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind*. These words describe primarily the Gentiles, who were just in this miserable condition as compared to the Jews. Secondly, they describe all sinners to whom the Gospel is offered, who feel their sins and acknowledge their own spiritual need and poverty. In these words there seems to be a reminiscence of the precept Christ gave (verse 13.) Outward want and corporeal wretchedness are easily apprehended by the eye and the mind; hence under this description are meant all such as feel the necessities of their soul and their spiritual wretchedness. (Matt. v. 3.)

22. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

Much humility is shown in the servant's reply. He does not say, "I have done as thou hast commanded," lest it should look like taking some glory or credit to himself, but, "It is done as thou hast commanded," so that the instrument is lost and obscured in the luster of him that uses it. A true minister of the Gospel will thus feel. *Yet there is room*, the feast must have its full complement of guests. It has been prepared at a most costly price, and there must not be one vacant place at the table. Since now the will of the Lord has been executed, the invitation held out to others, and by them accepted, the greatness of Divine grace is expressed in these words, as is also its universality in verse 23. The *room* is, indeed, as vast as the merits of the atonement, capacious as heaven itself. This expression seems to show that there

is more willingness on God's part to save sinners than there is on the part of sinners to be saved, and more grace to be given than there are hearts willing to receive it.

23. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled.

Highways and hedges, that is, the public roads, and paths hedged in, and passing through or along by vineyards. *Compel them to come in*. It yields a most delightful consolation, that God orders men to be compelled, for it intimates that He *really* seeks our salvation, and *really* wishes us to be saved, as when a father is seriously concerned about the government of his son, he not only employs cold admonitions, but also a certain severity of discipline toward him, and constrains him to do what is required. The meaning is, that the moral compulsion of love must be used. Men are to be *compelled*, by argument, by the force of moral suasion, by commending the thing to their consciences, to *come in*, and partake of those benefits provided for them in the Gospel. *That my house may be filled*. It is only God's design of mercy to save sinners (Eph. i. 3), not any proper merit on the part of men, which is the ground of the invitation; it must not be that His grace has been prepared in vain. If some reject, others will thankfully accept it. "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength," &c. (Isa. xlix. 5, 6.) God will have a Church in the world, though multitudes may reject the Gospel.

24. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper.

¹Matt. xxi. 43 and xxii. 8; Acts xiii. 46.

The ingratitude of those that slight offers of grace and mercy, and the contempt which they put on God, is a very great provocation of Him. Mercy abused turns to the greatest wrath. When the ungrateful Israelites despised the land of promise, God "swore in His wrath that they should not enter into His rest." Grace despised is grace forfeited. They that will not have Christ when they may, shall not have Him when they would. Do not the words, *none of those*, &c., seem to indicate that a time would arrive when those who had made excuses would repent

of their folly, and seek to be admitted to the feast? But they would find the door shut against them. When they knocked, they would hear a voice within, saying, "I know you not." They would not be permitted even to *taste* the supper, of which they had once been invited to partake.

25. ¶ And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,

Jesus was now on His way to Jerusalem. The multitudes which followed Him probably did so only as He walked from the feast to His place of abode. At all events, it is to be supposed that they returned to their homes, as He approached the Jordan to cross over to Jericho. They were under a slight and transient impression. He knew that they had generally very erroneous notions of His kingdom, and were not prepared to submit to the losses and privations, or to encounter the various dangers and difficulties which certainly awaited His true disciples. From love, therefore, He is stern enough to portray to them in darkest colors the conditions of being His disciples, that they may be held back from foolish fancy, and led to self-examination. The temptation to admit people to full communion, and endorse and approve them as true Christians, before they have given evidence of decided grace, is very strong. The inclination to set before young inquirers the joys and comforts of the Gospel, without any proportionate exhibition of the cross and the fight, requires constant watching against. The close imitation of our Lord's conduct in this passage would probably greatly lessen the number of our communicants. But it may be doubted whether we should not gain in quality what we lost in quantity, and whether we should not be freed from many of those disgraceful backslidings and gross inconsistencies, which so often nowadays brings discredit on religion.

26. ¶ If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

¹Deut. xlii. 6 and xxxiii. 9; Matt. x. 37. ¹Rom. ix. 13. ²Rev. xii. 11.

The coming *to* Jesus is not the same as the coming *after* Him. (Matt. xvi. 24.) The latter presupposes that one is already

His disciple, the other that one desires to become such. *And hate not his father, &c.* None can suppose that Jesus disapproves of natural affection. This would have been to contradict the fifth commandment. His whole life and teaching, His conduct to His mother when He was on the cross, refute such a notion at once. By the words themselves He guards himself against possible misconstruction, for He says not only, *if any man hate not his father and mother, &c., but his own life also.* To know what He means by the hate in the one case, we have only to consider what it can mean in the other. One thing is said to be loved, another hated, in Scripture, when the former is much preferred, and especially when, out of regard to it, the latter is neglected and forsaken. (Comp. Gen. xxix. 31; Deut. xxi. 15-17; Mal. i. 3; Rom. ix. 13 and Matt. vi. 24.) Matthew x. 37 expresses the true meaning of the words *hate not*, when He says, *He who loveth his father and mother more than me.* The meaning of the expression, then, is, that love to Christ in order to be genuine must be supreme. Earthly affections, when they come into collision with His claims must be postponed. He has done more for us than our nearest relative. When, therefore, the drawings of affection stand in the way of our entire surrender to Him—our supreme devotion to His interests—their power must be rejected. If one or another dearly cherished object stands on one side, and Christ on the other, we need not love them *the less*, because we cannot go with them, but we must love Him *more*. Even *life* and its attendant blessings are also to be regarded as worthless, when placed in an opposing scale to the love of Christ, and therefore to be freely surrendered when required to be yielded up in His service. Without such a spirit, no one can be Christ's disciple. He builds without a foundation, who pretends to be the servant of God, without loving Him, or to love Him as he ought, without preferring Him above all things whatsoever.

27. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.
 *Matt. xvi. 24; Mark viii. 34; Luke ix. 23; 2 Tim. iii. 12.

Our Saviour had not been crucified, but death by crucifixion, though a Roman

punishment, had already been made by the Roman dominion familiar to the Jewish eyes. In adopting this symbol of self-denial, He had Himself, doubtless, even already in the distance, beheld this instrument of His own pain and ignominy. The *cross* is a large and comprehensive word, but, with whatever variety applied to individuals, it cannot lose its essential nature—it still carries the nails that pierce the body, and the shame that penetrates the soul. What our Lord here commands, is that each follower should bear, not his Saviour's cross, but his own. The requirement is, that as Christ bore His own cross to His own crucifixion, so His followers should bear each his own cross to his own crucifixion.

And come after me. Christ is here presented as our *example* in bearing of the cross. He is everywhere described as being ever *tempted*, just as we are, though ever victorious, as—alas!—we are not. Nor can we doubt the disciplinary character of this constant and painful struggle, when we are told that, “though a Son, He learned obedience by the things which He suffered,” that He was “made perfect through sufferings,” and by that means “became the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him.”

Those, therefore, who would be Christ's disciples, must *come after Him* in those sufferings which, under the blessing of God, purify and fit for heaven. Each follower, who has the spirit of the Master, is crucified in behalf of Christ and of truth—crucified in fact or in readiness. They are not ambitious to share with Jesus in the merit of His sufferings as the *Atoner*, for this is absolutely and forever impossible; but there is more than a willingness to participate with Him in the benefit of His sufferings as the *Purifier*, and also to be conformed to Him in their own sufferings. Paul joyfully suffered *the loss of all things, and counted them but dung*, that he might have the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, that he might know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death. (Phil. iii. 8-10; see Col. i. 24.)

Christ never discouraged a sincere soul

from following Him. But He has given a true description of the nature of His service, so that none can say that it was represented as easier than they found it. A poor Madagascar woman, who had undergone great persecutions, was once asked whether she was surprised when afflictions overtook her. She replied: "No, from the first we knew it was written, that through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom of God, and when our troubles came, we said, 'This is what we expected.'" This poor woman was once shut up for five months in an iron cage that prevented her moving a single limb, yet, having counted the cost, she proved more than conqueror through Him who loved her.

23. For which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?—Prov. xxiv. 27.

Though there is no immediate external connection between this parable or the one that immediately succeeds it, and that of the great supper, yet a certain internal relationship may be recognized. *That* points out the carnal mind and the love of the world as the main hindrance which stands in the way of the sinner's salvation, whilst *these* similitudes represent the discipleship of Jesus to be a difficult thing, which demands the greatest sacrifices, so that its cost should be duly and carefully estimated by all who would become His followers. *A tower*. We are not so particularly to understand a tower in the strict sense of the word, but an expensive edifice requiring a more than ordinary development of resources. The words, *which of you*, would indicate that Christ addressed the *multitudes*, and they were not of a character and condition to justify the supposition of their building a tower, such as kings, governors and military commanders generally erected. Possibly nothing more was meant than a *dwelling house*, on the top of which, according to the Asiatic manner, battlements were built, both to take fresh air on, and to serve for refuge from and defense against an enemy. It was also used for prayer and meditation. *Sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost*, whether he have sufficient to finish it? The meaning is, a man about to build a house, if he is wise, will be careful what he is doing. He wishes to have a house in which to shelter him-

self. His first duty is to sit down calmly, and to look over everything connected with his plans, to satisfy himself that he is about to commence what he will be able to finish. That plan alone secures a good beginning, and a happy, successful ending. In like manner, any one proposing to become a disciple of Christ should weigh deliberately whether he is able and prepared to bear all the losses, conflicts and persecutions incident to such discipleship.

29. Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30. Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

¶ Matt. vii. 27, xxvii. 3-8; Acts i. 18, 19; 1 Cor. iii. 11-15; Heb. vi. 4-8, x. 35; 2 Peter ii. 19-22; 2 John viii.

Mock means to *deride*, *scoff at*. The words, *this man*, throw a shade of sarcasm on the expression. In the ground-work of this parable there is an allusion, it would seem, to the spiritual edifice referred to in 1 Cor. iii. 11-15, which must be reared on the one Foundation which shall be tried in the day of the Lord. While the decidedly Christian life constrains the world to involuntary respect, half Christianity provokes it to not unnatural scoffing—so absurd is it to undertake to be disciples of Jesus, without seriously considering what difficulties are to be met with. We must take great care, however, that our deliberation and consideration of difficulties do not deter us from, but work in us, a steady resolution to go forward. The design of Christ here is not to discourage, but to prevent men following Him lightly and inconsiderately, and to admonish all in taking up the cross, to gird themselves with fortitude.

31. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first and consulteth, whether he be able, with ten thousand, to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? 32. Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassador, and desireth conditions of peace.

Here is another view of what a disciple of Christ must make up his mind to, if he would walk in the narrow path. The king who declares war against another without comparing his forces with those of his enemy, and considering whether the bravery of his troops and the conduct of his generals, will be able to make up what he wants in numbers, is sure to be ingloriously defeated, unless he humbly sue for peace before the matter comes to an engagement. The *two kings* here are the *man desirous to become a disciple*, to

work out his salvation, and *God*, with whose just and holy law he is *naturally at variance*; and the question for each man to ask himself is, "Can I with my ten thousand stand the charge of him who cometh against me with twenty thousand?" The numbers *ten thousand* and *twenty thousand* are designedly chosen to denote an entirely unequal military power.

Or else, that is, if on deliberation, he is of opinion that he cannot cope with the more powerful enemy—cannot reckon on a successful issue—he will not hazard a battle, but *sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace*, that is, an embassy, to obtain the terms on which peace will be granted. This is spoken for the sake of verisimilitude. It would not have comported with royal usage for the king to have gone in person to sue for conditions of peace. But this feature belongs exclusively to the costume of the parable. In seeking the forgiveness and favor of God, each one must go in person. He must go, as a penitent sinner, to God whom he has offended, seek to be reconciled, supplicate for pardon and peace. He must send his petition to his Heavenly King, plead with Him through Jesus Christ, the all-prevailing Mediator and Intercessor, *take with him words, and turn to the Lord*, his God, giving up all confidence in himself, and confessing that he is "poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked," that he is utterly unable to save or help himself, and cast himself on the forbearance, the compassion and the kindness of the Being whom he has offended.

It may be taken as the general teaching of both the parables, that the consciousness of our own incapacity should lead us to seek for a higher power, to join ourselves to the great empire of light and its Prince, which, in all circumstances, contends against the empire of darkness.

We are not to think of God as a *real* enemy to us, but only an *apparent* one. He desires our salvation, for He so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life. It is only because of our sins that we are obnoxious to His wrath and curse, and He invites us to come and *reason* with

Him, that our sins, though as scarlet, may be as wool, and though red like crimson, may be made whiter than the snow.

33. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

So likewise, that is, like the person who "began to build, and was not able to finish," or, like the king, who, being afraid to face his enemy, sent an embassy and desired terms of peace. *Whosoever he be of you*—of you who are in great danger of supposing that to be my pursuer is to be my follower—that *forsaketh not all that he hath*, who does not engage so earnestly and resolutely in the Christian warfare as to hold all things cheap in comparison to life eternal, and be ready to forsake them when I call him to it, *he cannot be my disciple*; he lacks the proper prerequisite of supreme love for me, he cannot be acknowledged by me as a disciple, for my disciples will be exposed to such trials and afflictions, that unless they prefer me, and the cause in which I am engaged, to all visible and temporal things whatever, they certainly will not steadily adhere to me, or continue faithful and constant in my service.

34. † Salt is good; but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned? 35. It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dung-hill; but men cast it out. † He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

† Matt. v. 13; Mark ix. 49, 50; Col. iv. 6; Heb. ii. 4-8. † Heb. viii. 8, ix. 44; Matt. xi. 15; Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 23.

These verses do not stand here independently, but are in some measure the application of the previous remarks. (Comp. Matt. v. 13; Mark ix. 50.) As the disciples were a purifying salt with reference to the unbelieving world, so was Israel (here represented in the people following) called to be such a salt for the heathen nations. *Salt is good*, literally, salt is excellent, *but if the salt have lost its savor*, is insipid, wherewith shall it be re-endowed with its saline power? It is such a vile and worthless thing, that it is neither fit to be used of itself as manure for the land, nor even to be cast upon the dung-hill, to be there mixed with other manure, *but men cast it out*—it is thrown out of doors, and trampled under foot like mire in the streets.

Our Lord could not have selected a more striking illustration of the worthless character of false discipleship than the one

here made use of. When the Church, or any of its members, fail to exercise the salutary influence for which they were created, they become not only absolutely worthless, but just objects of contempt to those who ought to have revered them, and been benefited by them. But what is all the disgrace which the useless professor of Christianity (the savorless salt) can draw upon himself here, in comparison to the shame and everlasting contempt which awaits him in the other world? (Matt. xxv. 30.) *If the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned?* That is, "if the salt lose its taste, how is it to recover it?" The sentiment intended to be conveyed seems to be this: A professed Christian, especially if he has seemed to be distinguished for the knowledge and experience of the saving truth, and by being so has seemed to be useful in making the world wiser and better, who becomes careless, and ignorant, and worldly, and irreligious—who loses the hold he seemed to have of truth—who ceases to manifest anything like its native influence on his temper and conduct, is in a state peculiarly deplorable. There is less probability that he shall be reclaimed than that the grossly ignorant, the openly profane, should be converted. An ignorant, wicked heathen is in a less helpless condition than an apostate Christian, whether the apostasy be avowed or silent. This is a sentiment very strongly expressed by the inspired

Apostles, who had the mind of Christ. (Heb. vi. 4, 8; 2 Peter ii. 20-22.) It is clear that "salt may lose its savor," and that true Christians might lose the principle of Divine life, unless God had engaged to preserve it, but in respect of all those mentioned in Scripture, who became like "salt which hath lost its savor," some intimation is annexed that there was previously a radical defect—"No root in themselves," "No oil in the vessel," "They went out from us, because they were not of us." (Jer. xxxii. 39-41; Ezek. iii. 20, 21; Matt. xiii. 20, 22, xxii. 11-14, xxv. 1-13; John xv. 2, 6-8; 1 John ii. 18, 19.)

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. This whole discourse (25-35) can only be fairly understood by remembering that the audience to which it was so kindly directed consisted of a retinue of loose, but admiring attendants, who applauded at every step, but who were liable, under opposing influences, to cry, *Crucify Him, to-morrow*. This expostulation aims to call them to consider their depth of feeling and the true method of being an earnest disciple of Jesus. Every man who had *ears to hear* Christ's touching words is earnestly admonished to accept them in their true force. How can the faculty of hearing be better employed than in attending to the word of Christ, particularly to the alarms He has given us of the danger we are in *of* apostasy, and run ourselves into *by* it?

1. Who watched Jesus in the house of the Pharisee? 2. What miracle did He perform? 3. What parable did He put forth? 4. What did one of them that sat at meat with Christ say? 5. What parable did He then utter? 6. Who are meant by the "servants"? 7. Who by the "bidden"? 8. What different excuses were made? 9. What was the result? 10. What did our Lord say to the great multitudes with Him? 11. How are we to understand what is said about a man intending to build a tower? 12. Explain verses 34 and 35.

CHAPTER XV.

¹ *The parable of the lost sheep: 8 of the piece of silver: 11 of the prodigal son.*

An eminent expositor thinks that this chapter forms a contrast with the severity of the discourse in the preceding chapter, the point of junction between the two being our Lord's rejection of some and acceptance of others. This view appears the more plausible from the character of the persons to whom the discourses were addressed; the former being, as this expositor thinks, a company of self-reliant, curious persons, who had flocked together and were following Jesus to hear or see something strange and wonderful, while the present company were poor, despised publicans and sinners. To the former He laid down, in the most explicit terms, the stern requirements of discipleship; the latter He invites to come to Him by the most tender and winning appeals.

² *THEN drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.—³Matt. ix. 10.*

Then does not mark time by the mere continuation of the narrative: it seems to have the meaning of *as*. We suppose these transactions to have taken place as our Lord passed through Perrea, on His way to Jerusalem. *All the publicans and sinners.* As *Bethabara* was probably the rallying point of His Peræan ministry, this being near Jericho and the fords of the *Jordan*, with their custom houses, many publicans and sinners would be in the neighborhood, to whom the preaching of our Lord presented powerful attractions. *Publicans.* (See on v. 29, 30, vii. 34.) By *all*, we are to understand all in that particular neighborhood where our Lord was. *Drew near unto him to hear him.* This expresses a confidential and continued concourse of such persons about Jesus, with the design of listening to Him.

² *And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.*
³ Acts xi. 3: Gal. ii. 12.

Pharisees and scribes. (See on xi. 42, 43, 44, xii. 1) *Murmured.* In their self-righteous spirit they were offended when they saw the publicans and sinners gathering around our Lord, and said: *This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.* This

objection was a most plausible one: it was one which was likely to turn the tide of opinion against Christ; nay, it was an objection which, if in a *certain* point of view it could have been substantiated, would have utterly condemned His mission. Had our Lord's fellowship with the persons here spoken of been such as this—that He descended to their level, that He held converse with them without rebuking their sins—*then*, indeed, the objection, “this man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them,” would be well founded, and nothing else of power or love on the part of Him who did so could wipe away that stain. Jesus, therefore, without giving heed to the spirit which prompted the objection, at once proceeded carefully to vindicate His conduct from any false construction which might be put upon it, while, at the same time, He took occasion from the accusation itself to set forth, under the most remarkable imagery, the true nature of that fellowship in which He Himself rejoiced, His receiving sinners, and eating with them.

³ *¶ And he spake this parable unto them, saying,*

The three parables which follow, the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Prodigal Son, refer all to the same subject, and describe the same fact. They contemplate that fact, however, from opposite sides, and produce accordingly different pictures. The two first set forth to us mainly the *seeking* love of God, while in the third there is exhibited the *receiving* love of God. Whilst the two first teach the same doctrine, they differ in this: that in the case of the living creature, the loss is sustained through its spontaneous wandering; in the case of the inanimate silver, the loss is sustained through its inherent inertia. Both parables alike represent the sinner lost and the Saviour finding him; but in the one case the loss appears due to the positive activity of an evil will, and in the other to the passive law of gravitation. Not that, in the spiritual sphere, one sinner departs from God by an exercise of his corrupt will, and another is drawn away by the operation of an irresistible law: it is one transaction represented successively on

two sides. The representations are different, but both are true. In the fallen, sin is both active and passive. The sinful select their own course, and go astray in the exercise of a self-determining power; they also gravitate to evil in virtue of an inborn corruption, which acts like a law in their members.

Some have noticed gradations in the three parables: 1. A gradation of guilt—the stray sheep wandering from the shepherd, and scarcely aware of the error into which it has fallen, as representing the stupid, foolish sinner; the lost coin, as representing the sinner as altogether ignorant of himself; and the prodigal son, as representing the daring and willful sinner. 2. A gradation in the value of the lost articles, rendered prominent by the decreasing proportion in the number of what remained, compared with what was lost—one out of a *hundred*, one out of *ten*, one out of *two*; this last one, also, being a *son*, for whom there was a yearning of affection, and depth of longing desire for his recovery from sin and restoration to virtue and happiness, which casts very far into the background any grief for a lost animal or piece of silver. Certain is it that all the three parables represent a loving disposition, for it is love which moves the man to seek his sheep, and the woman her money, and love, also, which prompts the father to take back his lost son.

4. What man of you having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

See Matt. xviii. 12.

What man of you? The Saviour here, as also in verse 8, appeals to that universal human feeling which impels, as well the man as the woman, to seek what is lost, and to rejoice with others over what is found again. *Having an hundred sheep.* That the shepherd in the parable means Christ there can be no doubt. His own assumption of this character and name in John x. is conclusive here. The *lost sheep* is sinful man, as originally created safe and happy, in want of nothing, lying down by pastures of tender grass, and by the waters of quietness, but now straying on the bleak and barren mountains of sin. *Lost sheep.* What expression could exhibit

more graphically the hopelessness of a sinner's state? The lost dog finds his way back to his master or to his kennel, but the lost sheep rarely finds its way back to its fold; it goes farther and farther into the wilderness, till it dies of hunger, or is devoured by beasts of prey. No lost sinner ever yet of himself found his way back to God. Man by nature is lost to God, and to the grand purposes of his creation. And he has lost God—His image, His friendship, communion with Him, and the hope of His favor and beatific presence.

The shepherd missed his sheep. What an idea does this give of Christ's surveillance over us! His eye is upon every stray sinner in all his wanderings. He sees him from first to last, as He missed him at the first. How natural the conduct of the shepherd! The mother, who has many children that are all equally dear to her, and would not have one of them taken from her, when one of them falls sick and comes into jeopardy, finds a difference among the children; the sick one becomes now the dearest, and she can neither interest herself much in anything besides, nor pay much heed to it. Thus, then, the conduct of Christ, as set forth in this parable, is in harmony with the analogies of nature.

As soon as the shepherd misses the sheep, he goes after it. Christ's love is an active, working love. He did not sit still in heaven pitying sinners. He left the glory which He had with the Father, and humbled Himself to be made in the likeness of man. He came down into the world to seek and save that which was lost. *The shepherd pursued the sheep till he found it.* He knew the nature of the country in which the sheep was straying, and also the nature of the sheep that was straying there. He knew the roughness of the mountain passes, and the silliness of the solitary, truant sheep. He divined accordingly what track it would take. He followed and found the fugitive. In like manner Christ's love has no ebb and flow; it has no flux and reflux; it has all the fixity of an everlasting principle, and all the fervor of an inexhaustible passion. He never lets the eye of His compassion light upon a sinner without, by and by,

letting the weight of His power to save be felt by that sinner also.

5. And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

We have here a sweet intimation of the compassion of Christ. He transfers our burden to Himself, becomes a victim for us; thence bearing us, he carries us to His own flock, bears, feeds, sustains and governs us. As the shepherd dealt with the sheep, not by law or force, as well he might, driving it before him like other sheep, and letting it go itself, but took all the labor and trouble upon himself, that the sheep might have ease and rest, so Jesus lightens the sinner's return by this exercise of love, helping him to overcome hindrances, removing difficulties and strengthening weakness with Divine power. We are here taught that the work of saving the sinner is done by Christ alone. This fundamental truth, however, that salvation is begun, carried on and completed by the Saviour alone, does not, of course, come into collision with another fundamental truth, which expatiates on another sphere, and is represented in the parable of the Prodigal Son, that except the sinful do themselves repent, and come to the Father, they shall perish in their sins. *Rejoicing.* Whatever trouble the shepherd may have had, whatever care and anxiety he may have gone through, all is merged in the grandeur of that flood of joy that the lost sheep is brought back to the fold. So Jesus lifts His ransomed, His redeemed one, by His strong hand and His almighty power, and "makes a show openly" of what He has done in delivering His poor, erring child, and He does all this "rejoicing." His joy begins not when the work is over, but when the work begins.

6. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me: for I have found my sheep which was lost.
¶ 1 Peter ii. 10, 25.

The shepherd succeeded in his search which took him from home, or from his house, and he returned home with his lost one found. The evident purpose of the introduction of such words is to impress upon the hearts of all God's ransomed ones this precious truth, that when the Saviour carries them by His power from

the place of danger to the place of safety, *He* is going home, and therefore so are *they*. His home is their home; His place of rest theirs. The kingdom of God recognizes two successive home-comings in the history of every citizen: one when, by the discriminating mercy of the Redeemer, though he was an exile, through the regeneration he enters a state of grace; another when, under the leading of the same chief, in the resurrection he enters a state of perfect glory. It is over the first, the repentance of a sinner, our Lord tells us, a jubilee is held in heaven. They do not wait till the ransomed one shall appear in bodily presence near the great white throne. There is no need, the entrance into grace insures the entrance into glory. By the *friends and neighbors* we are to understand the different orders of heavenly beings. The heart of our Lord Jesus Christ is here represented so full of joy and love that it were impossible for any one to make Him appear more kind and joyful.

7. I say unto you, That likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.
¶ Luke vi. 32.

I say unto you. The truth which follows these words is wonderful in the extreme. It assures us that heaven and earth are united by a chord of sympathy. They are not isolated provinces of the same empire, but bound together by a tender tie. The inhabitants of heaven take a deep interest in the souls of our race. Heaven is not in sight of earth, but earth is in sight of heaven. The Church above forever watches the Church below. *Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth*—a single sinner—*any* sinner, in a cottage or an almshouse, a palace or a prison, on a throne or in a hovel; any one, even though his condition be so obscure, and his abilities so mean, that his conversion stops in his own soul's salvation. *One sinner that repenteth*—trusts in God's goodness through Christ, believes in the forgiveness of sins, receives Jesus as a Saviour, and shows a changed mind, by amendment of life both outwardly and inwardly. Over one such sinner there is and *shall be joy in heaven*, joy with the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and with the holy angels.

More than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance. It is not, of course, meant that a repenting sinner on earth is worthy of more esteem than ninety-nine confirmed saints in heaven. All that is meant is, that the interest for the time being is concentrated upon him, and the others are comparatively lost sight of.

8. † Either what woman having ten ^{*}pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?
^{*}Gr. *Drachma*, equal to the denarius. See Matt. xviii. 23.

This parable, as we have shown, is not identical with the one preceding it. Our Lord never repeats the same sentiment under the same symbol, or with precisely the same contemplated effects. The disproportion between nine to one, and ninety-nine to one, gives this parable an increased emphasis over the former one. In the case of the wandering sheep, there may remain some faint, instinctive recollection of the fold, and when darkness and danger surround it, or the pangs of hunger fasten upon it, some instinctive effort to recover what it has lost. But the figure of the *piece of money* tells us that, in the case of the lost soul, even the consciousness of his condition is wanting. He is lost, but he knows it not. He is in danger, but he heeds it not. *Either what woman.* By this is meant the Holy Spirit. Sinners, when regenerated, are "born of the Spirit." *Ten pieces of silver*—in the original a *drachma*. The value of this coin, which was a Greek one, was about fifteen cents. These ten pieces seem a small amount; for the woman, however, the loss of one was of great importance, since her whole treasure consisted of the ten *drachmæ*. Thus the idea is brought out, that not the material worth of what is lost, in itself, but the worth which it has in the eyes of the possessor, is the cause of the carefulness of the love which seeks it. Notice the increasing value of the *sheep*, the *coin*, and the *son*, by the diminished number from which they are lost. The *sheep* is but the hundredth part of the flock; the *coin* is but the tenth part; the *son* is one of two. *If she lose one piece.* Here the primeval dignity of the soul, in its original state, is compared to a piece of silver, having the image of the great Sovereign of the universe stamped upon it. "God made

man upright," bearing resemblance to Himself in His intellectual and moral attributes, capable of an endless progress toward perfection. But man, being left to the freedom of his will, degenerated from the rectitude of his nature, so that his original glory is departed from him. In this state of moral corruption, he is compared to a piece of beautiful coin, for a time lost in the dust of the earth, where its former luster is miserably tarnished, and its value diminished. (Lam. iv. 1; Isa. i. 22; Jer. vi. 30.)

Doth not light a candle. This indicates an earnest desire to recover what was lost. The lighting of the candle may be explained by the help and hints of such passages as these: Matt. v. 14, 15; Phil. ii. 15; Eph. v. 13. When the Spirit of God takes the Divine Word, and, carrying it into the recesses of a man's soul, reveals its foulness, danger and misery, then the sinner discovers his lost condition, and, feeling his need of a Saviour, cries, "What shall I do to be saved?" *And sweep the house.* Here is further evidence of the great effort made to recover the lost coin. The sweeping, which disturbs the house and reveals a foulness that, so long as it lay unstirred, was perhaps never suspected, may indicate the convictions, the alarms, the dread discoveries, the searchings and agitations of heart, which not unfrequently accompany conversion. Thus is it with the Word of God. For only let that Word be proclaimed, and much of latent aversion to the truth becomes open enmity, much of torpid alienation against God is changed into active hostility, and there is an outcry against the troublers of Israel, the men that will not let the world alone. But amid all this, the Holy Spirit is diligently seeking for the lost, not ceasing labor, care or diligence, till the lost is found. Let it be noticed that the coin was lost in *the house*. It is unfortunate to lose a piece of money in the house, but much more so in a field, forest or sea. Sins forgiven are lost in the sea, but souls under condemnation of the law and in danger of hell, are lost in the house. Though deformed by sin, and defiled by corruption, yet, being within the house, they are within the region of hope and the reach of mercy.

And seek diligently till she find it. The search, it will be observed, was not only earnest, but successful. The Holy Spirit seeks lost sinners by speaking to their conscience, by affliction, by the preaching of the Gospel. The sinner is *found*, when he realizes his lost condition, and yields to God on the terms of the Gospel.

3. And when she hath found it, she calleth *her* friends and *her* neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

Her friends and her neighbors. The feminine gender is employed in the original. It was natural that the *woman* should call together her female friends to rejoice with her. The angelic hosts have not the distinction of sexes; they are considered, however, as remaining at home, or going abroad—abroad, in manly attire, prepared for war; at home, in the domestic and peaceful garb of females. By this verse a gracious God, accommodating His language to our ideas, expresses His joy in saving sinners, and in seeing sinners saved. As the angels here referred to are not “in heaven,” as they were represented to be in the last parable, some suppose that they are angels that walk up and down the earth, are present in the congregations of the faithful, offended at aught unseemly among them (1 Cor. xi. 10), joying to behold their order, but most of all rejoicing when a sinner is converted.

10. Likewise, I say unto you, [†]there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

[†]Ezek. xviii. 23, 32; Matt. xviii. 10, 11; Acts v. 19; Heb. i. 14.

Not as in the former parable (verse 7), *joy shall be*; but *joy is*, &c. Neither is it here said, “more than over ninety and nine,” &c. This special characteristic of the joy seems to be left as its crowning one, when the whole story of fallen and restored humanity shall be made known from first to last, with all its springs and all its consequences. Here there is the present joy expressed when one after another of the family of man is taken out of the kingdom of darkness and brought into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. (See on verse 7.)

11. [‡] And he said, A certain man had two sons:

This parable has justly been called “the pearl and crown of all the parables of Scripture.” “What human teacher,” says one, “has placed the folly of human nature, and the consequence of this folly, in such

simple, clear and graphic colors before our eyes, and, in contrast therewith, has given of the long-suffering and compassion of God so inexpressibly rich an exhibition, as is done in this discourse, which, also, has no parallel for its adaptation to the capacity of all!” *Two sons.* One of the greatest difficulties meets us in this first verse. It is evident that God, as specially manifested in the Gospel, is represented by the father; but who are represented by the two sons—the elder, who remained at home, and the younger, who went away? On this point three distinct interpretations have been suggested: angels and men, Jews and Gentiles, or Pharisees and publicans. We shall probably more fully and more correctly ascertain the mind of the Lord by employing all these, than by selecting one.

12. And the younger of them said to *his* father, Father, give me [§]the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them *his* living.

[§]Deut. xxi. 16, 17. [‡]Mark xii. 44.

Father, give me the portion, &c. His claiming of his share in this technical and almost legal form is a delicate touch, characteristic of the entire alienation from all home affections which had already found place in his heart. Though treated with kindness, and provided with every reasonable comfort, he was restless and uneasy. He found the sober, rational enjoyments of his father’s family dull and insipid, and he sighed after other amusements and pleasures more suited to his taste. He wished to get rid of godly discipline and pious restraints, which were irksome to him. He longed to be independent, to be his own master, and to follow his own inclinations. To have restrained him would have been to increase his alienation and disobedience. The portion asked by the younger son, according to the Jewish laws of inheritance, would be the half of what the elder brother would receive. (Deut. xxi. 17.) This request, in its spiritual significance, is the expression of man’s desire to be independent of God, to be a God to himself (Gen. iii. 5), and to lay out his life according to his own will and for his own pleasure.

And he divided unto them his living. The case would seem to have been that the younger son, having a right to expect a

certain proportion of his father's movable property ("goods") on his death, was also entitled, by usage, to demand that portion before the demise of his father—probably that he might thus be enabled to establish himself in life. Thus we see, in patriarchal times, that Abraham in his lifetime gave his other sons their portions and sent them away, while Isaac (as does the elder son in this instance) remained with him and succeeded to the residue of the inheritance.

13. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

Not many days after—a litotes for *very soon after*. He made off as soon as possible. *Gathered all together*. His means were now all in a movable form, perhaps converted into money or into valuables that he could easily carry, and he was fully prepared for a profligate squander. *And took his journey into a far country*. Here is exhibited the spirit of apostasy and departure into open sin. *Wasted his substance in riotous living*—scattered even the patrimony which through the kindness of his father had become *his own property*. The essence of all sin is separation and departure from God. Men are said to remove themselves far from God, who lay aside all fear of Him. (Ps. lxxiii. 27.) The gathering together of all and departing intimates, on man's part, the collecting of all his energies and powers, with the deliberate determination of getting, through their help, all the gratification he can out of the world—the open preference of the creature to the Creator. It is only when man is, or imagines himself to be far from God, that he dares to indulge his vicious propensities, and when thus distant, by putting God far from His thoughts, he continually sinks deeper, so that all the powers and faculties of his soul are misapplied and squandered upon what is worthless and vile.

14. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

His profligacy soon made way with his means. Distress, disgrace and ruin was all the fruit which he reaped from his sin and folly. For a time he enjoyed himself, and took his pleasure. But this was soon over. His substance was squandered, and

he felt the pinchings of want. His distress was increased by the fact that a mighty famine had arisen in the land. Without money, without friends, in a foreign country, far from home, his affliction must, indeed, have been great. The words, *he had spent all*, mark the internally degraded state of the sinner, his ignorance, his unbelief. (Eph. iv. 18, 19; Rom. i. 21.) From the expression, *there arose a mighty famine*, we learn that the desire of good, the longing after bliss, is never wholly extinguished in the human heart, however far sinners are from rightly understanding it, and if at times it seems quite gone, and sinners think themselves happy, other times again come when they *begin to be in want*, i. e., to have a keen feeling of their necessities, their misery, and the unsatisfying nature of all that is temporal; for they hunger or seek after what can afford a better and truer satisfaction to the wants of their nature.

15. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

Joined himself, i. e., became a servant to a citizen of that country. As he himself was an alien and a foreigner, he hired himself to a citizen. Is not this citizen the devil, or one of his angels? Is any man a citizen of the realm of sin? *To feed swine*. This was deemed an ignoble employment among all nations, and especially by the Jews, to whom swine was an abomination. His proud heart was yet unsubdued; his confidence in his own resources not altogether exhausted. Human sorrow is not all or always godly sorrow. Convictions and terrors seldom bring the wanderer at once to the door of mercy, he generally tries in succession several other methods in order to obtain relief. (See Isa. ix. 10; Jer. v. 3; Isa. lvii. 10; Amos iv. 6-10.) As the prodigal attempted to keep body and soul together, by the most desperate and loathsome expedients, rather than throw himself on his father's compassion, so an alienated human soul, conscious of having offended a good God, and therefore hating deeply the Holy One, will bear and do the will of the wicked one to the utmost extremity of misery, rather than come home a beggar, and be indebted for all to a Father's love.

16. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him. ¹Isa. xlii. 20, iv. 2; ²Lam. iv. 5; ³Hosea xii. 1; ⁴Rom. vi. 19-21. ⁵Psa. cxlii. 4; ⁶Isa. lvii. 3; ⁷Jonah ii. 2-8.

The pods of the kharub trees were called *husks*, from their resemblance to a horn. With these *husks* the prodigal would gladly have filled his belly—the expression was chosen of design—all he could hope from them was just this: to dull his gnawing pain, not that he should with them truly satisfy his hunger, for the food of beasts could not appease the cravings of man. None but God can satisfy the longings of an immortal soul. As the heart was made for Him, so only He can fill it. *And no man gave unto him*, rather, *for no man*, &c. No one, in this state of extreme scarcity of food, gave him anything to eat, and hence he was glad to eat the husks. What a reverse! Was this all the fruit he gained by leaving his father's house and following his own inclinations? Such are the consequences of sin. Sinners will forsake one another in the time of adversity.

17. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

¹Jer. xxxi. 18, 19; ²Ezek. xviii. 28; ³Acts ii. 37.

He came to himself. The prodigal's first act, when light dawned on his darkness, was to converse with himself. Hitherto he had been acting the part of a fool and a madman. It is a characteristic of the insane that they never know or confess their insanity until it has passed away. The two beings to whom a man living in sin is most a stranger are himself and God. When the right mind returns, he becomes acquainted with both again. We cannot return to ourselves until God returns to us. It is a beginning of happiness for a man thoroughly to comprehend the misery of sin, and to envy the happiness of those who serve God.

18. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee. 19. And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

¹2 Kings ii. 3, 4; ²2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13; ³Psa. xxxii. 5; ⁴Jer. xxxi. 6.

In the midst of the prodigal's distressing thoughts, a ray of hope broke in. The very remembrance of his father's kindness, which pierced him to the soul, yet raised an idea in his mind that possibly he might yet receive him, and at least might save him from perishing. This idea, once raised, is cherished as his only hope. *I will arise.*

He did not propose to remain at a distance, until, by efforts of his own, he should make himself, in some measure, worthy to resume his original place in the family, but to come in want of all things, that out of his father's fullness all his wants might be supplied. *And go to my father.* In returning to his father, though bringing with him poverty and hunger, he would leave the instruments of his lusts, his associates, habits and tastes behind. This is a distinctive, discriminating feature of true repentance. *And will say unto him*, &c. By the term *father* he expresses his confidence in the still unchanged and loving disposition toward him of his much-wronged parent. He determines freely and fully to confess his great sinfulness, without any attempt to excuse, palliate or diminish it. We are not to suppose that a man can turn to God in his own strength, or that a sinner's repentance alone is sufficient to reconcile him with his God, that he needs not a Mediator and a sacrifice. Both these errors are sufficiently guarded against by innumerable passages of Scripture—the first by such as John vi. 44, the second by such passages as Heb. x. 19-22. We cannot expect that every portion of Scripture is to contain the whole circle of Christian doctrine.

20. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.—Acts ii. 39; Eph. ii. 18, 17.

He not only resolved to go, but went—went promptly, too, suffering no delay. Many are always on the eve of resolving, “I will arise and go to my father,” and not a few come to the very point, but the prodigal carried his purpose into action, with firm, unshaken confidence in the exercise of his father's love. *But when he was yet a great way off*, &c. The kind and tender-hearted father no sooner sees his returning son, than, forgetful of all his guilt, he only feels *compassion* for his present sufferings. Regardless of his own age and dignity, he runs to meet him, and instead of upbraiding him with his faults, *falls on his neck and kisses him*, giving every evidence, according to the custom of the East, of a cordial and welcome reception. The gentlest motions in the sinner's heart are known to the all-seeing God. He with His grace antici-

pates the penitent in all the steps he takes in order to return to Him. (Isa. lxx. 24; Psa. xxxii. 5.) He is careful to receive him with a fatherly tenderness, since it is His goodness which causes him to return. *He runs*; that is, while we languish, He draws us by His holy Word and Spirit. *He falls upon our neck*, embraces us, supports us in trouble and distress, for we should be overwhelmed with grief and sorrow were we not aided and upheld by God. *He kisses us*; that is, He intimates to us the remission of sins, and assuages our pains and fears by new light and consolation.

21. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.—Psa. li. 4.

Father, I have sinned against heaven, &c. He recognized his sins to have been committed not merely against man, but against heaven, or against God. Sin is committed against God. We may injure ourselves by our evil, we may wrong our neighbor; but, strictly speaking, we can *sin* only against God; and the recognition of our evil, as first and chiefly an offense against Him, is of the essence of all true repentance, and distinguishes it broadly from many other kinds of sorrow which may follow our evil deeds. As the prodigal confessed his sin by a name of love—*Father*—we learn that the love of God is the foundation of true repentance. The chief motive to the hatred of sin is, because it is contrary to the goodness of God, and because He, who is the best of all fathers, is offended thereby. Confessing of sin is a sign of true repentance. (Prov. xxviii. 13; Jer. ii. 35, xvi. 10; Hos. xiv. 2; 1 John i. 9, 10.)

And no more worthy to be called thy son. Melted, and, in some measure, confused by the undeserved, unexpected warmth of his reception, the son bethought of the speech which, at the turning-point of his repentance (verses 18, 19), he had resolved to address to his father, and began to recite it, but stopped short before he came to the words, *make me as one of thy hired servants*. Some say the father may have cut the prodigal's speech short by giving aloud an order to the servants for the kind and honorable reception of his child. There is, however, a deeper significance in the

omission. The son lying on the father's bosom, with the father's tears falling warm on his upturned face, is some degrees further advanced in the spirit of adoption than when he first planned repentance before the swine in his master's field. There and then the legal spirit of fear, because of guilt, still lingered in his heart; he ventured to hope for exemption from deserved punishment, but not for restoration to the place of a beloved son. *Now*, the spirit of bondage has been conclusively cast out by the experience of his father's love, and he could not finish the speech which he had prepared—he could not ask for the place of a servant, for he was already in the place of a son.

22. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23. And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: 24. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. (Gen. xli. 42; Esther iii. 10 and viii. 2. Verse 32: Eph. iii. 1 and v. 14; Rev. iii. 1.)

Let it be noted that the father does not say a single word to his son about his profligacy and wickedness. *Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him.* The words, translated "the best robe," are extremely expressive in the original—the robe, that first one, the most distinguished, that chiefest, that best one. In the East, wedding-garments hang upon the pegs in the hall, and an individual had only to take one and put it on. The father commanded the servants, "Bring forth one of the robes: there is going to be a great festival, a high feast; take from my child the rags which have degraded him as the prodigal, and clothe him in the robe that indicates the accepted son." By this is especially signified that act of God, which, considered on its negative side, is a release from condemnation, a causing the sinner's iniquity to pass from him—on its positive side, is an imputation to him of the merits and righteousness of Christ. *And a ring on his hand.* This was a mark of honor, confidence and distinction. (Gen. xli. 42; Ex. iii. 10; James ii. 2.) In ancient times, rings were invariably used for seals. The giving this ring or seal, therefore, was the evidence that the prodigal was now no more a servant, nor to seek a servant's place, but a son that had received a father's welcome. (2 Cor. i. 22; Rom. viii. 23; 2

Cor. v. 5.) *And shoes on his feet.* The Apostle speaks of being "shod" with the preparation of the Gospel of peace: so the putting shoes on the prodigal's feet teaches that he was not to wander any more, but, like Abraham, to "walk before God;" like Enoch, to "walk with God," and to lead a life that should be the evidence of his sonship.

And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it. Eastern hospitality always had in a state of readiness a calf, or some such animal, to be slaughtered and served up. (See Gen. xviii. 7, xli. 2; 1 Sam. xvi. 20, xxviii. 24; 2 Sam. vi. 13.) This "fatted calf," literally, "the calf—that fatted one," seems to have been one kept for a special occasion. It was killed—plainly not for sacrifice, but simply for the feast, or the festival to which they were called. *And let us eat, and be merry.* As the shepherd summoned his friends (verse 6), and the woman her female neighbors (verse 9), so here the householder his servants, to be sharers in his joy. It is the very nature of true joy—that it runs over, that it desires to impart itself. *For this my son was dead, &c.* The prodigal's life before his repentance, and the change when he repented, was a state of *death*, after this change, it was a state of *life*. All life, even when most prosperous, without fellowship with God, is but death and misery. (Eph. ii. 5, 6.) *Was lost*, in all that pertains to virtue and happiness. *Is found* marks deliverance from the condemnation of sin. *And they began to be merry.* The strong contrast between this expression and the one at the end of verse 14 ought not to be overlooked. Unconverted man begins to be "in want." Converted he begins to be "happy."

25. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing.

In the field, engaged in the duties of superintending the farm. As he approached the house, *he heard music and dancing.* It would appear that a party of musicians and dancers had been hired to enliven the rejoicing entertainment given on this occasion. In Oriental towns there are large numbers of musicians and dancers who derive their subsistence from their exertions on such occasions. The guests

and members of the family are spectators and auditors merely.

26. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. 27. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

The cool and calculating selfishness of the elder brother betrayed itself in the fact that, instead of entering the house, as his position in the family would have justified, and learning by personal observation the cause of the unwonted joy, he called one of the servants, and sought information from him. *And he said unto him, &c.* The father was overwhelmed with the moral transformation of his son, but the poor servant, who attended merely to duty, and had no sympathy, except with outward facts, replied to the elder brother, that his brother had returned, had been welcomed, and was received by his father, *safe and sound*—none of his limbs broken or features defaced.

28. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him.

¹1 Sam. xvii. 28; Isa. lxxv. 5.

Our Lord now holds up to the murmuring Pharisees of verse 2, a likeness of themselves, for them to recognize and avoid. As the elder son, because of his cold, selfish and contracted disposition, is angry at the joy which welcomes the prodigal home from his wanderings, so have these men murmured at the mercy with which Jesus had received the publican and sinner. *Came his father out, &c.* He went forth to meet the prodigal; now, though he saw his son acting in a manner so unworthy of the affections and duties of a son, he does not utter one word of anger or rebuke, but entreats him to lay aside his anger and enter the house.

29. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: 30. But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

¹Isa. lviii. 2, 3; Zech. vii. 3. ²Mal. iii. 14.

The words, *many years*, stand opposed to *as soon as*, in verse 30. *Do I serve thee.* The word *serve*, here, is the service of a slave, and hence some have held it as characterizing the Pharisee's devotion to God. *Neither transgressed I, &c.* In this profession of invariable obedience, contrasted with the implied disregard of the father's

command, evinced by the desertion of the younger son, there is strongly displayed the self-righteous spirit of this elder brother. He boasts of perfect obedience, while at the very time his conduct belies his words, and shows that he was devoid of all true filial respect and moral uprightness. *A kid*, far inferior to the *fatted calf*. See how expressive the language of this brother is of the chagrin, envy and hatred of his heart. He does not say, "as soon as my brother is come," but "as soon as *this thy son*," this contemptible fellow, "which hath devoured *thy* living with harlots." That was not matter of fact. The elder son had had his share, and the younger had had his. It had ceased to be his father's, and became his own. There was no evidence that he had wasted his father's living "with harlots." This was a mere guess, because there was nothing in his past history to warrant it. It may have been, or it may not, but there was no evidence on which the son could say so. Next he says, "*as soon* as he was come," not, "as soon as he repented and reformed himself, and became a better man," and, as if there were sinfulness and excessive indulgence on the father's part, the elder son added, "thou hast killed for him the *fatted calf*." Envy, jealousy, ill-will, uncharitableness, were all compressed into this speech.

31. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. 32. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother

was dead, and is alive again: and was lost, and is found.—u Verse 24.

Son. The father speaks to him affectionately, and does not immediately drive from him the elder brother. *Thou art ever with me*. Always, and therefore it was not necessary that there should be any special rejoicing. *With me*. It is better to be happy with a father than with a multitude of friends. *All that I have is thine*, for the younger brother had received his portion, and the elder was sole heir to his father's goods. *It was meet*, i. e., right, proper, *that we*—the elder son is affectionately included in this general expression, notwithstanding his contemptuous and sneering words—for *this thy brother*, purposely repeated from *this thy son*, but with different manner, denoting the deepest affection. *Was dead and is alive*, &c. (See on verse 24.) This answer of the father was wisely intended and adapted to avert the wrath and jealousy of the elder brother. From the spirit manifested by the elder son, it was evident that *he* was lost, as well as the younger, but as far as the parable reveals his history, he was not like him found again. He, like his brother, went astray, but unlike him, for anything we know to the contrary, refused to come back. That which really in the last resort hinders a man's salvation and secures his doom, is not his sin, but his refusal to know and own that he is a sinner, and flee to God, through Christ, for pardon, peace, hope and heaven.

1. Who drew near to Jesus? 2. Why did they do so? 3. What did the Pharisees and scribes say? 4. Explain the parable of the lost sheep. 5. Who are the "friends and neighbors" referred to? 6. What is said of one sinner that repenteth? 7. Who are the "ninety and nine just persons," &c., referred to? 8. How does the second parable differ from the first? 9. Who are meant by the "younger son," in the third parable? 10. Who by the "elder son?" 11. What were the evidences of the genuineness of the prodigal's repentance? 12. How was he received by his father? 13. What does this teach us? 14. What do we learn from the spirit and conduct of the elder son?

CHAPTER XVI.

1 *The parable of the unjust steward.* 14 *Christ reproveth the hypocrisy of the covetous Pharisees.* 19 *The rich glutton, and Lazarus the beggar.*

The object of our Lord's teaching in this chapter is to awaken and quicken us all, so to use this world as not to abuse it, so to manage all our possessions and enjoyments here as that they may promote our happiness, and not increase our misery, in the world to come. He also aims to rouse us to take the warning given us by the written Word, and not to expect immediate messages from the other world.

AND he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward: and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

Unto his disciples. Not exclusively the Apostolic circle, but rather the whole body of those who had attached themselves to Jesus to be taught of Him, whom His word had found out in the deep of their spirits, and who, having left the world's service, had decidedly passed over into the ranks of His people. *A certain rich man.* This may denote an ancient nobleman of very high rank—probably a satrap, or the governor of a very large district of country. This *rich man* is not like the one referred to in another parable, as preparing to build new barns and storehouses in the miserable hope of a future of peace, prosperity and comfort; nor like another spoken of at the close of this chapter, who was "clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day," but a rich man who was careful of *his goods*. He does not appear to be exceedingly anxious as to their increase, nor yet lavish and luxurious in their expenditure, but he takes good care not to lose sight of them. *Which had a steward.* This officer was one who superintended domestic concerns, and ministered to the support of the family, having the products of the field, business, collection of rents, &c., put into his hands for this very purpose, and having only to render annually to his lord his accounts of all his expenditures and receipts. As our property increases, our personal control over it diminishes; the more we possess, the more we must intrust to others. Every man stands in the relation of a

steward to God. *Wasted his goods*, had been profuse and profligate, embezzling his master's substance, and concealing the fraud for a time under the folds of complicated accounts. Some person discovered the facts and informed the proprietor. Not to use what has been intrusted to us according to the design and intention of God is to waste it. Nothing is concealed from God.

2. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

How is it that I hear this of thee? This is the expostulation of indignant surprise—an intimation of the abuse of the confidence that had been placed in him, to which he had so illy responded, and in which he had shown ingratitude and inconsiderate forgetfulness of his obligations: of *thee*, whom I had trusted so far, to whom I had committed so much. Never is rebuke so poignant as when it is given in soft and gentle accents. *Give an account, &c.* Produce thy books of receipts and disbursements, that I may see whether the accusation against thee be true or false. Here is expressed God's holy zeal against all unfaithfulness, and that the application made by men of earthly goods is far from being a matter of indifference to Him. *For thou mayest, &c.*, literally, "Thou wilt not be able to be steward any longer." It is impossible that thou canst be. I cannot allow thee. In this intimation of the removal of the steward, God's righteousness shines forth. A short respite, however, was still allowed him, which he might employ, and which is to be referred to the period of life granted to every one, always uncertain, and never long in continuance. There are three things at the death of an unfaithful man which are very terrible: 1. His being obliged to appear with a guilty conscience before holiness itself. 2. His having an exact account to give of his whole life, and of whatever he has received. 3. His seeing himself deprived of all forever.

3. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

*Isa. x. 3; Hos. ix. 5; Acts ix. 6.

The steward seems to have given up his

case as soon as he was accused. He attempted no excuse. He uttered not a word in his own defense. There was no proof on the one side, and no denial on the other. He said *within himself, what shall I do?* &c. He thus displayed his perplexity. He felt that he was about to lose his position and support, and he was, for the moment, at a loss what course to pursue for a livelihood. With habits, both mental and physical, cast in another mould, he cannot win his bread as a laborer, and his pride revolted against the prospect of becoming a beggar on the spot where he had long been owned as master by the multitudes. The aphorism repeated for many hundred years is still true—"Honesty is the best policy." No man ever gets rich with that which is not his own. A little, with the conscience at peace with God and man, is sweet; much, amid the fever of remorse, generates no happiness.

4. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

So he said within himself, after a little consideration; a lucky thought, as he doubtless accounted it, coming into his mind. As he was not yet ousted from office, he resolved to use his power, for the little time it remained, in such a manner as to make himself friends, who would succor him in his need. *That they may receive me into their houses*—that the tenants or debtors of his lord, who paid their rents or debts, not in money, but in wheat, oil or other produce of the ground they rented or possessed, might give him entertainment in their houses, or provide for him some other means of subsistence. Dishonest men are often found to have very sharp wits.

5. So he called every one of his lord's debtors *unto him*, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

It is quite evident, from the debts being stated to consist of corn and oil, that these *debtors* were the *tenants* of the steward's lord, and consequently that the transaction refers to the terms on which the corn-fields and olive grounds were held.

6. And he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. 7. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, a hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write four score.

An hundred measures of oil, supposed to

be the Hebrew *bath*, containing nearly nine gallons. What the quantities mentioned may have been in relation to our standards, is only a question of critical and antiquarian interest. The amount of the debt has no influence on the meaning of the parable. The point which is really important is the proportion between the amount owed by the debtors and the amount exacted by the steward. Olive oil and wheat were two of the staple products of the country. *Take thy bill*, obligation, bond. These bonds, it seems, were kept in the hands of the steward, and of this we have instances in the Roman law. *Sit down quickly*, &c., says the steward. No time to be lost. If you do not change your bill now, you will never be able to do it afterward. If you do, I will take care in my reckoning that you are not exposed. He displays his tact and shrewdness in taking advantage of the very last moment at his disposal, and also by implicating others with him in his fraud. The parable narrates the case of two debtors as a specimen of the whole. Wicked as the steward was, he had an eye to the future. Disgraceful as his measures were, he provided well for himself. He did not sit still in idleness, and see himself reduced to poverty without a struggle. He schemed, planned and contrived, and boldly carried his plans into execution. How different the conduct of most men about their souls! In this general point of view, and in this only, the steward sets us all an example. Like him we should look far forward to things to come, provide against the day when we shall have to leave our present habitation, and secure a home in heaven. (2 Cor. v. 1.)

8. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

^bJohn xii. 36; Eph. iv. 5, 8; 1 Thess. v. 5.

The lord, i. e., the landlord, the same lord as in verses 3 and 5. Great care should be taken so as not to confound the *lord* or master of the steward here spoken of with the Lord Jesus Christ. *Commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely.* He did not commend him for his injustice. He turned him out of his office on that account, but as a man of the world, he could not withhold from him commenda-

tion for his cleverness and shrewdness in the plan he had formed for his future provision and comfort. Our Lord now proceeds to make the application. By *the children of this world* we are to understand worldly persons, those who make this world their god, are devoted to the cares, pleasures or pursuits of the present life; mind earthly things, have their treasure here, and desire no better portion than this world can yield. These, says Christ, *are in their generation, i. e., are for their life, or for their day, wiser, more shrewd and active than the children of light* are in relation to their eternal good. By *the children of light* are meant Christians; those who, having been "some time in darkness, are now light in the Lord"—whose understandings have been enlightened to see the truth as it is in Jesus, who no longer walk after the course of this world, and profess to be seeking a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Our Lord's meaning is, that Christians are not as prudently careful over what spiritual interests they possess, not as watchful that none shall in any way rob or defraud them of them; not as clear-sighted and watchful in regard to these interests as was this *rich man* in relation to "*his goods*," neither are they as quick and prompt to take advantage of every moment, in order to make provision for the time to come, or as eagerly vigilant not to let slip any opportunity which might be improved for this purpose, as was this *steward* in relation to his future prospects in the world.

9. And I say unto you, "Make to yourselves friends of the **mammon* of unrighteousness, that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."
*Dan. iv. 27; Matt. vi. 19 and xix. 21; Luke xi. 41; 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19. *Or, riches.

And I say unto you—I give you the following counsel and advice. *Mammon* is a Syriac word, and signifies riches or wealth. In verse 13 our Lord beautifully represents this as a person whom the folly of men had deified: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." *Mammon* may be called *unrighteous*, because it is generally unrighteously obtained, unrighteously retained, or unrighteously employed. Trade is not unlawful, neither is property founded in sin; but because the spirit which pervades trade, if not purified by Christianity,

and as it exists in heathen countries, and as a heathenish element in Christian countries, is *unrighteous*, mammon, riches or property is so called. That cannot be unrighteous in itself which God gives to so many persons by His blessing their diligence, frugality and economy, so as to make them rich, that they may be a source of blessings to others by their beneficence. We are not to suppose that we can *make to ourselves* friends, in the sense here intended, by *ill-gotten wealth*. This must be restored, as in the case of *Zaccheus*. (Luke xix. 8; see, also, Isa. lxi. 8.) Neither can any one fulfill the injunction of the text who is still an unpardoned sinner. The first thing to be attended to, by those who would make a right use of their money, is, that they themselves be justified, be at peace with God, and have Him for their friend. (Eph. ii. 14.) The verse evidently teaches that Christians are to make use of their money, which has been righteously obtained, not only for their own necessities, but also for the support of the cause of the Gospel, and for the relief of the afflicted and destitute. (Matt. ix. 13; Luke vi. 36; Matt. v. 7; Luke xii. 13; Matt. v. 44; Heb. xiii. 16.) *That when ye fail*—become a bankrupt. The Greek may be rendered, "when ye suffer an eclipse." Death brings us under it; our health, strength, beauty, honor, glory and renown, our powers of body and mind will suffer an eclipse. In the final hour we shall *fail*, as far as all earthly resources are concerned. *They may receive you into everlasting habitations*. *They, i. e., the friends* just spoken of, which are to be referred to God. *Everlasting habitations*. This expression must evidently mean heaven. Heaven will be the eternal home of all God's people. There those will be received with welcome who brought forth fruits worthy of repentance, whose love labored, whose hope produced a patient continuance in well-doing, and made them steadfast in the faith, who, as they had the ability, were "rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate." (1 Tim. vi. 17, 18.)

10. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much."^a Matt. xxv. 21; Luke xix. 17.

Faithful. Our Lord commends, not pru-

dence, but *fidelity*; for fidelity begets and directs prudence. *In that which is least.* This refers to the mammon of unrighteousness, or the earthly stewardship committed to us. *Is faithful also in much*, i. e., *the true riches*. If we are faithful in this world's *least*, we shall be faithful for eternity's *much*. This, of course, does not mean that honesty about money can justify our souls, but that dishonesty about money is a sure sign of a heart not being "right in the sight of God." *Unjust in the least . . . in much.* Our least sin is committed for eternity, and, if unforgiven, must result in an eternal woe proportionate to its guilt. We may, by our degrees of unrighteousness, more or less sink ourselves deeper into perdition; but the slightest unremoved condemnation is eternal. It is an acknowledged truth, that a man's conduct in little things is a sure test of what he is likely to do in great things.

11. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous *mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?—*Or, *riches*.

Jesus speaks from a heavenly point of view. He calls the blessings of salvation by antithesis **THE TRUE**, because they are not, like the unrighteous mammon, untrustworthy, deceitful and unsatisfying, but fully deserve the name of genuine and true good, whereby the highest ideal is realized. (See John i. 9; Heb. ix. 24.) The doctrine is, that he who is dishonest and unfaithful in the discharge of his duties on earth, must not expect to have heavenly treasures, or to be saved.

12. And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

The argument here is the same with that in the preceding verse, though the expressions are different.

Mammon is called by our Lord, not unrighteous merely, but also a strange thing (*another man's*), intimating that it is a temporal good, and not always abiding, like that which is spiritual. We are made Christians in order to enjoy heaven and eternity, and therefore heavenly and eternal treasures are those alone which are properly *our own*. And these are *given* to us, not of debt, or claim, but of grace.

13. † No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.—Matt. vi. 24.

If any one should think that possibly he might reconcile the criminal employment of temporal riches with the attainment of eternal life, our Lord anticipates and explodes this vain refuge. *Mammon* is the Syriac word for riches, and seems here to be an idol. The covetous man is an idolater, and therefore no true servant of God. The point contended for in respect to God is not exclusive *possession*, but exclusive *dominion*. Other things may occasionally, for a certain time, and to a certain degree, have possession of our minds, but they must not *rule*, must not *reign* over them. We can serve but one master faithfully and effectually, and that one must be God. The concerns of this life may have their *due* place in our hearts, but they must not aspire to the *first*. This is the prerogative of religion alone—religion must be supreme and paramount over all.

14. And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.—Matt. xxiii. 14.

The Pharisees who were covetous, of a very worldly spirit, literally, *silver lovers*, *derided him*, as a visionary, who did not understand human life, or only appeared to despise the world, because (as they suppose) it was out of His reach. The original word is very emphatic, signifying *they mocked Him*, by a scornful motion of the mouth and nose, as well as by what they spake to Him. It is natural for the human heart to shrink from the touch of truth. Ministers often find that their hearers have been offended by the most searching parts of their sermons. Though it be painful to be told of our sins, we should not become angry when this is done; it is better to know our sins *now*, than to wait till we stand before God.

15. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

‡ Luke x. 29. † Ps. vii. 9. ‡ Sam. xvi. 7.

By shunning the company of sinners, and your care of external appearances, you make specious pretenses to extraordinary sanctity before the world, and you seldom fail to acquire a great reputation for it. You also endeavor to make it appear that ye can still feel an insatiable thirst after the present world, and yet secure the blessings of another—that ye can reconcile God and mammon. *But God*

knoweth your hearts—you cannot justify yourselves before Him. He sees through your pompous and plausible disguise. He knoweth that ye are *alive to the world*, and *dead to God and goodness*. For that which is highly esteemed, &c. How often do we see this solemn truth illustrated! Riches, honors, rank, pleasure, are the chief objects for which the greater part of mankind are living; yet these are the very things which God declares to be “vanity,” and of the love of which He warns us to beware! Praying, Bible reading, holy living, repentance, faith, grace and communion with God, are things for which few care at all; yet these are the very things which God in His Bible is ever urging on our attention!

16. *The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the Kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

†Matt. iv. 17 and xi. 12, 13; Luke vii. 29.

The law and the prophets, the Old Testament, the whole revelation of God's will in that form. Until John—as far as, down or up to John, as the last in the succession of such agencies. Since that time, &c. You forget that the dispensation of the law and prophets was only intended to pave the way for the better dispensation of the kingdom of God, which was to be ushered in by John the Baptist. That dispensation has come. John the Baptist has appeared. And humble men, who feel their wretchedness as sinners, are receiving the glad tidings of the kingdom, whilst ye proud, self-righteous men are deriding me and my doctrine.

17. *And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fall.

†Ps. lii. 26; Isa. xl. 8, li. 6; Matt. v. 18; 1 Peter i. 25.

The idea that the law shall never cease to be authoritative and obligatory is expressed by a comparison, familiar to the style of the Old Testament, with the frame of nature or the constitution of the universe, a striking emblem of immutability. The immutability of the Divine Word, in relation either to happiness or misery, yields as much comfort to the righteous as it gives despair to the wicked.

18. *Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery.

†Matt. v. 32 and xix. 9; Matt. x. 11; 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

Here is an example of the permanence and the violation of the law. The Phari-

sees had unconverted hearts. They professed to love God; but in reality they hated Him. How did they show that they hated Him? By hating His law. They did not keep His holy commandments. Jesus reminds them of one great sin, which they frequently committed. They broke the seventh commandment by putting away their wives in order to marry others. They had lowered the standard of the law of divorce. They had allowed divorce for trivial and insufficient causes. They had perverted and abused, for licentious purposes, the Mosaic law (Deut. xxiv. 1), that if “uncleanness” were found in a wife, the husband might “write a bill of divorcement, and put it into her hand, and send her out of the house.” What was then permitted, and that, too, only to prevent greater evils, and because it was found to be necessary in view of the hardness of the hearts of the people, was now regarded as precept, and when thus regarded, sadly misinterpreted and applied. This language of our Lord is to be interpreted in harmony with Matt. v. 32, on which see notes. According to this law, adultery or unchastity, is the only sufficient reason for divorce.

19. † There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:—Judg. viii. 26; Esth. viii. 15.

From the very earliest days it has been a matter of dispute, whether this portion of our Lord's teaching ought to be regarded as a parable or a real history. It would be safe, perhaps, to regard it as mainly historical, and partly figurative; in other words, as the relation of events which actually occurred, though somewhat colored with borrowed imagery, which the great Teacher, according to His usual custom, employed to convey the important instruction communicated. It is, however, of no real importance to inquire whether this is the history of men who actually lived at Jerusalem, or whether our Lord borrowed only general and probable characters, and worked them into a parable. In either case the moral is the same. It cannot, for a moment, be supposed that Jesus would use any embellishment, even in a parable, that would leave any impression on an honest mind inconsistent with truth. If the parable in part consists of

drapery, it is not the drapery of error, but of truth.

A *certain rich man*. No name is given to him, because it would have been invidious, and have provoked ill-will, to name any one in such a description, but he is commonly called *Dives*, a Latin word signifying a *rich man*. The omission of the name is a means of generalizing the representation. We are not told how this man became rich. *Which was clothed in purple and fine linen*. Purple was the color in that age appropriate to princely rank. It was obtained from the blood taken from a vein in the throat of a certain shell-fish. The wearing of fine linen (called *byssus*) was then, because the manufacture of it was in its infancy, considered a proof of the greatest wealth, or greatest luxury. *And fared sumptuously every day*. He gratified his palate with the most exquisite food which nature, assisted by art, could furnish. The original expression is very expressive, signifying that *he feasted splendidly*, or *delighted and cheered himself with luxury and splendor every day*. This rich display was not reserved for special days, festivals or galas, it was his ordinary style. It is important, in order that the edge of the parable may be retained, that the character of *Dives* as evil should not be exaggerated. He is not said to have been dishonest, nor a calumniator, nor a false accuser, nor an oppressor of the poor, nor avaricious, nor a spendthrift, nor an adulterer, nor a murderer, nor a criminal. There is not exhibited to us any flagrant crime or peculiar wickedness in his conduct. But the design of the parable is to admonish us, not that a monster of wickedness shall be punished in another world, but that the man who, though not chargeable with doing much *ill*, does little or no *good*, and who, though not perhaps *intemperate* or *sensual*, is yet careless about the situation of others, and exists only for the gratification of himself, the indulgence of his own appetites and vanity, shall not escape punishment. It shows the danger of living in the *neglect of duties*, though not chargeable with the *commission of crimes*, and particularly the danger of considering the gifts of Providence as our own *property*, and not as a *trust* from our Creator, to be employed in

His service (*i. e.*, in doing His will), and for which we are accountable to Him.

20. And there was a certain beggar named *Lazarus*, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

This *Lazarus* was not the brother of *Martha* and *Mary*. *Lazarus* was by his own name known in heaven. The rich man was not distinguished by any name (verse 25); he had only a genealogy in this world (verse 27). This is the only one of our Lord's parables in which He introduces parties to us by *name*. *Which was laid at his gate*—placed there by others, who either wished to rid themselves of him, or to secure to him what fell from the rich man's table; in sight of the rich man, that he might not have ignorance to plead. *Full of sores*, entirely covered with them, ulcerated, one of the natural effects of a mendicant's life. It is one of the blessed fruits of the Gospel, that it provides for the poor and the suffering. We are apt to wonder at the ways of Heaven, and perhaps tempted to arraign the conduct of Providence, in crowning so worthless a man as *Dives* with wealth and prosperity, whilst all that diversified the lot of *Lazarus* was scene after scene of poverty and pain. But let us suspend our judgment. We see but one link in the great chain of Providence. We live but in the infancy of being. The great drama of life is but begun. When the curtain between both worlds is undrawn, the morn will arise that will light the Almighty's footsteps in the deep, and pour full day upon all the paths of His providence.

21. And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

And desiring to be fed, &c. The expression, in the original, does not afford a sufficient foundation for supposing that he was refused the crumbs, the word rendered *desiring*, not implying so much in the Scriptural use of it. Nor does such supposition seem to be warranted by the facts, that the rich man afterward immediately knew *Lazarus*, asked that he might be made the instrument of the relief wanted, and that, though the patriarch upbraided the rich man with the carelessness and luxury in which he lived, he said not a word of the refusal of the crumbs to the beggar at the gate. Besides, as the beggar

appears to have been laid there repeatedly, this implies some success. *Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.* The act attributed to the dogs accords, as is well known, with their instincts and habits. It was soothing to the sufferer in the sensations of the moment, and healthful in its effects. The true Christian, building on the one foundation, even Christ, must be ready not only to *do*, but to *suffer*. He must make up his mind to a cheerful acquiescence in the will of God, even if God shall be pleased to send him manifold "evil things" in his outward lot—even if he be dependent on the merest charity for his daily food.

22. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;
—Ps. xci. 11, 12; Heb. i. 14.

Lazarus died first. The earliest death is not the evidence of judgment; the ripe is oftenest taken—saints are frequently gathered first. No mention is made of Lazarus being *buried*. His poor, diseased body was probably hid out of sight in any obscure grave which the hand of charity might provide for it. But his dust was precious in the sight of that God in whom he trusted, and in the resurrection morning God will show how much He prizes the redeemed bodies of His saints. *Abraham's bosom*, we may assume, was already an expression employed by the Jews to designate the place of the blessed beyond the grave. It is plain that heaven is a *place*. The joys of the blessed after death are here represented as a feast. Abraham, the father of the faithful, is placed, as it were, at the head of the table. Heaven will be a feast of the intellect, of love, of memory, of anticipation. *And was carried by the angels*, that is, his soul. (See Heb. i. 14; Ps. ciii. 20.) It is not in vain that Christ assigns this office to the angels, whom we know to be given as ministers to the faithful. How great and sudden the change! He who was lately the sport, not only of man but of dogs, is now honored by the presence and kind offices of angels! *The rich man also died, and was buried*. Death is no respecter of persons. "It is appointed unto all men once to die." No earthly resources, however great or grand, can shield us from the

assault of the destroyer. The rich man was buried, we may suppose, with much pageantry and pomp. But what a mockery was this marked attention to the lifeless body, now that his soul had passed into punishment!

It must not for a moment be supposed in relation to the parties mentioned in the parable, that *because* the one was rich he was excluded from heaven, and *because* the other was poor he was admitted into heaven. The true lesson here taught is in one aspect the very reverse of this: an ungodly man is in the highest sense poor, in spite of his wealth, and a godly man is in the highest sense rich, in spite of his poverty.

23. And *in* hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.—Ps. ix. 17; Prov. v. 5; Isa. xli. 9.

Both were now in the world of spirits, but the beggar in that world was in Abraham's bosom, and the rich man in torment; the ransomed man entered the Father's house and joined the company of the holy, the ungodly gravitated according to his kind into the place of woe. It is evident that hell is a place. *He lifted up his eyes, being in torments*. In interpreting these expressions we must carefully remember that our Lord's language is adapted to our understandings. It is plain that lost souls can suffer intensely before the resurrection, but how a lost soul can be susceptible of *bodily* suffering before the resurrection of the body we cannot fully comprehend. *And seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom*. Among the Jews, the rabbins say that the place of torment and paradise are so situated that what is done in one may be seen from the other. The Grecian poets represent the abodes of the blest as lying contiguous to the regions of the damned, and separated only by a great impassable river, or deep gulf, in such a way that the spirits could talk with one another from its opposite banks. Grecian mythologists also tell us that the souls of wicked men lie in a river of fire, where they suffer the same torments they would have suffered while alive had their bodies been burned. It does not follow, however, from these resemblances, that the parable is formed on the Grecian mythology, or that our Lord

approved of what the common people thought or spake concerning those matters, agreeably to the notions and language of the Greeks. In parables, provided the doctrines inculcated are strictly true, the terms in which they are inculcated may be such as are most familiar to the ears of mankind, and the images made use of such as they are best acquainted with.

24. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

*℣*zech. xiv. 12. *℣*isa. lxvii. 24, *℣*mark ix. 44, &c.

He cried and said. He did not acknowledge the justness of his punishment, or the greatness of his sins. *Father Abraham.* His pride on account of his fleshly descent from Abraham, and his Judaism, had gone with him; he thinks of laying claim to salvation as a right wholly standing in himself; and is quite blinded in regard to his unfilial state of heart (*Matt. iii. 8; Rom. ix. 6, 7*), though he recognizes Abraham as his father. In such a state of mind his condition must have been doubly painful to him. (*Matt. vii. 22, &c.*) *Send.* He still treats Lazarus as of little account, as afterward Moses. (*Verse 30.*) It appears probable, that those are always present to the thoughts of the wicked whom they remember to have been ill-treated by them. *Cool my tongue, &c.*—marking the continuance of his lusts and desires, which were now without any means of satisfaction, and consequently increased his torment; the thirst bespeaks a longing desire after an absent good, the suffering of pain a present feeling of distress; the flame is an image of the highest degree of pain, he begs, not for entire deliverance, but only for alleviation; he sues for mercy who himself had been so unmerciful. As this is the only prayer to a saint recorded in the Bible, and it, though for a small relief, was not answered, of course, prayers to saints are unwarranted. *Tormented in this flame.* The evil passions which now rankle in the bosoms of sinners here will hereafter produce in them inconceivable anguish, by being released of every restriction, and being left unshackled to revel in full and exasperated expansion forever. Each passion which it was the concern of a lifetime to indulge, but which it must

now be the employment of an eternity to deny, will be as a fire-sheet around them. The punishment of the wicked is often represented by Christ, not only in parables either, but in His explanations of parables, by fire. (*Matt. xiii. 41, 42; Mark ix. 44, 46, 48; see also 2 Thes. i. 7, 8, 9; Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11.*)

25. But Abraham said, Son, remember, that thou, in thy lifetime, receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.—*℣*Job xxi. 13; *℣*Luke vi. 24.

Thy good things—the things you have chosen as your portion—the things of earth, and time, and sense, in the enjoyment of which you lived contentedly and happily, as *your own*. God put them into your hands as a steward, to be taken care of and used for Him; you have appropriated them to yourself, as if they were your own property. They have been *your good*. *Receivest.* This word, in the original, has great emphasis. It expresses the *receipt in full*—the exhaustion of all claims on. “Those that were good things *to thee came to an end* in thy lifetime; there are no more of them.” Whatever *can* be derived from the guilty use of the things of earth, apart from the Giver, and in neglect of fidelity to Him, had been received by this rich man. He had taken them as *his own*, and he received his reward. They gave him as much as they could, and then left him to perish. *But now he is comforted.* His afflictions are all past, he has exchanged his place at the gate, for a home in heaven, his want for abundant satisfaction of every necessity, his rags for a robe of glory, his obscure and despised condition for the sweet society of God and angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect. *And thou art tormented*—thy gorgeous attire has given place to a robe of flame, instead of sumptuous fare thou art fed with bitter tears, and gnawed continually by a condemning conscience, and instead of thy past elegancies and comforts, nothing but torment and anguish surround thee. Memory will follow the soul into the future state. There is reason to believe that no impressions made upon the human soul in connection with the body are ever permanently erased. In the coming world of vivid intellection and endless meditation,

“—the *past* lives o’er again
In its effects, and to the guilty spirit
The ever frowning *present* is its image.”

25. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

*2 Thes. i. 9; Rev. xx. 10 and xxii. 11.

* *Besides all this*—as to the favor thou desirest from the hand of Lazarus, it is a thing impossible to be granted, for *between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, a great chasm, or void, is established. They which would pass from hence to you, cannot*—if any should be so compassionate as to desire to help you, they are not able—*neither can they pass to us, that would come from you*—but we must still continue in an unapproachable distance from each other, the passage is forever closed, the *great gulf* is forever fixed. The righteous will be “forever with the Lord.” The wicked shall be “unjust still.” The same word, “eternal,” is written on the gate of heaven and the gate of hell. (Matt. xxv. 46.) There is nothing intermediate between heaven and hell. How the doctrine of a *purgatory* can be reconciled with this verse, it is impossible to imagine. How solemn the thought, that whether a person be happy or miserable in the future world, his state is unchangeable!

27. Then he said, I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28. For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

The first prayer of the rich man (verse 24) being refused, he offered another prayer for himself. Alas! what could give us a more complete idea of the hopelessness of his condition in the world of woe, than his ceasing to ask for mercy! Having given himself up to his fate, he now appeals from justice to grace, and begs that Lazarus might be sent to his brethren, and warn them, *testify unto them*, the certain truth of the immortality of the soul, and of a future state of rewards and punishments, and of the infinite importance thereof. Some have inferred from this request that in the future world some good and kind sentiments may remain in those who are themselves forever lost. It is more reasonable to suppose that there was in this request of the rich man the tormenting thought, that he had himself been the means, by his example and his life, of leading his brothers into careless, irreligious habits, which were most likely to involve them in eternal

ruin, and that their presence with him in torment would increase his misery. He dreaded the reproaches of those whom he had loved in a wrong manner, and thereby made companions in his misery. How important it is to consider what kind of influence we are exercising on the community at large, and especially on those whom Providence has placed under our immediate supervision and control! Those who have sinned together on earth, instead of being able to lighten each other's burden in the world of darkness, will only increase each other's misery.

29. Abraham saith unto him, “They have Moses and the prophets: let them hear them.” Isa. viii. 20 and xxxiv. 16; John v. 39, 45; Acts xv. 21 and xvii. 11.

They have Moses and the prophets—from these they might learn (not that it is wicked to be rich and blessed to be a beggar, but) that a rich, infidel, sensual worldliness meets a terrible retribution from a just God. From this answer of Abraham, it would seem that these five brethren were all Jewish believers; they had these writings in their hands, but they did not permit them to influence their lives. It is often asserted that the doctrine of future punishment is not taught in the Old Testament. Doubtless, like the correlative doctrine of heavenly reward, it was not announced in terms as distinctly as in the New. But the general doctrine of retribution, both for the righteous and the wicked, is abundantly taught there, so that, as the reply of Abraham indicates, men were sufficiently warned of the coming wrath. (Gen. ii. 17; Num. xv. 31; Ps. vii. 11; Prov. xiv. 32; Ezek. xviii. 4, 31, xxxiii. 8; Dan. xii. 2, &c.)

30. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

Whatever aspect of sympathy the rich man's prayer may have worn, it is plain that it breathed the spirit of audacity. It assumed that there was not sufficient evidence of the authenticity, genuineness and fullness of the Old Testament Scriptures to warrant their reception as a rule of faith and practice. It was a reflection on the wisdom of God, inasmuch as He had made a revelation unaccompanied with evidence adequate to produce conviction of its Divine origin, or so obscure as not

to be intelligible for practical purposes. And it was a reflection on His justice, because it had doomed *him* to suffering, for not yielding to the influence of a system of truth thus imperfectly attended with marks and means of credibility. It was, indeed, an effort on his part, for tacit exculpation of himself, by taxing God with having formerly used only imperfect and improper means for his conversion. Thus is it evident that the sinner carries with him to his cheerless abode the same disparaging thoughts he had of the Bible when on earth, and the same conceit of wisdom superior to the Divine, which supposes itself competent to dictate a more effectual method of salvation than God was pleased to appoint. Thus regarded, therefore, we are prepared for the disposition which was made of this prayer.

31. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.—John xlii. 10, 11.

"They will repent," says Dives, but Abraham replies, "They will not even be persuaded." "They will repent," says Dives, "if one went unto them from the

dead;" but Abraham, with a prophetic glance at the world's unbelief in a far greater matter, further replies, "No, not if one *rose* from the dead;" as if he had said, "A far greater act than you demand would be ineffectual for producing a far slighter effect. You suppose that wicked men would repent on the return of a spirit; I tell you they would not even be persuaded by the rising of one from the dead." The state of heart in which the Bible is rejected is such, that it would not be overcome or changed by any external evidence. This was the point which Jesus had mainly in view in this part of the parable. He wished to explain the nature of faith, to show that it is a moral act, an act of the will and affections no less than of the understanding, something therefore which cannot be enforced by signs and miracles; for where there is a determined alienation of the will and affections from the truth, no impressions which these miracles will make, even if they be allowed to be genuine, will be more than transitory.

1. With what parable does this chapter open? 2. What was the parable of the unjust steward designed to teach? 3. What is said about "two masters?" 4. What did Jesus say to the Pharisees when they derided Him? 5. What is said about the possibility of the law falling even in the smallest particular? 6. What is said of "a certain rich man?" 7. What of "a certain beggar?" 8. What is meant by "Abraham's bosom?" 9. Is memory a source of anguish to the lost? 10. Why did Dives wish Lazarus to be sent to his five brethren? 11. What answer was made to the request that this should be done? 12. Explain verse 31.

CHAPTER XVII.

1 *Christ teacheth to avoid occasions of offense.* 3 *One to forgive another.* 6 *The power of faith.* 7 *How we are bound to God, and not he to us.* 11 *He healeth the lepers.* 22 *Of the kingdom of God, and the coming of the Son of man.*

The awful parable of the rich man and Lazarus, which had been specially spoken to the Pharisees, seems to have caused them to depart in silence. But, though silent, they were not penitent. They were still bent upon opposing Christ. Their busy and active hostility may have led them to influence others to forsake the company of Jesus, and to such they proved

stumbling-blocks in the way of salvation. Some suppose that our Lord may now have had in His mind the stumbling-block that conduct like that of the rich man toward Lazarus put in the way of weak believers, or that possibly He referred again to His lesson about "faithfulness in little things" in the parable of the Unjust Steward, and proceeded to warn His disciples not to give occasion to the enemy to blaspheme.

THEN said he unto the disciples, "It is impossible but that offenses will come: but woe unto him through whom they come! 2. It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

*Matt. xviii. 6, 7, on which see notes; Mark ix. 42: 1 Cor. xi. 19.

Offenses, i. e., *stumbling-blocks*. So the word is elsewhere translated. (Rom. xi. 9, xiv. 13; 1 John ii. 10.) Christianity, or true religion, is considered as a path, or way, and whatever occurs that tends to prevent men from beginning to walk in it, or to turn them out of it, or to hinder them in pursuing it, is an offense or stumbling-block. (Rom. xiv. 13, 21.) *It is impossible*, &c. Considering the general corruption of human nature, the snares of the world and the temptations of Satan, it cannot but be that, one way or other, offenses will be given and taken. *But woe unto him*, &c. Woe unto the man who is the intentional author of these offenses by persecution, or deceitful infidelities, or heresies, or ungodly example.

A millstone, &c. Drowning a person with a stone tied about the neck was an ancient mode of punishment. *One of these little ones*. One of these feeble believers. Probably Jesus pointed to some of the weak and unestablished followers who accompanied Him and the twelve Apostles. There are always many who are "babes in Christ." (1 Cor. iii. 1.) Those who are *strong* in faith must be careful not to injure the *weak* in faith, even as the *elder* children in a family must carefully avoid hurting the tender frames of the younger children.

3. ¶ Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. 4. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.
*Matt. xviii. 15, 21 on which see notes. *Lev. xix. 17; Prov. xvii. 10; James v. 19.

Take heed to yourselves, that you may neither offend others, nor be offended by others. *If thy brother*. If, in this community of Christ's little ones, there shall be one who trespasses against thee who art also one of the same childlike brotherhood. Personal offenses or aggrievances are here referred to. *Rebuke him*. While our Lord cautioned them against all angry passions, and that quarrelsome temper which they naturally produce, He thus prescribed a seasonable and prudent reprehension of any fault that might be committed, accompanied with forgiveness on the part of the person injured, as the best means of disarming the temptations that

might arise from such a disposition. *And if he repent, forgive him* immediately, without insisting on any rigorous satisfaction. Whether a brother acknowledges his offense or not, our hearts must stand ready to forgive the wrong done to us, and pray for forgiveness on his behalf at the hands of God.

Seven times in a day denotes frequent repetition. *And turn again to thee, saying*, &c. This cannot mean that we are not to forgive men unless they do repent. At this rate there would be much bitterness constantly kept alive. But it does mean that when there is no repentance or regret for an injury done, there can be no renewal of cordial friendship, or complete reconciliation between man and man. *Thou shalt forgive him*. Thou shalt consent to be at peace with him, and hold him as not having trespassed. You may be conscious of his changing and careless disposition, but beware of cherishing a purpose of revenge. It is important to compare the precept which Christ here gives for private intercourse with that which He ordained for the exercise of discipline in the Church. (Matt. xviii. 15-18.) To the individual brother, there is *not* permitted what at last may be allowed to the Church, namely, to put one out as a publican and heathen. The forgiveness must be repeated as often as even the least trace of repentance is shown.

5. And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

If we consider these words—in reference to *the Being* to whom they were addressed—"the Lord," they teach us that He is the source of grace and the object of worship. If in reference to *the persons* who addressed Him—"the Apostles"—they teach us that even the Lord's disciples themselves have their imperfections, but feel them, and are concerned to be freed from them. If in reference to *the subject* they express "our faith," they teach us that faith is not finished at once; it admits of degrees, and higher measures of it are attainable. If in reference to *the occasion* which excited them—our Saviour's preceding charge—they teach us that an increase of faith is not only always desirable, but sometimes necessary. Why did the disciples offer up

this prayer? Not because our Lord had just revealed some *mystery* that it was difficult to *believe*, but because He had enjoined a *duty* that it was difficult to *practice*—the duty of forgiving oft-repeated trespasses. Whoever has been deeply or often injured, and has endeavored freely to forgive, knows that the wicked heart rises up against the righteous deed, and that the struggle is sharp between the sense of injury and of duty.

6. ^aAnd the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea, and it should obey you.

^aMatt. xvii. 20 and xxi. 21; Mark ix. 23 and xi. 23.

A grain of mustard seed was a proverbial expression for anything diminutively small. This *sycamine tree*. Probably the same as the *sycamore*. The expression seems to intimate that they were standing by such a tree. The sycamore is a spreading tree, of great size, and one of the most common in Egypt and Palestine. It strikes its large, diverging roots deep into the soil, and on this account is alluded to as the most difficult to be rooted up. *If ye had faith*. The Saviour does not deny that they had any faith, but only gives them to feel how far they are removed from faith in the highest ideal sense, which alone can make them capable of fulfilling His own so strict requirement. There is nothing which may tend to the glory of God, or to our own good and comfort, but may be obtained of God by a firm exercise of faith in Him. *All things are possible to him that believeth*.

7. But which of you, having a servant ploughing or feeding cattle, will say unto him, by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

The natural tendency of the human heart might lead the Apostles to go from one extreme to another, from the depressed feeling of being utterly unable to attain to such an amount of Christian grace as was required to enable them to give no cause of offense, and to forgive trespasses, to the notion that, with the help vouchsafed to them according to their request (verse 5), and with their Master's testimony to its power (verse 6), their graces and good works might become intrinsically valuable, and be so excellent in the sight of God as to deserve commendation from Him on their own account. It was to meet and obviate

this tendency that our Lord spake this parable.

A servant ploughing or feeding cattle. Two kinds of work are mentioned, in order definitely to designate the Apostolical labor awaiting them, and that on its more difficult as well as on its easier side. By the *servant* we are to understand a serf, who was entirely dependent on his lord, and strictly bound to obey him. *By and by*, "immediately," "forthwith." *When he is come from the field*. The work must be indefatigably accomplished. Rest follows afterward, and there is no need of hurrying for that. *Go and sit down to meat*. In one thing or another to have been obedient, and to have labored for the Lord, is not enough to warrant our expecting from Him an immediate refreshment and recompense.

8. And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?—Luke xii. 37.

Here, what the servant has already done, is regarded as a matter of obligation, and his lord demands from him further obedience, additional labor. *Make ready* refers to the general preparation for the evening's repast, and *gird thyself* to the particular service of waiting on his lord at the table. (See John xiii. 4.) It was a common practice with servants, before making any bodily exertion, to tie their loose garments tightly round the waist. The custom is alluded to by Horace and Anacreon. *Till I have eaten and drunken*, and AFTERWARD *thou shalt eat and drink*. It will be observed that the fulfillment of duty, both in the field and in the house, while it is required fully, and no reserve of the one allowed because of the discharge of the other, nevertheless leads certainly to refreshment and rest at last. Jesus delights in the calm, spiritual enjoyment of His people. But He knows this is neither good nor safe, that in fact it cannot be attained by a half-hearted or a half-performed service, and so He never ceases to urge His commands that they may be fully and heartily complied with, because it is only "in the keeping of them that there is great reward."

9. Doth he thank that servant, because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. 10. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do. Job xxii. 3 and xxxv. 7; Psa. xvi. 2; Matt. xxv. 30; Rom. iii. 12 and xi. 35; 1 Cor. ix. 16; Phil. ii. 11.

This is a question of holy irony, by which the Saviour does not precisely mean to approve the fact, that so many acts of service in daily life are performed without even a word of thanks, but simply reminds of what is continually wont to happen. The point of the inquiry is this: Does the servant, by the mere discharge of what is his incumbent duty, put his master under any obligation to him? *I trow not.* The Greek word so rendered is generally translated "think," or "suppose," in a sentence like that before us. The word which our translators have used here they have not used anywhere else in the Bible. We belong to God by absolute right. We do no more than what we ought, when we even spend ourselves in His service, since we have received everything only from and for Him.

So likewise ye. The Saviour will have His disciples, even after their work is faithfully accomplished, not esteem themselves higher than such servants. *When ye shall have done all,* by the powers both of nature and of grace, which have been conferred on you. This is spoken by way of concession, and must not be understood contrary to the doctrine of Scripture, as meaning that man actually can yield a perfect obedience to what the law requires in respect to God and Christ. *Say, we are unprofitable servants*—confess, in a spirit of deep, unpretending humility, that you can build nothing upon your own worth. The word rendered "unprofitable" is used in Matt. xxv. 30 in a positive sense, denoting worthless, punishable; here it is used rather negatively, of one who brings no gain, is useless, does only what is commanded, and hence can obtain blessings only through grace. The whole expression indicates and involves a consciousness of one's own want of desert and worth, in reference to God. *We have done that, &c.,* no more than our duty. Note, 1. That we are all God's servants. He owns us by creation and redemption. We must obey Him. 2. That salvation is entirely of grace. Supposing all kinds of work, in the field, and in the household, not only done, but well done—still we are not for a moment to presume that by all this we can make God our debtor. All we do is only from grace

given to us, not from natural strength. It gives us no merit. 3. The doctrine of works of supererogation, which the Church of Rome teaches, and according to which men may not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but may also do more for His sake than of bounden duty is required, and thus have surplus merit to appropriate to the salvation of other men, is utterly untrue. He who, after doing all that is commanded, must still acknowledge himself an useless servant, cannot possibly have any merit of which others can avail themselves to supply their own deficiency. 4. Though good works are not in themselves in any sense or degree meritorious, they are not by any means to be neglected, for they will receive a gracious reward. (Luke xii. 31; Matt. xxv. 34–36.) At His second coming, Jesus graciously promises to do, *of His own love and kindness*, what He here shows He is not bound to do *by the deserts of His servants.* "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching; verily I say unto you, that *he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.*" (Luke xii. 37.)

11. [†] And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee:—^aLuke ix. 51, 52; John iv. 4.

We are, most probably, to understand the Evangelist as saying, that our Lord, with the band of His disciples, on this His last journey to the holy city, from the north of Palestine, passed *between* these two regions, having, that is, one on His right hand, the other on His left, and skirting them both. This explains the mention of Samaria first, which, from its geographical position, is, on any other explanation of the words, almost inexplicable.

12. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off.—^bLev. xiii. 46.

The *village* referred to is to us unknown. *Ten men that were lepers.* (See notes on chap. v. 12–14.) Lepers were not excluded from villages. Neither was the law for their exclusion understood to exclude them even from any towns but such as were already walled in the time of Joshua. Their common misery had drawn these ten lepers together, and had even caused

them to forget the fierce national antipathy which reigned between Jew and Samaritan (verse 16; see 2 Kings vii. 3). Under common calamity, persons who are alienated, if not hostile, are often made to forget in judgment what they will not forego in love. *Which stood afar off.* They kept at a distance, because forbidden by law and custom to come near to those who were untainted. (See Lev. xiii. 46; Num. v. 2; 2 Kings xv. 5.) Sin, of which leprosy was a type, is the great separating, rending, splitting element. It is this that keeps us far from God, and far off from each other.

13. And they lifted up *their* voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. 14. And when he saw *them*, he said unto them, *Go show yourselves unto the priests.* And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

1 Lev. xiii. 2 and xiv. 2; Matt. viii. 4; Luke v. 14.

They had heard of Christ's approach, and now ranged themselves on the roadside, where they might catch His eye, and, by a display of their misery, move His heart to help them. *Jesus, Master.* Neither His honor, nor His name, nor His power is unknown to them. By the use of the word "Master," they intimate their readiness to acknowledge Him as their teacher, and virtually profess themselves already His disciples. *Have mercy on us.* They were now in earnest to receive the mercy, however at a later period they were slack in giving thanks for it. By praying, they showed that they felt their misery. No man prays for deliverance till he feels danger. The worse a bodily disease is, the more one feels it; but, alas! the worse the disease of sin is, the less one feels it. In spiritual disease insensibility is evidence of the greatest peril.

Go, show yourselves to the priests. (See on Luke v. 12-14.) This command was according to the direction. (Lev. xiii. 2, &c., xiv. 2, &c.) Our Lord intended that their cure should be received by *faith*. They depended on His goodness and power, and, though they had no promise, yet they went at His command to do that which those only were required to do who were *already* healed. The Roman Catholic inference from this verse, that our Lord intended there should be a Christian priesthood, and that sinners deriving spiritual relief were always meant to go to

a priest, is utterly baseless. There is nothing whatever in the verse to warrant it. So long as the ceremonial law lasted, and the Levitical priesthood continued, all its requirements were to be observed. The veil was not yet rent. The true sacrifice was not yet offered. The Old Testament dispensation had not yet passed away. In commanding lepers to go to the priests, our Lord simply declared his respect for the ceremonial law so long as it lasted. *As they went.* They started before they were healed. The highest reason that can be given for *believing* is, that *God has commanded it.* *They were cleansed.* Their disease was removed; they felt an unusual and delightful sensation in their bodies, which proved that they were restored to health. As they looked at each other, they mutually beheld, with surprise, the ghastly hue of their flesh, and the unsightly glare of their eyes, change for the bloom and freshness of health. Not one, or a part—all—share the happy deliverance. He who will not believe till he receives what *he* calls a *reason for it* is never likely to get his soul saved.

15. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16. And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks; and he was a Samaritan.—Isa. xxviii. 19.

All were healed, but only one was thankful, and this man *was a Samaritan* (see notes on chap. x. 33), one of that heretical nation from which one would have expected less of anything good than from the Jews, the professors of the true religion, and members of God's visible Church. If deliverance from a physical evil evoked such thankfulness, what gratitude is due to God from those whose sins He has so often pardoned! This is a thing of which we are by far too little sensible. We preserve the remembrance of a temporal blessing, of the healing of a bodily disease, but too frequently forget the exercise of God's forgiving love toward us. A recovered sinner should be always prostrate in mind and heart at the feet of his Deliverer.

17. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

Where are the nine? How touching are these words! The Lord keeps an account of the number that He blesses, and He expects to see them at His feet, giving

Him thanks. How rare a thing is true gratitude! The lesson before us is humbling, heart-searching and deeply instructive. The best of us are far too like the nine lepers. We are more ready to pray than to praise, and more disposed to ask God for what we have not than to thank Him for what we have. Murmurings, complaints and discontent abound on every side of us. Few, indeed, are to be found, who are not continually hiding their mercies under a bushel, and setting their wants and trials on a hill. These things ought not so to be. Let us pray for a daily thankful spirit. It is the spirit which God loves and delights to honor.

18. There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. 19. *And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole. *Matt. ix. 22; Mark v. 34 and x. 52; Luke vii. 50, viii. 48 and xviii. 42.

The connection between "returning" to give thanks to Jesus, and "giving glory to God," is peculiarly to be observed. *Save this stranger.* The Greek word used here means, literally, "one of another nation," and only occurs here. It is a strong expression, and shows clearly that our Lord did not recognize the Samaritans as anything more than Gentiles. This man belonged to an ignorant nation; to a nation whom the Jews despised, and whose religion the Lord disapproved. This instance shows that among the most ignorant there are some whose hearts God has prepared to love Him. *Arise, go thy way, &c.* The man was dismissed with a new and better blessing; the first had reached but to the healing of the body, and that he had in common with the unthankful nine, but gratitude for a lower mercy led to his reception of a higher; one which reached not merely to the springs of bodily health, but to the very fountains of his spiritual being. These also are healed, that which the others missed, to which their bodily feeling should have led them up, he obtained. He had shown himself to his great High Priest, and from Him received the blessed assurance—*thy faith hath made thee whole.*

20. † And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh *not with observation; 21. †Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for, behold, †the kingdom of God is †within you.

*Or, with outward show. †Verse 23. †Rom. xiv. 17. †Or, among you; John i. 26.

It was common with our Lord, when the Pharisees asked Him questions, to disappoint them by His replies. They made inquiries in the hope of entangling Him, but they themselves were confounded by the answers they received. In the present instance He revealed a more important truth than that about which He had been interrogated. *The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.* By this some understand, "not with that royal splendor or worldly grandeur, which shall render it conspicuous in the eyes of the world;" others regard the expression as meaning, "it cometh not in such a way, that men shall be able to observe it, but quietly, noiselessly, unnoticed." Probably both views are correct. *Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there!* The truth intended to be presented is here brought out more fully. The coming and development of the kingdom are not to be of such a character as to be recognized by external tokens, so that *they, i. e.,* such as by their spiritual discernment are cognizant of its internal approach and presence, shall trumpet forth the event with a *Lo here! or, Lo there!* for, behold, *the kingdom of God is within you.* According to some, what our Lord here asserts is, that His kingdom is not *external*, but *internal*; that is, it is not a thing of *observation* and localities, but of consciousness and *within*. It is not an external and political kingdom, but an internal, spiritual one, erected in the hearts of men, consisting in the subjection of their will to the will of God, and in the conformity of their minds to His laws. Others hold that "*within*" means "*among you*," and that the Saviour intended to say, "My kingdom has already begun in the midst of your nation, my disciples have already joined it and become its first subjects; while you are waiting, my spiritual kingdom has already been set up." This view they support on the following grounds: 1, that in this way the antithesis between the external coming and the being already actually present is kept more sharply defined; 2, that the kingdom of God had not been truly set up in the hearts of these Pharisees; 3, that in John i. 26, xii. 35, Luke vii. 16, xi. 20, the same thought which is expressed in our trans-

lation is expressed in another way. The kingdom of our Lord, which began in a manger at Bethlehem, without the knowledge of the great, the rich and the wise, and was afterward gradually and silently developed, corresponded with the description given of it in these verses.

22. And he said unto the disciples, "The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it."

*Matt. ix. 15; John xvii. 12.

Having disposed of the Pharisees by the answer He gave them, our Lord here turns away from them and addresses His own disciples. His object was to prepare them for His approaching departure. He foresaw that under the pressure of manifold tribulations in their efforts to establish His kingdom, they would long even for the temporary revelation of the glorified One; but to prevent their disappointment, He told them that when He left the world it would be His final departure until the last day, when He should be "revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God." (Acts iii. 21; 2 Thess. i. 7-10.)

23. "And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them."

*Matt. xxiv. 23, on which see notes; Mark xiii. 21; Luke xxi. 8.

Our Lord now proceeds to give such warning as should protect His followers from being deluded by false Christs which should appear. This warning was the more important, inasmuch as the notion that the coming of Christ would be at the destruction of Jerusalem, was liable to lead them to credit false deliverers, by which the Jews were deluded in immense numbers to their own destruction. This warning is unquestionably meant to apply to the times immediately preceding the second advent. False Christs, false prophets, and pretenders to Divine commission, may be expected in the latter days, and believers must be on their guard against them. There are false churches as well as false Christs, and the true spouse is known by the same marks with the true Bridegroom.

24. "For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day."

*Matt. xxiv. 27, on which see notes.

The coming of false Christs would be on

earth, while the next coming of Jesus would be in the sky, like the lightnings flashing along the firmament. It is here distinctly declared that His second advent, when it does take place, will be so sudden, so clearly marked, and so unmistakable, that true believers shall at once recognize it as the coming of their King. Christians are thus assured that when the Saviour comes, they shall see Him, wherever they may be, or whatever they may be doing. The suddenness of Christ's second appearing is a solemn thought. It ought to make us study a continual preparedness of mind. Our heart's desire and endeavor should be to be always ready to meet the Lord. (Rev. xvi. 15.)

25. "But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation."

*Mark viii. 31, ix. 31 and x. 33; Luke ix. 22.

The reference is here to the moral necessity arising from the work of redemption which our Lord had taken upon Himself, and which required that He should suffer and die for the sins of the world. (See Matt. xvi. 21; Mark viii. 31, ix. 31, x. 33.) Jesus asserts the great truth which His disciples and all the Jews were so exceedingly slow to see—that He must first suffer and afterward reign.

26. "And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. 27. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all."

*Gen. vii; Matt. xxiv. 37, on which see notes. *Deut. vi. 10, 12 and viii. 12, 14; 1 Sam. xxv. 36, 38; Job xxi. 9, 13; Isa. xxi. 4 and xxii. 12, 14; chap. xii. 19, 20 and xvi. 19, 23; 1 Thes. v. 1, 3.

Although the coming of our Lord will be the perfect redemption of His disciples out of all tribulations (verse 22), it is here represented especially as a judgment upon the godless and unbelieving world, and this judgment is typified in the fate of the contemporaries of Noah. *As in the days of Noah.* The same illustration is used in 2 Peter iii. 5, 6, and the parallelism shows that it is the judgment day alone that is the present subject. *So shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.* The days preceding His second advent, just as the days of Noah were the days preceding the flood. (See Matt. xxiv. 37.) It should be noted that the universality of the flood is asserted in both passages, and thus valuable collateral evidence is furnished of the totality of that catastrophe, as recorded in Genesis.

It is here plainly taught that the coming of Jesus will be unlooked for by the mass of mankind. They will be engaged in the business and pleasures of the world, little expecting, little thinking of the universal ruin of the ungodly, till it come upon them, notwithstanding the express predictions and declarations of Christ and His Apostles. The hour of death and that of judgment are uncertain. This should lead us to live in constant preparation for these unspeakably solemn events. We should shun the sottishness and strange stupidity of worldly men, who are entirely taken up with this present life, and regard not in the least the threatenings of Divine wrath.

23. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; 29. But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. 30. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

*Gen. xix. *Gen. xix. 16, 24. *2 Thes. i. 7.

It will be observed that the history of Lot and the destruction of Sodom and of Lot's wife, are here referred to as real, true historical facts. This second example of the coming desolation Luke alone relates. (See Jude v. 7.) *Eat . . . drank . . . bought . . . sold . . . planted . . . builded*—all these describe not any special course of sinfulness, but a regular train of careless daily life, expecting no sudden advent of destruction; they also show that the people were active and enterprising, as well as earthly-minded and corrupt. *It rained*. Instead of *it rained*, Genesis xix. 24 justifies the insertion of the pronoun *He*, designating Jehovah. *Fire and brimstone* denote sulphureous flames. There is here a terrible likeness of a *flaming fire*, described in 2 Thes. i. 8, as attending the *second coming* of the Son of man. The suddenness of the doom of Sodom is seen from the narrative in Gen. xix. 1-29. *Even thus, &c.* These are words of faith, which assure us that the wrath of God shall pour down upon sinners like a rain, and swallow them up like a deluge, and that multitudes shall fail to escape His justice. A false notion which men frame to themselves of a mercy without rule or means, encourages the greatest part of the world in the neglect of their salvation. It becomes us to escape for our lives like Lot. We must flee to the

ark like Noah. This alone is safety. Then, and then only, we shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger, and avoid destruction when the Son of man is revealed. (Zeph. ii. 3.)

31. In that day, he which shall be upon the house-top, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

*Matt. xxiv. 17; Mark xlii. 15.

It is well known that the houses of the Jews, as well as those of the ancient Greeks and Romans, were flat on the top, for them to walk upon, and had usually stairs on the outside by which they might ascend and descend without coming into the house. In the walled cities, these flat-roofed houses usually formed continued terraces from one end of the city to the other, which terraces terminated at the gates. The counsel here given is, that those who were on the house tops should not come down, neither should those who were in the field return to take with them their valuable goods, which they might feel greatly disinclined to leave behind. In either case, there must be an urgent flight. If this is to be regarded, as it may be, as having reference to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, through Vespasian and Titus, we are also to see its deeper and more direct significance, as well as that of the verses which immediately follow, in its application to the time when the Lord Jesus, by the trumpet of the archangel shall suddenly summon the world to judgment—the time when believers must give up all thought of worldly goods, beware of lingering and looking back to the world. Nothing but singleness of eye, wholeness of heart and unworldliness of spirit will be able to abide the fire of that day.

32. Remember Lot's wife.—*Gen. xix. 26.

The manner in which our Lord introduces this short but emphatical warning to His followers against any vacillation of purpose in making their flight, in view of the swift destruction to come on the Jews, is suited to excite our deepest attention. The incident referred to is recorded in Gen. xix. 26. The more common opinion of interpreters is that this woman was suddenly petrified, and changed into a statue of rock salt, which either by its own nature or by miraculous power was

made capable of continuing undissolved by the action of the elements. In conformity with this is the testimony of Josephus, who says expressly that Lot's wife "was changed into a pillar of salt, for I have seen it, and it remains to this day." Clement, of Rome, also says that it was standing there to his time, which was about the time of Josephus, and Irenæus says that it was there a century still later. Ecclesiastical history informs us that though Jerusalem was "compassed with armies," no Christian perished in its siege. The example of Lot's wife is replete with solemn instruction. Though she was the wife of a "righteous man," and connected through him with Abraham, the father of the faithful, and though she fled with her husband from Sodom in the day when he escaped for his life by God's command, yet she had left her heart behind her. She willfully disobeyed the strict injunction which the angel had laid upon her, looked back toward Sodom, and probably turned back, and hence became a monument of the Divine displeasure, and of her own folly and sin. Her case is a most impressive warning against unbelief, disobedience, worldly-mindedness, contempt of God's threatenings and lingering desires for wicked company. It is possible to be *almost* saved—yet *lost*. We must, even with joy, relinquish our friends and relations, our wealth and temporal advantages, and dismiss them from our memory, whenever they become obstacles to our salvation. We love them with a criminal fondness when we leave them with grief and anxiety. Many such separations as Lot then endured will take place when Christ comes again.

33. *Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.
 *Matt. x. 39 and xvi. 25, on which see notes; Mark viii. 35; Luke ix. 24; John xii. 25.

The word translated "life" signifies both life and the soul. The person who *seeks to save his life* is the person who, from a fear of losing the wealth, or honors, or pleasures of this life, or life itself—from a fear of exposing himself to poverty, contempt, suffering and death—neglects duty or commits sin—refuses to become a follower of Christ, or having become one, abandons his profession, or acts a part unworthy of

it. That person *shall lose his life* in a far higher sense than he has retained it—he shall lose his soul. He shall not cease to exist, but his everlasting existence shall be but a capacity of feeling everlasting loss—of enduring everlasting misery. He who *shall lose his life* is he who acts as if he considered wealth, honor, pleasure, life itself, all things, of comparatively no value, brought into competition with the claims of truth and duty—who readily sacrifices the former to the latter—who, when these things claim to be regarded above those, rejects the claim, and readily parts with all rather than disobey God or deny Christ. That person *shall preserve his life* to eternal life; when he seems to be throwing away his life, he is securing it. He shall live eternally, and his eternal life shall be life indeed—the highest measure of the highest kind of life of which man is capable.

34. *I tell you, in that night that there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken and the other shall be left. 35. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken and the other left. 36. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

*Matt. xxiv. 40, 41, on which see notes; 1 Thes. iv. 17.

Two women shall be grinding, &c. Corn was then ground, as it still is in the East, by a hand-mill, and generally by women. The mill consisted of one stone turned upon another by a handle, a woman sitting on each side of it, one of them moving the stone, the other supplying the grain. (See Exod. xi. 5; also Isa. xlvii. 2.) The Saviour in these verses strengthens His admonition still more by allusion to the definitive terrible *division*, which will coincide with the great *decision*. At His coming, that will be torn asunder which outwardly, as well as inwardly, appeared to be as closely as possible joined together. The suddenness of separation at the judgment day is here most strikingly described. *Two*—one is a Christian, the other is a sinner. The holy angels come and snatch one, to bear him to the right hand of Christ. The other is left, to be borne by evil angels to his doom at the left hand. Sad, indeed, will be the separations which will then take place. Those who were most tenderly united and attached to each other, wives and husbands, parents and children, brothers and sisters, will part to meet no more.

37. And they answered and said unto him, ^bWhere, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.
^bJoh xxi. 30; Matt. xxiv. 28, on which see notes.

Where, Lord? Not an expression of terror, but a definite inquiry after the locality in which all the things just mentioned should take place. *Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.* This reply of our Lord was somewhat enigmatical. He gave them neither an evasive nor an entirely definite answer, but only recited a proverb. This proverb, as used by Him, is generally understood as meaning that the Roman armies (which

had eagles upon their standards) should gather for the destruction of the guilty city of Jerusalem, whose moral condition is represented by a *carcass*, as ravenous birds collect upon their prey. As already suggested, this saying of our Lord is dark and mysterious, and probably was intentionally made so by Him to keep the disciples ignorant of His full meaning, inasmuch as they were not at the time able to bear it. It belongs to the "things hard to be understood," which shall only be fully explained at His second coming.

1. What is said about offenses? 2. What course is prescribed in relation to a brother trespassing against us? 3. What did the Apostles pray for? 4. Explain our Lord's answer. 5. Who met Jesus as He entered into a certain village? 6. What is said concerning them? 7. What did Christ say about the coming of the kingdom of God? 8. What did He say about His second coming? 9. Explain the reference to Lot and Noah. 10. How are we to understand verse 37?

CHAPTER XVIII.

3 *Of the importunate widow.* 9 *Of the Pharisee and the publican.* 15 *Children brought to Christ.* 18 *A ruler that would follow Christ, but is hindered by his riches.* 28 *The reward of them that leave all for his sake.* 31 *He foretelleth his death,* 35 *and restoreth a blind man to his sight.*

The parable with which this chapter opens is closely connected with the preceding chapter, in which there is a reference to the troubles and persecutions which should precede the coming of the Son of man. In view of these tribulations, prayer, patience, and perseverance, would be greatly needed, and hence these duties are here inculcated with the cheering assurance of the success with which they would be crowned.

AND he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;
^aLuke xi. 5 and xxi. 36; Rom. xii. 12; Eph. vi. 18; Col. iv. 2; 1 Thes. v. 17.

Ought always to pray. We are not to understand that a man should be incessantly performing the act of prayer. The life of Jesus was a prayer, yet there were seasons in which He especially applied Himself to prayer with His heavenly Father. Men ought to pray constantly at stated times; to be habitually in that spirit of humble

dependence, desire and expectation, which give life to prayer; to be frequently offering ejaculatory petitions, and to be always ready for prayer, secret, social or public, when opportunity is afforded. *And not to faint, i. e., not to flag or be remiss.* Jesus, knowing how easily we become discouraged when our petitions are not immediately granted, and that the preservation of the higher life of prayer involves a contest, inasmuch as it has constantly to labor with the oppression of earthly things, here earnestly warns us against yielding to such discouragement and growing tired of such internal warfare.

2. Saying, There was *in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:

*Gr., *In a certain city.*

According to Deut. xvi. 18, Israel must have in all the gates of the city judges, to administer justice, without respect to persons. In the days of our Lord, also, such municipal tribunals existed. (Matt. v. 21, 22.) What is here said about the *judge*, it will be observed, is said, irrespective of the special case about to be detailed in the parable. It is the description of what this man was, always and under every circum-

stance, thoroughly, radically, lawless and unjust. *Which feared not God*—was altogether destitute of awe of God, and of that reverence which belongs to Him, as our infinite superior. As practically atheistical, he had no inducement from religion to do justice. (See Ex. xxiii. 6-9; Lev. xix. 15; Deut. i. 16, 17; 2 Chron. xix. 6, 7.) *Neither regarded man.* Occupying a position of power, in which men could not injure him, he did not feel any concern as to what they said or thought of him, and hence, in all his decisions, he was influenced merely by passion or interest. It is evidence of a sad decline in the morality of any community, when unprincipled and corrupt men occupy the sacred office of a judge. The difficulty which some have found in the fact that such a man as this judge should stand in the position of a type and emblem of God, vanishes at once when we rightly comprehend the design of the parable. The object of the Saviour is not *comparison* but *contrast*.

3. And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, *Avenge me of mine adversary.*

The helpless and friendless condition of a widow in Eastern countries and Bible times, should be carefully remembered. (See Ex. xxii. 22; Deut. x. 18, xiv. 17, xxvii. 19; Job. xix. 13; 1 Kings xvii. 9, 12; Mal. iii. 5.) The judge had doubtless seen this poor widow very frequently. She was no stranger to him. He could more easily put aside her claims than those of one who had a stranger's acknowledged right to receive a redress of wrongs. This widow, having no friends to assist her, could neither defend herself from injuries nor obtain satisfaction for them when committed; hence, in an instance where she was greatly oppressed, she found herself obliged to petition the judge for redress. *Avenge me of mine adversary*, or, rather, as the original means, *do me justice on mine adversary*. She desired to have *justice*, and that only. She felt deeply her oppressed situation, and wished the judge to make an end of her tedious suit, and to deliver her forever from the *adversary* who was wickedly and obstinately oppressing and persecuting her. The fact that the suppliant here is a widow conveys the idea of perfect helplessness, and gives a still more frightful

idea of the hard-heartedness of the judge, which continued unmoved by the circumstance of a desolate woman pleading, not for revenge, but only for her just and righteous claims against the wrongs of her oppressor.

4. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, *Though I fear not God, nor regard man; 5. Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.*—Luke xi. 8.

Though the strength of the parable lies in the unlikeness between the righteous Judge of the world and this ungodly earthly judge, it may not be denied, as is here indeed taught, that God often *seems to man* to be acting as this unjust judge, to be turning a deaf ear to the prayer of His people. Under this *apparent* indifference, Christians are tempted to say, with the storm-tossed disciples, "Carest thou not that we perish?" The parable, however, is intended, as we shall presently see, to meet this very difficulty and temptation, to which believers, suffering long under sore earthly trials, are exposed. *But afterward he said within himself*, or thought within himself. How many actions which appear *good* have neither the *love of God* nor that of our *neighbor*, but only *self-love* of the basest kind, for their principle and motive! *Though I fear not God, &c.* He negatively confesses what did not move him to fulfill the prayer of the widow: it was neither the fear of God, nor a sense of duty. This confession gives great emphasis to the point here to be illustrated: the force of *importunity*, which could prevail on *such* a judge to do a right action. *Yet because this widow troubleth me.* Here, in a special manner, the unrighteous character of the judge displays itself in the very act of granting the solicited relief. He has taken no pains to discover whether the woman's cause is right or not, yet he determines to yield to her request; and his sole reason for doing so is the fear of being constantly annoyed by her importunity. *I will avenge her.* I will do her justice. *Lest by her continual coming*, literally, *coming to the end, i. e., forever.* *She weary me.* This exaggerated language is like the common expression, "tire me to death." The word rendered *weary* properly signifies *to beat on the face*, and particularly under the eye; and hence, to

beat in general, as 1 Cor. ix. 27. In this passage it has a metaphorical meaning, and signifies *to give great pain*, such as arises from severe beating. The sense of the clause, therefore, is, that the uneasy feelings which this widow raised in the judge's breast, by the frequent and earnest presentation of her case, determined him, for his own comfort's sake, to dispose of it.

6. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

Our Lord intimates that we should reason thus with ourselves: "If a person of such an infamous character as this judge was, could yield to the pressing and continual solicitations of a poor widow, for whom he felt nothing but contempt, how much more ready must God be, who is infinitely good and merciful, and who loves His creatures in the tenderest manner, to give His utmost salvation to all who diligently seek it."

7. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?—Rev. vi. 10.

How these words—*his own elect*—touch in the tenderest manner the great and eternal contrast between this unjust judge and God! The latter yields to the prayer of the suppliants, first, because it is *right* to do so, and then He does it with His whole heart—it is His joy and delight to do so. The suppliants are His own beloved people, whether regarded as the Church as a body, or as individual Christians—they are His chosen ones, very precious in His sight—so precious, indeed, that it is said of them, "he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye." And so His gift comes to them distinguished by that "holiness which becometh God's house forever," as well as a "love which passeth knowledge." The very contrasts which the parable presents only tend to confirm the blessed assurance it conveys to God's people, that He will without fail grant their requests. *Shall not God*, must be to the suppliant as clear and certain as the sun shines at noon-day. *Avenge his own elect*, i. e., maintain the right of those whom He has chosen to salvation—see that redress is obtained for them. *Cry*, i. e., fervently beseech—*day and night*, i. e., continually, for these two periods, in their alternate revolutions, make up the entire

term of our earthly pilgrimage. *Though he bear long with them?* or, delays to help them. To the inquiry, Why does God delay at all to answer the prayers of His people? it may be replied, that this is done with wisdom and love combined. It would be, so to speak, easier for a father who is at once rich and benevolent, to comply immediately and fully with all his child demands, but it requires and exercises a deeper, stronger love to leave the child crying and knocking for a time in vain, that the bounty given at the proper time may in the end be a greater boon.

8. I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?—^aHeb. x. 37; ²Peter iii. 8, 9.

I tell you, &c. This is the last ground of confidence and continued prayer—the true and faithful promise of Divine help. God will interpose *speedily*, i. e., suddenly, unexpectedly, before His people, with their weak faith, and under their formidable trials, looked for it. *Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh*. Every special interposition of the Lord in behalf of His own is a coming of Him, and He comes most unexpectedly when prayer and faith are well nigh extinguished. It is, however, undoubtedly, the last coming of the Son of man to which reference is here made. The Saviour transports Himself in spirit to the time of His second manifestation, which shall be preceded by the last conflict, and the deepest tribulation of His Church, and which His disciples on earth are to endure in faith, prayer, patient waiting. *Shall he find faith on the earth?* That is, when the Son of man at length shall come—arise to take vengeance—to bring in the year of His redeemed, will He find a faith among His people at all commensurate to the truth, love and fullness of what He has promised on His side? Or, like the disciples in the garden, will there be "sleeping for sorrow," or, the "love of many waxing cold," by reason of abounding iniquity? Solemn questions, indeed. Enough to make each child of God tremble for himself.

9. And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

^aLuke x. 29; xvi. 15. ^{*Or, as being righteous.}

This parable, like the last, treats of prayer. Each presents a different aspect

of the same subject. *That* recommends generally the duty of prayer, *this* gives us to understand the property of a right prayer. *That* teaches that prayer must be earnest and persevering, *this* that it must also be humble. *That* dissuades from indolence, *this* from confidence in ourselves. The two extremes are remarkable. Indolence and improper confidence are opposed in verses 1, 9, as proper confidence and indolence are, also, in 2 Cor. iii. 4; iv. 1; Eph. iii. 12, 13. *Unto certain*—the multitude, among whom were doubtless persons belonging to both the classes here represented. *Who trusted in themselves that they were righteous*—who had confidence in themselves—the false ground of their confidence standing in the conviction, that they were righteous, in possession of the Divine favor; a vain imagination, a mere conceit. They who have the least righteousness always trust the most in such as they have, as if they were inwardly conscious that they had very little. *And despised others, disdained, made nothing of others, treated them with sovereign contempt.* Others, “the rest,” “all others, who did not comply with their rules.” The Pharisees were especially intended, who relied on exemption from gross immoralities, attendance on the externals of religion, and exact observance of the traditions of the elders.

10. Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

These two persons are introduced into the parable as representing two distinct classes of mankind in general. The Pharisee represents the moral, the respectable, the externally correct. The publican represents the wicked, the profligate, and the utterly irreligious. *Went up into the temple to pray.* It was usual with pious people to do this at that time, when the temple was not only the place, but the medium of worship, God having promised, in answer to Solomon’s request, that whatever prayer should be offered in a right manner in, or toward, that house, it should, therefore, the rather be accepted. Christ is our temple, and to Him we must have an eye in all our approaches to God. There were other points of resemblance between these two men, beside their

going up to the temple to pray, and thus indicating their reverence for God’s house. (Isa. lvi. 7; Matt. xxi. 13.) They were both sinners. Their sins as to outward form were diverse, but in essential character the sinfulness was in both the same. Both adopted the same attitude in prayer. Both alike looked into their own hearts and lives, and both permitted the judgment thus formed to determine the form and matter of their prayer.

11. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, *God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.* (Ps. cxxxv. 2; *Isa.* i. 15 and lviii. 2; *Rev.* iii. 17; *Isa.* lxxv. 5; *Matt.* iii. 7, 10 and xix. 18, 29; *Luke* xx. 47; *Gal.* iii. 10; *Phil.* iii. 6; *James* ii. 9, 12.

There was nothing to be blamed, as indicative of pride, in the Pharisee’s attitude. The publican, whose prayer was an humble one, stood also. Standing was the usual posture among the Jews. (1 Kings viii. 22; 2 Chron. vi. 12; *Matt.* vi. 5; *Mark* xi. 25.) Sometimes, however, in moments of more than ordinary humiliation or emotion of heart, they changed this attitude for one of kneeling or prostration. (*Ex.* xxxiv. 8; 2 Chron. vi. 13, xxix. 29; 1 Kings viii. 54; *Ezra* ix. 5; *Dan.* vi. 10, 40; *Ps.* xcv. 6; *Matt.* xxvi. 39; *Acts* ix. 40, xx. 36, xxi. 5.) Each of these postures has its own peculiar appropriateness. Either is a seemly and Scriptural method of bringing the position of the body into significant harmony with the desire of the soul. Such being the case, all sorts of forms being recognized by the Old and New Testament Scriptures, how foolish, how useless, to say nothing else, is it to dispute about these forms! The all-important matter is to have the heart in a proper frame. “Standing and kneeling,” says *Burkitt*, “are praying postures, but sitting is a rude indecency, except in cases of necessity.” “In prayer,” says *Bishop Hall*, “I will either stand as a servant to my Master, or kneel as a subject to my Prince.” *Thus with himself.* The words *with himself* strictly and properly belong to the word “stood.” “*The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed.*” This man did not pray with himself in the sense of praying internally or secretly, that nobody might hear him, but it was one of his main designs that everybody should hear him. He spoke for himself, for his own satisfaction,

and with much complacency of heart. *God, I thank thee.* It was not wrong in the Pharisee to begin his prayer as he did. It is right to thank God. (See Ps. ciii.) It was the proud, boastful spirit of the Pharisee, that made his thank-offering vain. *That I am not as other men are.* Here, again, there would have been nothing wrong in what the Pharisee said, if it had sprung from a proper feeling, if he had been conscious of his unworthiness, and amazed at God's long-suffering. But this was not his spirit. He was proud, self-righteous. He presumed to give thanks not for what he *had received*, but for what he *was* and *did*. His thoughts of others excited in his heart the very opposite of that real gratitude which was expressed by one who, seeing a felon led to the gallows, exclaimed, speaking for himself, "But for the grace of God, there goes John Bradford!" *Extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.* Inasmuch as there is no reason to believe that this Pharisee was a hypocrite, the good things which here and in the next verse he affirms of himself may be supposed to be true. He was free from gross and scandalous sins. He was not an *extortioner*, not a usurer, nor an oppressor to his debtors or tenants, but equitable and kind to all dependent upon him. And not *rapacious*, seizing other men's property under false pretenses. He was not *unjust* in any of his dealings, did no wrong to any man, did not take advantage of any man's ignorance, want of experience or necessity, in buying or selling. He was not an *adulterer*, but avoided every species of uncleanness. How solemn the truth that all this may be true of a man who is yet far from the kingdom of God! *Or even as this publican.* He here drags into his prayer the poor publican, on whom his eye alighted, making him to supply the dark background on which the bright colors of his own virtues shall more gloriously appear, doubtless congratulating himself that he had no need to beat his heart, or cast his eyes in shame upon the floor, because he had done nothing to call for this.

12. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

According to Lev. xvi. 29-31 and Num. xxix. 7, a yearly fast only was enjoined;

but the Pharisees, and others who laid claim to peculiar sanctity, observed two fast days every week—the second and fifth days—for reflecting on the ascent of Moses to Mount Sinai, when he went to receive the law, and on his return thence. This observance they accounted meritorious. *I give tithes of all that I possess.* The law commanded only to tithe the fruit of the field and produce of the cattle (Num. xviii. 21; Deut. xiv. 22; Lev. xxvii. 20), but he tithed mint and cummin (Matt. xxiii. 23), *all* that came into his possession, probably not capital but income, down to the trifles on which there was question, even in the Jewish schools, whether it was needful to tithe them or not. (Hos. xii. 8.) To fast is right, and to give tithes is right, but this Pharisee spoiled all he had done by his proud and self-righteous pretensions. His prayer exhibits no sense of sin and need; contains no confession and no petition—no acknowledgment of guilt and emptiness—no supplication for mercy and grace. It is a mere boasting recital of fancied merits, accompanied by an uncharitable reflection on a brother sinner.

13. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

The *publican*. The difference between the men does not lie in that this was a good man, while the other was bad. This is a sinner too, but he has come to know it, and therein lies the distinction between him and the Pharisee. *Standing afar off.* If he was a Pagan, he stood in the court of the Gentiles; but if he was a Jew, such was his humility and sense of unworthiness, that he did not presume to approach the place where stood the Pharisee and other chief men. He wished to keep out of sight. *Afar off* is really the proper description of man by nature. Sin has borne him far off from God. *Would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven*, much less his hands, as was usual in prayer. He lifted up his heart, indeed, to God, in holy desires, but, through shame and humiliation, did not lift up his eyes in holy confidence and courage. (See Luke xv. 18; Ezra ix. 6.) *But smote upon his breast*, literally, *kept smiting upon his breast*. Smiting the breast was a token of excessive grief commonly practiced in all

nations. It seems to intimate a desire in the penitent to *punish* that *heart* through the evil propensities of which the sin deplored had been committed. *God be merciful to me a sinner.* This prayer of the publican was short; fear and shame hindered him from saying much; sighs and groans swallowed up his words, but what he said was to the purpose. Observe, 1. He owns himself to be a sinner, and guilty before God. The Greek words rendered *a sinner*, literally signify "*the sinner*," that is, "*the great sinner.*" As the Pharisee had compared himself with all mankind, and concluded that he alone was good, so the publican, in the depth of his shame, seems to count himself the only sinner. He casts about for no palliation—thinks of no excuse. He has none to condemn but himself. 2. He has no dependence but upon the mercy of God. He does not present himself as a *reformed* sinner, nor yet as a *penitent* sinner, nor yet as a *praying* sinner, but simply as the *sinner*. He disclaims all thought of merit, and flees to mercy as his city of refuge, with nothing to promise, nothing to extenuate, nothing to pledge, nothing to pay. 3. He earnestly prays for the benefit of that mercy. Unreservedly, fully, and yet confidently, he leaves himself in the hands of God. The only thing he can plead with such a God is, "*Be merciful,*" be propitious to me, forgive my sins, be reconciled to me, and receive me graciously. We are not to understand that the publican sought from God absolute and unconditional mercy. His prayer, as the original imports, was, "*Be propitious toward me, through sacrifice, or, let an atonement be made.*" The Greek word, rendered "*be merciful to,*" is only found in one other place, and is there applied to our Lord Jesus Christ, as a High Priest, "*making reconciliation*" for the sins of the people. (Heb. ii. 17.) The publican may have learned the great truth, that "*without shedding of blood there can be no remission,*" from seeing the lamb slain morning and evening, as the daily sacrifice, and the lamb slain once a year as the Passover lamb. Hence the peculiarity of his prayer, as having reference to a Mediator, a Saviour.

14. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; *for every one that exalteth*

himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

¹Job xxii. 29; Matt. xxiii. 12; Luke xiv. 11; James iv. 6; 1 Peter v. 5, 6.

Justified, i. e., accepted and approved in the sight of God. Of course, it is not meant that the prayer of the publican justified him. That the man who pleaded merely for mercy should be justified merely by his prayer is absurd. He was justified, forgiven, his sin pardoned, his guilt remitted by that mercy which he had invoked; but it was mercy in answer to prayer. (See Rom. iii. 26.) Neither are we to suppose that the Pharisee was a little justified, and the publican very much, and that the difference between them was only one of degree. There are no degrees in justification. The Pharisee was not justified at all, except by and before himself. The idea designed to be conveyed by these words is, that there was such essential difference in the religious act of these two men, that one only could be acceptable with God; and that such was the deep self-abasement of the publican, that his was the prayer which was accepted, *rather than* the one so offensive to God as that of the Pharisee. *Went down to his house justified.* Not merely was he justified in the secret, unsearchable counsels of God, but he returned to his home with a sweet sense of a received forgiveness shed abroad in his heart. (Ps. l. 15, li. 3-5, 19; Isa. lvii. 15.) How great, sudden and happy a change!

For every one that exalteth himself, &c. (See Luke xiv. 11.) The repetition of such a maxim will cause us the less surprise, if we consider that it expresses the unalterable fundamental law of the kingdom of heaven, according to which all men are judged, and, at the same time, gives the deepest ground why the justification of the Pharisee and the rejection of the publican were each entirely impossible. These words also form a beautiful transition to the bringing of the children to Jesus, the incident next recorded by the Evangelist.

15. *And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them.*

¹Matt. xix. 13; Mark x. 13, on which see notes.

The connection between this passage and the parable preceding it, in which humility is inculcated, should not be overlooked

Here is an illustration of the truth there taught. *Also infants*, literally, *even the infants*. They were not only *little children*, but infants. *They brought unto him*. Reference is here doubtless had to the parents. Thus they, 1, testified their respect for Christ, and the value they set upon His favor and blessing; and, 2, manifested their love to their children. *That he would touch them*. (See Matt. xix. 13.) It was customary among the Jews, when one prayed for another who was present, to lay his hands upon the person's head. (Gen. xviii. 14; Matt. ix. 18; Acts vi. 6, viii. 17.) This imposition of hands was practiced especially in paternal blessing. (Gen. xlviii. 14-20.) *They rebuked them*. In administering this rebuke the disciples thought most probably that compliance with the request of these persons would be mere waste of their Master's time, and that infants could derive no benefit from being brought to Christ. It is our duty to consecrate our children to the Lord, in reliance upon His promise and power. The souls of young children are evidently precious in God's sight. They are capable of receiving grace. The imperfection of charity and knowledge in the present life, exposes the humble and the little ones to suffer frequent repulses even from good men.

16. But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, *Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.*

¹1 Cor. xiv. 29; ²1 Peter ii. 2.

Called them, i. e., the children themselves. Mark says that when Jesus saw the disciples rebuking those that brought the children, Jesus *was much displeased*. (x. 14.) The opposition between the friendly countenance of the Master and the contracted brows of the disciples is indescribably beautiful. *Suffer little children to come unto me*, &c. (See on Matt. xix. 14.) This shows that some were children, while others were yet in their infancy. Our Lord does not merely say suffer *these* children, but suffer all little children to come unto me. He was not only not offended, but delighted with the presence of the little ones. *For of such is the kingdom of God*. Here is the reason why the children should be brought. That these words were not meant to teach that children are born sinless and innocent, is abundantly clear from other parts

of Scripture. (John iii. 6.) They teach, 1. That the Church of God on earth is largely composed of children. "Of such is the kingdom of God." We cannot approve of rendering the original words translated "of such," *such as resemble these*. This idea is presented in the next verse. 2. That the Church of God is to be perpetuated and prospered mainly by those who, in their childhood, are dedicated to His service, and receive a religious training. 3. That the kingdom of God in glory will be largely composed of little children. The salvation of all who die in infancy may confidently be expected. Though sin has abounded, grace has much more abounded. (Rom. v. 20.)

17. *Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein.*—Mark x. 15.

The kingdom of God here means the requisitions of the Gospel. We must stand affected to Christ as little children to their parents. Whilst we are not to be like children in their inconsiderateness or ignorance (1 Cor. xiv. 20), or inconstancy (Eph. iv. 14), we are to resemble them in exemption from prejudice (1 Cor. ii. 14); in sincerity, in simplicity or artlessness; in humility (Psa. cxxxi. 1; 1 Peter v. 2; James iv. 6, 10); in freedom from covetous desires (Psa. cxxxi. 2; Luke xviii. 24; Mark x. 17-22; 2 Tim. iv. 10); in a teachable spirit (1 Cor. i. 23); in a meek and loving spirit, without malice (1 Cor. xiv. 20; Psa. xxv. 9, cxlvii. 6, cxlix. 4); without dependence on our own works, as children have nothing whereon to depend (Rom. ix. 30-33, x. 33); in faith, as children readily believe their parents in whatever they say; in confidence and trust, as children rely on the power, love and faithfulness of their parents (Rom. iv. 18-21; Heb. xi. 13); in prayer, as children ask their parents, expecting to receive; in submission, as children are not without trials and discipline to which they are subjected. (Heb. xii. 6, 7.) This requisition of our Lord is not peculiar in its application to Christianity. *Lord Bacon* says, in the introduction to his book on the "Interpretation of Nature," "It is fit and necessary in the very front and beginning of this work, without hesitation or reservation, to be professed, that it is no less true in this

human kingdom of knowledge, than in God's kingdom of heaven, that no man shall enter it except he first become as a little child."

18. "And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"
 "Matt. xix. 16; Mark x. 17, on which see notes.

A man may miss heaven for want of a childlike indifference to worldly riches. *A certain ruler.* It is probable that this person was not a member of the Sanhedrim, but rather a magistrate in some other court, or a ruler of a synagogue. *Good Master.* The ruler was persuaded that Christ was a Divinely-commissioned Teacher, and thus manifested his affection and peculiar respect to Him as such. *What shall I do to inherit eternal life?* From this question it is evident, 1. That he believed in a future state. 2. That he was anxious to secure eternal life. 3. That he felt that in order to this end something must be done. 4. That he thought he was willing to do what was to be done. 5. That he was under the spirit of legality. How shall I be saved, is the most interesting and important question that any soul can ask of God. It is peculiarly gratifying to see an interest on this subject prevailing among the young. The first step toward being saved is to get instruction in the way to heaven.

19. And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.

See on Matt. xix. 17.

Before replying to the young man's inquiry, the Saviour comments for a moment upon the singularly unusual epithet which he had applied to Him. There is nothing here to disprove our Lord's supreme Divinity. If, as Socinians allege, Jesus here denies that *He is God*, He also denies that *He is good*. Now as we know Christ to be good, if the passage proves anything on this point, it proves that *He is God*. It is evident from the title of *good*, which the ruler gave to Jesus, a title which the rabbies affected, that he supposed Him to be a mere man. The meaning of our Lord, then, was evidently this: "*None is good*, essentially and perfectly, but God; why, therefore, *callest thou me good*, since thou hast never yet been taught that truth, which flesh and blood cannot have revealed to thee, that I am indeed the Christ,

the Son of the living God?" If the ruler had professed a belief in this vital truth, our Lord would never have called in question the propriety of his epithet, but would have confirmed it, as He did the declaration of Pilate, by the strongest possible affirmative and acquiescence. Our Lord never refused any homage offered Him, however high.

20. Thou knowest the commandments, "Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother."
 "Ex. x. 12, 16; Deut. v. 16, 20; Rom. xiii. 9. "Eph. vi. 2; Col. iii. 20.

See on Matt. xix. 17.

This reply of our Lord differs widely and importantly from other answers given both by Himself and by His disciples to similar inquiries. (John vi. 28, 29; Acts xvi. 31.) The reason of this difference is probably to be found in the state of mind of him whom He addressed. He was, as his reference to *doing* shows, a man evidently living under the covenant of works, and Jesus simply met him on his own ground. As a wise physician, He administered to the sick patient the medicine most likely ultimately to conduce to his spiritual health. He addressed him in the way most likely to bring him to self-knowledge. The Jews were not accustomed, in ordinary discourse, or in the commonly published books, to recite the precepts of the decalogue in the *very words* in which they were expressed, but in *other words*, or in another order. The Saviour names the commandments of the second table, because, when the ruler had once seen his lack of love to his neighbor, the conclusion as to his lack of love to *God* could not be difficult.

21. And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.

From the statement of Mark (x. 21), *Jesus beholding him, loved him*, it seems probable that the young man, in expressing himself as in this verse, did not mean to make a self-righteous boast, but to say that he knew the will of God as contained in the law, and that he had directed his life generally according to that law. Otherwise we should hardly be told that Jesus *loved him*, except as He loves all mankind. He would hardly have felt a special interest in him. It is evident, however, that like the generality of the

Jews of our Saviour's time, this young man had interpreted the decalogue by its letter, not according to its spirit.

22. Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.
p. Matt. vi. 19, 20 and xix. 21; 1 Tim. vi. 19.

Yet lackest thou one thing, namely, to love God more than mammon. Our Saviour knew his heart, and soon put him upon a trial which laid it open to the ruler himself. *Sell all that thou hast, &c.* This command was given to cure his love of the world, which could not, in him, be cured otherwise. What a touchstone for his sincerity! What a trial of the power of the law, to convict of disobedience all who profess to keep it! When God commanded Abraham to offer up his only son Isaac, he stood the test, and proved that he loved the Lord above *all*. This young man did *not* stand the test. He might have stood an *easier* test, but this one he could not endure. To sell not *half*, but *all* his possessions, all his *great* possessions, too, and then to distribute the precious wealth, with his own hand, piece by piece, among the poor, and thus see the source of his earthly joy, pride and hope, as it were, drop by drop, dry up—this was more than he could bear to do. Thus was he shown, that, instead of preferring God and His commandments to everything else, as he professed, he really loved mammon more than God. We are not to understand that all Christians are required to do what was enjoined on the rich ruler. Yet it is true that the Gospel requires such a consecration of all property to God, that, when the duty is made known, to give some, or much, or all to God, the offering can be made. *Treasure in heaven*—in place of thy *treasure* on earth. *And come, follow me.* Here was the Gospel hidden in this brief command. Jesus preached faith to this inquirer. His invitation to him was the very language in which He called almost every one of the disciples, who doubted not the meaning, knowing that in following Christ, they were to acknowledge Him as the Messiah of God.

23. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.

Very sorrowful. Men undergo great agony of mind while they are in suspense

between the love of the world and the love of their souls. *For he was very rich.* What was his wealth—which he had found could not give him comfort—in comparison with peace of conscience and eternal life? Yet he chose to retain his earthly treasure, which he could only hold for a few years, and to refuse the offer of imperishable treasure in heaven!

24. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 25. For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.
q. Prov. xi. 28; Matt. xix. 23, on which see notes; Mark x. 23.

This may be considered as the moral of the story, the extreme increase of difficulty which worldly possessions cast in the way, to the attainment of the heavenly glory. In Mark x. 24, it is, "them that trust in riches." This somewhat modifies the declaration here; but how few are there to be found who really possess wealth, and never trust in it?

Some would read a *camel*, instead of a *camel*, but this is unauthorized. The camel being the largest animal they were acquainted with in Judea, its name became proverbial for denoting anything remarkably large, and a *camel's passing through a needle's eye* came, by consequence, as appears from some rabbinical writings, to express a thing extremely difficult, or apparently impossible. Our Lord here represents the salvation of a rich man as being next to an impossibility. Riches powerfully tend to increase pride, covetousness, self-indulgence; they purchase flatterers, exclude faithful reprovers, prejudice the mind against the humbling truths and self-denying precepts of the Gospel, and they increase the number and force of those obstacles which must be broken through, and the supposed value of those objects which must be renounced, if a man would be a disciple of Christ.

26. And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved? 27. And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.
r. Jer. xxxii. 17; Zech. viii. 6; Matt. xix. 26; Luke i. 37.

The scene with the ruler, as well as the last earnest utterance of Jesus, taught the disciples to cast a deeper look into their own hearts. In the living consciousness of the wide prevalence of earthly-mindedness, both among the rich who have, and the poor who are not able to acquire, they

express wonder or surprise, if not doubt, as to the salvation of any.

There was much tenderness and sweetness in this reply of our Lord to the question proposed. It will be observed that He does not retract what He had said, nor even soften it in the least degree, but rather strengthens it by representing the salvation of a rich man as the utmost effort of omnipotence. The energy of Divine grace is able to make a man despise the world, with all that it contains, when no efforts of man, no arguments, eloquence or persuasions are able to do it. Money will not keep us out of heaven if our hearts are right before God. *Grace*, and not *place*, is the hinge on which our salvation turns.

28. *Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee.—Matt. xix. 27.

Peter speaks for himself and the rest of the Apostles. Had he spoken this in pride, he would have received *rebuke* instead of *encouragement*. The disciples had, indeed, but little to leave, yet it was their *all*. A poor man's "all" is as dear to him, in a certain sense, as the rich man's palace. There is no season in life upon which the believer looks back with so much joy as that in which he first determined to engage in his Redeemer's service. A man may leave all without having ever possessed anything. It is by the heart that we cleave to earthly possessions; it is by renouncing them in our heart, that we disengage ourselves from them.

29. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake. 30. Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting. *Deut. xxxiii. 9. *Job xlii. 10.

See on Matt. xix. 29.

There is no man that hath left, &c. Sacrifices like these were doubtless often necessary when the Gospel was first preached, and were bitterly opposed by prejudiced Jews and ignorant heathen. At the present day, a converted Jew is often obliged to separate from his nearest and dearest relatives, and a converted Hindoo is cast off by all his family. Our Lord spoke, with foresight, of cases like these, and His words are singularly full of comfort. *Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time.* The compensating retributions in this world and the next are definitely distinguished. Even with all their losses and

trials, the joys of Christians are much greater than their sorrows. *Rutherford* says, in his letters, that when he was imprisoned in Aberdeen, he discovered a sweetness in Christ that he had never conceived before. *Dr. Payson*, when racked with pain, in his last illness, said: "God has used a strange method to make me happy. I could not have believed, a little while ago, that, in order to render me happy, He would deprive me of the use of my limbs, and fill my body with pain. But he has taken away everything else, that He might give me HIMSELF." And the Apostles bore the same testimony, when they said, "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." (2 Cor. i. 5.) *And in the world to come life everlasting.* To the earthly advantages of godliness, which make it profitable for the life that now is, life everlasting is to be superadded. What believers need, is more daily practical faith in Christ's words that He will make up for the sacrifices they submit to for His sake.

31. ¶ Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.

*Matt. xvi. 21, xvii. 22 and xx. 17, on which see notes; Mark x. 32. *Ps. xxii.; Isa. liii.

Took he unto him the twelve—took them apart. This was done because He did not choose to declare before His enemies the deeds which they would commit against Him, for such declaration would have emboldened them in wickedness, and thus, moreover, He might have seemed to purposely procure the fulfillment of the prediction concerning His sufferings. *We go up to Jerusalem.* There was the site of the Old Testament theocracy. There the sacrifices of the law, and the blood of the Old Testament atonements, had shown forth His death for ages. And from there, the royal city of David, must go forth an announcement of the kingdom of the Son of David to all the world. It will be observed with what calmness and submission He spoke of the painful trials that awaited Him. *And all things that are written by the prophets, &c.* The Messianic prophecies of suffering stand before the Saviour's eyes, as a great whole put in writing, and are referred to as though for every detail of His passion sketched in verses 32, 33, there

must also be at least an intimation to be found in the prophetic record. Such passages as the following were meant: Ps. xxii., Isa. liii.; Dan. ix. 26.

32. ^aFor he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on; 33. And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.
^bMatt. xxvii. 2; Luke xxiii. 1; John xviii. 28; Acts iii. 13.

The Gentiles—this word is from a Latin one, signifying a *race*. The Jews, from their own standpoint, called other peoples the Gentiles, that is, *the nations*. Here the word specifically designates the Romans. For the *mocking* of Jesus by Herod and his Roman soldiers, see Luke xxiii. 11. *Spitefully entreated and spitted on*, to express their abhorrence of Him as a blasphemer. *Scourge him, and put him to death*. This was done by *Pilate*, the Roman governor. The punishment of the *cross* was *Roman*, not *Jewish*, but the *chief priests* condemned Him to it, and the *Romans* executed the sentence. How little did they know that they were, by this process, jointly offering up that sacrifice which was to make an atonement for Gentiles and for Jews; an atonement for the sin of the whole world! How often may it be literally said, *The wrath of man shall praise thee! And the third day he shall rise again*. Christ mentions His resurrection and glory, 1. To encourage Himself in His sufferings. 2. To comfort His disciples, who would be overwhelmed with sorrow and terrified by His death. 3. To direct us, under *all the sufferings of this present time*, to keep the eye of our faith fixed upon *the glory to be revealed*. Nothing is so capable of giving us comfort, and fortifying our weakness against the fear of painful trials and the dread of death, as the remembrance of the sufferings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

31. ^aAnd they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

^bMark ix. 32; Luke ii. 50 and ix. 45; John x. 6 and xii. 16.

The blindness of the disciples about our Lord's crucifixion and sufferings is, at first sight, very extraordinary. The words just spoken by Him seem so plain that we can scarcely conceive how any one could have failed to understand them. But, perhaps, as the Lord often used figurative language, the disciples supposed that His prophecies concerning Himself were figur-

ative. They saw, and heard, and imagined a great many things that seemed to contradict the natural import of these prophecies, and hence declined to accept their literal interpretation. In judging them, we must remember that they were all Jews, and trained from their infancy to expect a Messiah in glory and majesty. In their ignorance as to the import of Christ's words, we see the effect of prepossession in precluding the exercise of ordinary intelligence. As they had *wished* a different manifestation of Christ's Messiahship than that, though differing, they seem, thus far, to have been unable to understand or believe what He here, and at other times, so plainly foretold. The mind of man is naturally shut against the knowledge of the cross, of sufferings and of death.

25. ^aAnd it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side, begging;

^bMatt. xx. 29, on which see notes; Mark x. 46. ^c1 Sam. ii. 8; Luke xvi. 20, 21; John ix. 8; Acts iii. 2.

Jericho was a stronghold of the Canaanites, and was the first city subdued by Israel, after the crossing of Jordan and entering the Holy Land. (See Josh. vi. 26.) *As he was come nigh*, &c. Matthew and Mark, referring (as is generally supposed) to the same miracle, say that it was wrought when our Lord was "departing" from Jericho. (Matt. xx. 29-34; Mark x. 46-52.) There was more than one Jericho, namely, an *old* and a *new*, situated a little distance one from the other, so that, if the Saviour was really leaving one and approaching the other, the apparent discrepancy is easily reconciled. *A certain blind man*, &c. The sense of sight is the highest bodily privilege, the purest physical pleasure which man has derived from his Creator. When indigence and blindness are united, they present a truly sad instance of wretchedness. *Begging*. He had placed himself by the road-side in order that travelers might see him and give him help. Except in extraordinary cases, it is in all respects most advisable to relieve those who are known by us both as to their wants and conduct, and, provided less be not given in charity, and no *extreme* case neglected, the refusal of relief to vagrant beggars is rather a proof of *discretion* than an indication of defect in

beneficence. If this conduct were generally adopted, the indigent would, in ordinary cases, be compelled to abide where they are known; the sums expended in charity would be far more profitably applied, the interests of morality and religion better secured, and the poor themselves far more adequately relieved.

36. And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. 37. And they told him, Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. 38. And he cried, saying, Jesus, *thou Son of David*, have mercy on me.

The sound of numerous feet and the clamor of many voices, drew the attention of the blind man, and he was led to inquire what great person was on the road, attended by this great throng of people.

Jesus of Nazareth. The people name our Lord according to the customary style. The "Prophet of Galilee," the raiser of Lazarus from the dead, the Teacher and Miracle-worker of Peræa, is not unknown by fame to this poor man. To the sufferers throughout the land, that name would have a special interest. Its report would have a rapid circulation among the sons and daughters of affliction.

No sooner was our Lord's name mentioned than the blind beggar, deeply impressed with a sense of his own affliction, and not knowing whether he should ever again have so good an opportunity, earnestly appealed to Him. *He cried.* In the midst of judgments God remembers mercy. Though God had deprived this man, for wise reasons, of his *eyes*, He had left him the use of his *speech*. It is never so *ill* with us but it might be *much worse*. We should, therefore, be submissive and thankful. *Jesus, thou Son of David.* The blind man, by thus greeting Christ, shows that his faith has reached a higher grade than that of the people who had just told him who was passing by. There was, on his part, a double confession of faith: first, that Jesus could heal him; and, secondly, not merely as a prophet from God, but as *the Prophet*, as the one who should come, according to the words of Isaiah, to give sight to the blind. He recognized Him as the true descendant of the ancient King of Israel, the promised Messiah for whom Israel was looking. *Have mercy on me.* He asked for mercy, conscious that he *deserved* nothing.

39. And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace; but he cried so much the more, *Thou Son of David*, have mercy on me. 40. Chap. viii. 49, xi. 52 and xix. 39.

Of the great multitude who accompanied Jesus on His way to Jerusalem, some preceded, others followed Him. *Rebuked him, that he should hold his peace*, rather, *charged him that he should be silent*. At this time the multitude were respectful to Jesus. Their rebuke resulted simply from the desire in those, for the most part spiritually undeveloped men, that the procession to Jerusalem, where they anticipated a public and open avowal by Jesus of His Messiahship, even, perhaps, the assumption of the regal dignity, might not be delayed by an affair of comparatively such trivial importance as the giving sight to a poor blind man. The beggar regarded not the rebuke that was given him. His case was urgent. The occasion was precious, and he called louder and more fervently than before, using the same form of address and appeal as at first.

40. And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him, 41. Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? 42. And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

Above the respectful clamor of the multitude, the voice of earnest prayer reached the ear of Jesus. He would not yield to their haste to press forward. He *stood*. It was impossible for Him to pass on without turning an eye of compassion toward him who had uttered the cry of misery—the prayer of faith. *Commanded him to be brought unto him.* He would not perform the miracle till the blind man came to Him, that, by the manner of his walking, the spectators might be convinced that he was truly blind. *What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?* This question of our Lord was, in part, an expression of His readiness to aid; in part, also, for the calling out into yet livelier exercise the faith and expectation of the petitioner. (Matt. ix. 28.) *Lord, that I may receive my sight.* The man's cry had hitherto been a vague general cry for mercy, now he singles out the blessing which He craves, declares the channel in which He desired the solicited mercy to run. "My eyes are thirsty for the light. To me the wonderful realities of creation have long been a dark and dismal blank. Thine is the power that can

again reveal them like a new creation to my view."

42. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: *thy faith hath saved thee.*—Luke xvii. 19.

See on Matt. xx. 29-34.

Receive thy sight. Here, and in the verse preceding, as well as in the one following, the Greek word so rendered means, literally, "look up," or "see again." It is worthy of observation, that giving sight to the blind was peculiar to our Saviour. No instance is recorded in Scripture of this miracle having been wrought, either by prophets before His coming, or by His Apostles afterward; nor is it mentioned among the miraculous powers which He conferred on them. *Thy faith hath saved thee.* This assurance must have been dearer to the poor beggar than even his bodily sight, for it implied a promise of eternal blessedness.

43. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.
† Luke v. 26; Acts iv. 21 and xi. 18.

The cure, by the power of Christ's word, was instantaneously effected. How great and welcome the change! The man who had hitherto been tied by his infirmity to one place was now free to go where he listed; and he chose well, for he chose to follow Jesus, by the way glorifying God. *And all the people, &c.* All the multitude, deeply impressed with the miracle they had witnessed, united with the blind man in his doxology.

In viewing the case of Bartimeus, let us

not fail to see an emblem of the blindness, ignorance, misery and poverty, into which man is cast by sin, with respect to heavenly things. It is, alas! one property of spiritual blindness to keep the person from perceiving it. The conversion of a sinner is sometimes linked to, and depends upon a first motion, which seems natural, upon curiosity or mere chance, and yet it is really no other than a gift of God, who intends to save him. There are times when Jesus passes specially near to us. We should improve them, lest the opportunity may be lost forever. We should not sit lazily at home, and wait for relief to come to Christ. We are insensible of our spiritual diseases, when we do not find ourselves inclined and moved to pray. In prayer we must expect, not because we deserve, but because we need. When a man is first in earnest about his salvation, and begins to cry that his eyes may be opened, he will find strong hindrances, and these even sometimes from such as seem, like this multitude, to be with Jesus, and on His side. These hindrances, however, should only stimulate him to still greater earnestness. Nothing is so attractive to the Son of God as the cry of a believing penitent. If our wish is a good one, God will surely fulfill it. When Divine grace has changed our hearts, the praise of our salvation should be given to God. We should resolve to show our gratitude by becoming followers and disciples of Jesus.

1. What is the first parable in this chapter intended to teach? 2. How does it encourage importunity in prayer? 3. To whom was the parable of the Pharisee and the publican spoken? 4. Explain it. 5. With what solemn statement does it conclude? 6. What did Jesus say about little children? 7. Why did a certain ruler approach Jesus? 8. What did our Lord say to him? 9. What was the result of the interview? 10. What did Christ say to the Twelve? 11. What miracle was wrought by Him on a blind man? 12. What effect was produced by the restoration of his sight?

CHAPTER XIX.

¹ *Of Zaccheus a publican.* ¹¹ *The ten pieces of money.* ²⁸ *Christ rideth into Jerusalem with triumph:* ⁴¹ *weepeth over it:* ⁴⁵ *driveth the buyers and sellers out of the temple:* ⁴⁷ *teaching daily in it.* *The rulers would have destroyed him, but for fear of the people.*

Many, no doubt, were converted to the faith of Christ of whom no record is kept in the Gospels; but the conversion of some, whose case had something extraordinary in it, is recorded, as that of Zaccheus, with the record of which this chapter begins.

AND Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.

Jericho. An ancient city in the plain of Jordan, about six miles west of that river, and nineteen east of Jerusalem. This was our Lord's last journey toward the scene of His approaching betrayal and sufferings.

² And, behold, *there was a man named Zaccheus,* ^a *which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.*—Ezra ii. 9.

Behold. This word serves to call attention to the incident which follows. *Zaccheus* is a Hebrew name, signifying "Pure." This Hebrew name, with Greek ending, of itself denotes him as a man of Jewish origin. (See also verse 9.) *Which was the chief among the publicans.* The employment of publicans in the collection of the revenue, was the only civil office in which native Jews were employed by the Romans. The office of chief of the publicans at so important a place as Jericho must have been one of great importance and responsibility, and, as we learn from the text, lucrative to him who held it. We may understand that Zaccheus was a sort of comptroller-general to whom the inferior publicans rendered their account, and was himself the responsible officer to whom the Romans looked. Or it may not be unlikely that he farmed the revenues of this district from the Romans. *And he was rich.* Yet he had not incurred the woe of those rich who are full. (Luke vi. 24.)

³ And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. ^b John xii. 21.

He felt a strong desire to see Jesus, of whose kindness to his despised order he had, doubtless, heard much from other publicans, and who had, in fact, a publican

among His chosen friends and followers.

Who he was. Not "who He was" in the sense of "what manner of person," but "*which He was*" of that confused multitude, to distinguish Him from His company. It cannot be doubted that Zaccheus was influenced by curiosity to behold one of whom he had heard so much, but it may also be believed that he was also under the power of a vague longing for some spiritual good from the great Teacher, whose miracles and instructions were so widely talked of. His wealth did not yet satisfy him, and some degree of desire for higher treasures had been awakened in his heart. We may suppose his state of mind to have been like that of the Greeks. (John xii. 21.) *And he could not for the press, &c.* So earnest, however, is he in the matter that, rather than be defeated of his longing, he devises a way for the satisfying of it, which will involve, indeed, a certain compromise of his dignity, but from which he does not on this account shrink.

⁴ And he ran before, and climbed up into ^a a sycamore tree to see him; for he was to pass that way. ^c Luke v. 19. ^d 1 Kings x. 27; 1 Chron. xxvii. 28. Isa. ix. 10.

Ran before. (See on verse 3.) *Sycamore tree,* more frequently called the *sycamine tree.* Sycamore trees abounded in the neighborhood of Jericho. *For he was to pass that way.* It was publicly known that the Saviour's route lay toward Jerusalem. The running and climbing of so wealthy a man and so prominent an official as Zaccheus to see a religious teacher, would, of course, call forth mockery from all who saw him. But he cared not for man's opinion. He did not, like Nicodemus, come to Jesus by night, but in open day, surrounded by spectators, and he exposed himself to ridicule in his efforts to see Him. It is necessary, in order to true conversion, for a man to have a holy eagerness to raise himself above earthly things, that he may see and know Christ. Upon the little action of Zaccheus climbing the tree, so far as man's eyes can see, there hinged the salvation of his soul. We must never "despise the day of small things." (Zech. iv. 10.)

5. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, *Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house.* *Ezek. vi. 6; John i. 48. *Gen. xviii. 3, 5; John xiv. 23; Eph. iii. 17; Heb. xiii. 2; Rev. iii. 20.

Zaccheus came to look upon Christ and resolved to take particular notice of Him, but little thought of being noticed by Christ. That was an honor too great, and too far above his merit, for him to have anticipated. *Looked up, and saw him, and said.* Zaccheus did not cry for mercy as Bartimeus did. How much astonished must he have felt when Jesus, glancing upward to the overhanging branch on which he rested, addressed him as he did! He must have been ready to exclaim, as Nathanael once did, "Whence knowest thou me?" (John i. 48.) It was evident the Lord knew not only his *name* but his *circumstances*. He knew that he had a *house* in which he could receive guests. He knew *more* than this, He knew his *heart*. He was sure that Zaccheus was *willing* to entertain Him beneath his roof; He must have known it, for He himself had made him willing. *Make haste, and come down.* Hurry and have done with such expedients and concealments. *For to-day.* My call to suffer at Jerusalem brooks no delay. *I must abide at thy house.* Knowing already the more than readiness of the publican to extend a hospitable reception, and his ability to do so, Jesus did not ask him if it would be agreeable or convenient for him to receive Him and His disciples as guests, but assumed that his hospitality would be cordially extended. On no other occasion is it recorded that he entered without invitation the house of a stranger. Christ sometimes comes to those who seek Him not. (Isa. lxxv. 1.) Impenitent men must come down from their high opinion of themselves, if they would receive salvation from Him who is "meek and lowly in heart," and the urgency of their case requires that there should be no delay in doing so.

6. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

He rendered a prompt and cheerful obedience to the command he had received to descend from the tree. "Zaccheus," says one, "was as ripe fruit, which dropped in the Saviour's lap at his first

and lighest touch." *And received him joyfully.* He had now *seen* who He was, and he wished to *hear* what He was, and therefore He rejoiced in the honor that God had now conferred upon Him, leading the Saviour's way to the courts of his home. No wonder he rejoiced in the prospect of an opportunity of conversation with Him who knew all things. The very condescension of such a famous Teacher of religion in offering to be a publican's guest, touched and softened his heart, which doubtless Jesus had already changed by heavenly influence conveyed with the invitation to come down from the tree. How often does Jesus make the proposal of lodging, not only in our house, but in our hearts, without its being accepted. (Rev. iii. 20.) When Jesus calls us, we should hasten to obey. (Ps. xxvii. 8.)

7. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, *That he has gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.—*Matt. ix. 11; Luke v. 30.

The self-righteous Pharisees were indignant that He who claimed to be the Messiah should compromise His dignity, and risk the reputation of His holiness by availing Himself of the hospitality of a *sinner*. *Publicans* and *sinners* were classed together, because many of the tax-gatherers were bad men and were despised by the Jews, and hence to be a publican came to be equivalent to being a sinner. This accusation against our Lord was indeed a truth, and one not confined to any person or to any time. As it was then, so is it now—the Saviour is the sinner's frequent guest. No heart so vile, so polluted, so sin-defiled, that Jesus refuses to enter there.

8. And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor: and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold.

*Chap. iii. 14. *Ex. xxii. 1; 1 Sam. xii. 3; 2 Sam. xii. 6.

Zaccheus stood forth in the presence of the whole company, and professed his readiness to make all the restitution in his power for his ill-gotten gain. From the very hour the tree was planted it began to bear. *The half of my goods I give to the poor, not have given.* Here was no boasting of what had already been done in days of ignorance, but a simple declaration of what he was now ready, from this moment, unhesitatingly to perform. This he would do, not expecting to be justified by his

works, but merely by his good works, through the grace of God, to evince the sincerity of his faith and repentance. *And if I have taken anything from any man, &c.* It would seem that Zaccheus had hitherto been no extortioner. Had he been so, had he been conscious that his were in the main treasures of wickedness, gotten together by fraud and wrong, it would have been ridiculous to offer as a gift half of them to the poor, before it was seen whether the whole would satisfy the demands of justice. Without, however, having been this extortioner, he yet feels that according to that higher standard of right which he recognizes now, some of his gains may prove to have been unfairly acquired, and any such injustice he will make largely good. *I restore him four-fold.* In our days he would probably have expressed himself as meaning to restore principal and interest, but the law forbade the Jews to take interest of one another. The same law required a four-fold restitution, upon conviction, from a man who stole a sheep (Ex. xxii. 1), but he had only to add one-fifth of the value, when, without being detected or tried, he made a voluntary confession of his offense. (Num. v. 7.) Zaccheus, therefore, showed the unflinching character of his repentance, by voluntarily subjecting himself to the stringent penalties incurred only by a conviction in the courts of law. True conversion shows itself by the change of life. He who has wronged his fellow-man must make restitution, if he have it in his power.

9. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

*Rom. iv. 11, 12, 16; Gal. iii. 7. †Luke xiii. 16.

Salvation has here, as in chapter i. 77, its highest spiritual sense of deliverance from sin and its consequences, and the bestowment of eternal life and blessedness in the kingdom of Christ. An indirect allusion may also have been made in the use of the term, to the name of Jesus (*Saviour*), who had been the guest of Zaccheus. The publican had really shown himself to be another man from what he appeared to be in the eyes of the multitude. *Forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.* Jesus pronounced this eulogy upon him whom the murmuring crowd had just before named

as "a man that is a sinner." "Notwithstanding all the sins he has committed, it is now manifest that even this man also is a true son of Abraham, and that, not only in respect of his lineal descent, but of his faith and holiness."

10. †For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

*Matt. xviii. 11; see Matt. x. 6 and xv. 24.

Though our Lord was continually healing the lame and the blind, it was *not* to heal *them* He came into the world. *It was to seek and to save that which was lost*, lost in sin, as we all are by nature. This was His blessed and glorious errand. He came to suffer and die that we might be saved. And the greater the depth of sin and misery into which we have fallen, the more urgent should be the demand we make upon the love of Him who "died for our offenses, and rose again for our justification," and who is able to save to the uttermost—in point of number, as well as of the heinousness of sin—all who come unto God through Him. (See on Matt. xviii. 11.)

11. And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.—*Acts i. 6.

Our Lord had just spoken of Himself as one who had come into the world for a great end, to seek and to save that which was lost. (Verse 10.) Through a misunderstanding of these words, the disciples may have been confirmed in the error which they held in common with the mass of the people, that Jesus was to establish, and probably during this very visit to Jerusalem, which He was now making in so open and public a manner, an earthly kingdom, from which they, as His friends, would receive honor, power and great glory. Before reaching Jerusalem, which was about twenty miles distant from Jericho, our Lord undertook to correct these erroneous views and expectations concerning the Messiah's kingdom, by declaring its true nature, and showing how men would stand related to it.

Some have regarded this parable and that of the talents, in Matt. xxv. 14–30, as one and the same. But they are not so. Although in many of their features there is a strong resemblance, in others there is a decisive difference. *This* parable was

spoken before Christ's entrance into Jerusalem, and at the house of Zaccheus, *that* while He was seated on the Mount of Olives, the third day after His entry into the city; *this* was addressed to a mixed multitude, *that* to Christ's own immediate disciples; in *this* there are ten servants, in *that* there are three; *this* shows that Christians differ in the diligence they display, *that* shows that they differ in the amount of gifts they receive.

12. *He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

*Matt. xxv. 14, on which see notes; Mark xlii. 34.

A certain nobleman—a man of noble birth, through his birth, family, ancestry, distinguished from the rest of the people. (Verse 14.) The reference is to our Lord Himself, who being descended from Abraham and David, after the flesh, was of kingly origin, and, besides, was the Son of God. (See 1 Tim. i. 17.) *Went into a far country.* Heaven is here meant, which Isaiah calls “the land that is afar off.” *To receive for himself a kingdom.* Those in Judea who, by hereditary succession or by interest, had pretensions to the Jewish throne, traveled to Rome, in order to have it confirmed to them. Jesus ascended into heaven to take possession of the kingdom, the right to which, as Messiah, He had acquired, and the foundation of which He had laid by His obedience and sufferings. (Dan. iv. 3; Isa. ix. 7; Luke i. 33; Phil. ii. 8, 9; Heb. i. 3, 8, 9.) All power was given to Him in heaven and on earth. He was invested with the kingdom by God, His Father. In virtue of that investiture, He has right to rule supreme over that world, on which before He had not where to lay His head. He has His kingdom in heaven, and from thence He exercises His power (Matt. xxviii. 18; Phil. ii. 9–11; Eph. i. 17, 20–22), until He comes at the last day to the judgment. (Matt. xxv. 31.)

13. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

*Gr., *mina*.

The word *ten* is here used of an indefinite number. By *servants*, are represented all who profess and call themselves Christians. Only two classes of persons are mentioned as having remained in the country while the nobleman was absent—servants and adversaries. (Verse 14.) In

a spiritual point of view, only two classes exist: those who serve Christ as the Lord that bought them, and those who, being at enmity with God, refuse to obey the Gospel of His Son. *Ten pounds*—in Greek, *ten mina*. A pound was the sixtieth part of a talent, or about \$15. The Greek word translated “occupy” is only found here. It means, literally, “employ in business, or trading.” *Till I come, i. e.*, all the time of my absence. The place and age in which our lot has been cast, our early education, our bodily members and mental powers, our station in society, and the circle of our homes, money, time, health, wealth and influence, and, in addition, the graces of the Spirit, in whatever measure they may have been conferred, all that we are and have belongs to God, and must be used for His glory, and the good of our fellow-creatures. For the use we make of all our gifts, graces and opportunities, we are to give account. Our belief of the return of Christ, and the uncertainty under which He has left us as to the time of His coming, ought to make us ever active and diligent in improving the sacred trust which He has committed to us, in whatever way and sphere this can best be done.

14. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.—John i. 11.

His citizens. By these are doubtless meant in the first instance the Jews. They are here thus named, as by John they are called Christ's “own,” for, according to the oldest predictions, He was the King of Zion. They sent messages after Him to show that they would not acknowledge Him as their king, when they incited the heathen to persecute the followers of Him whom they crucified. They still send after Him such messages, because they pronounce the curse over all their members who venture to receive the Christian faith. All persons, however, are included in the number of these “citizens,” who will only recognize Jesus as an enlightened Teacher, but not as their Lord and Saviour. *Hated him.* The original imports a permanent, settled hatred, entertained toward the nobleman, even before he set out on his journey. *Sent a message after him*, would be better translated, *sent an embassy, &c.* *We will not have this man to reign over us.*

This very declaration twice found formal utterance from the lips of the Jews—once when they cried to Pilate, “We have no king but Cæsar,” and again, when they said, “Write not, The King of the Jews.”

We will not. The verb *will* here, as in several places of the New Testament, loses much of its force by being mistaken for the auxiliary verb *will*. Let it here be rendered, “we *will* that this man shall not reign over us!” It is a wicked, insulting *will* that originates and continues the foul rebellion. This is no more than a mere shadow of the rebellion of a sinner against his God. None who refuse to have Jesus Christ to reign over them can possibly avoid being slaves to sin under the dominion of the devil.

15. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given ^{the money,} that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

^{*Silver—and so verse 23.}

He commanded, &c. These words refer to the general judgment. *That he might know.* As the Omniscient, Christ knows all things, but the conduct of one and all must be made known before the whole world, as also the righteousness of the Lord be acknowledged in rewarding and punishing. *How much every man had gained by trading.* The inquiry was two-fold. 1. As to who had been diligent. 2. As to the gain that had been made. The nobleman had not given them weapons for fight. On the day of judgment all shall reckon with the Judge. The dead shall be raised from their graves. The living shall all be summoned to the bar. The books shall be opened. High and low, rich and poor shall stand “before the judgment seat of Christ,” to account for the powers, privileges and opportunities with which they were favored in the time of their probation. How solemn will that reckoning be!

16. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

With a sweet and cheerful boldness does the faithful servant come before his Lord. The investigation is carried on with each one separately. Each must stand or fall on his own merits. *Thy pound hath gained ten pounds.* In deep humility he acknowledges that the gain is not his own, but the Lord's; therefore, he says, with em-

phasis, *thy pound*. So Peter speaks: “I, yet not I, but the grace of God that was in me.” (See 1 Peter iv. 10.) He is not said to have *doubled* his pound; but, instead of this, to have gained *ten* pounds by his *one*. By this we are given to understand the unbounded power of expansion in the gift of God's grace in Christ, when really and faithfully received by His servants. It is not said *how* the gain was accomplished by this servant. Such a result may be reached by a minister in the Church of God who faithfully discharges his office, or by the faithful Sabbath-school teacher or tract distributor, or by the wealthy man who liberally distributes his means for the good of man and the glory of God, or by the magistrate who, in the fear of God, well discharges the duty of guarding the morals and peace of society. How great will be the consolation of the Christian, whose conscience shall give testimony of his fidelity at the hour of death!

17. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

^{9Matt. xxv. 21; Luke xvi. 10.}

Well. A word of approval; brief, but comprehensive and final. *Because thou hast been faithful in a very little.* The sum intrusted to him was comparatively small, but it served to test his industry and fidelity, and therefore was not permitted to limit his reward. However small a man's gifts and opportunities, he is as much accountable for using them rightly as if they were very great. And the poorest and the humblest Christian, if he uses his one pound well, shall be as carefully noticed and rewarded as the mightiest king. *Have thou authority over ten cities.* An allusion to the custom formerly (as it seems) prevalent in the East, of assigning the government and revenues of a certain number of cities or towns, as a reward to favorites and faithful officers. The favor which Christ will show at last to His faithful servants will be, first of all, this; He will show greater *confidence* in them now than ever. They have had a certain charge committed to them; they have been faithful in *that*; He will now enlarge His trust exceedingly, which He will place in their hands, on the principle He Himself enun-

ciated: "He that is faithful in that which is least, will be faithful also in much." All the faithful are made great; but the greatest worker is the greatest winner when the accounts are closed. He who has made the *best* use of grace on earth is, on that very account, fitted for the highest place in heaven.

18. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

The second. We hear nothing of the other seven servants, but we need not, for this reason, conclude that they had wholly lost or wasted the money entrusted to them. Rather may we believe that the three who come forward are adduced as specimens of classes, and that the rest, while all we are to learn is learned from the three, are, for brevity's sake, omitted. *Thy pound.* Here, as in the former case, humility is shown by the servant in acknowledging that the gain is not his own, but the Lord's. It will be noticed that this servant had received an equal amount with the first. *Hath gained five pounds.* The limitation as regards the productiveness of God's grace, in this case, does not spring from anything in that gift itself, but from the less degree of faithfulness and unceasing diligence on the part of him who has it.

19. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

The commendation bestowed on the first servant is here withheld from the second, who, with the same pound, had only gained the half of what the first had gained, in order thereby to intimate that the reward should be different in just that proportion in which the profit of the labor is greater or less. The gain, indeed, creates the capacity for the reward. *Over five cities.* The honor, riches, power and authority of a temporal government are but a faint shadow and resemblance of that which he shall receive at the hands of God, who has faithfully managed and improved the wealth of his sovereign Master. (Rev. iii. 21, iv. 6; Matt. xix. 28; 1 Cor. viii. 2, 5.) The doctrine of reward according to works is here plainly taught, as it is also in other places of Scripture. "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor." There are degrees of glory

in heaven. Every vessel will be alike full, but not alike large. And the degree of glory there will be according to the degrees of usefulness here. (1 Cor. iii. 8.)

20. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, *here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin.*
*Prov. xxvi. 13, 16; Matt. xxv. 24; verse 13, iii. 9 and vi. 46; James iv. 17.

Two are represented to have been diligent and only one indolent; but no information is thereby given regarding the proportions of mankind in general, or within the Church, who shall be found faithful in the great day. We can well understand why this servant should have lingered to the last, being reluctant to appear in the presence of his Lord. *Here is thy pound.* Our Lord does not mean by this that men of inferior responsibilities are less likely to discharge them than those of higher. The words *here is* are not in the original, so that the expression literally rendered, is, "Lord, behold thy pound." *Which I have laid up in a napkin.* The word rendered "napkin" literally signifies a handkerchief, or "sweat-cloth," "which," says one, "not exerting himself, his idle servant does not need for its proper use ('in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread'—Gen. iii. 19), hence uses it for the wrapping up of his pound. That he had it disengaged and so free to be turned to this purpose, was itself a witness against him." This servant did not waste the money committed to him. Let it be noted that his laying up his pound in the handkerchief was not because the sum he had received was less than that of the others, or different from it, and therefore incapable of increase. Neither was it because he had no opportunity of turning it to account, or no inherent energy of action able to do so. Neither was it because he had no intelligible instructions, for this is not pleaded. He said in effect, "I give you back all you gave me. I have done no harm." He was mistaken in supposing that he could return the pound as he had received it, because not to use is to waste.

21. *For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layest not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.
*Matt. xxv. 24; Rom. viii. 15.

Feared thee. He justifies the caution and timidity he had shown, and how it was

that he would attempt nothing and venture upon nothing; he feared to trade on that pound, lest in the necessary risks of business, seeking to gain other, he might lose that one, and so enrage his master against him, even as men might profess to fear to lay themselves out for the winning of other souls, lest, so doing, they might endanger their own. The man who feels deeply the value of his own soul feels most for the situation of others. *Austere*. Harsh, stern, unforgiving. *Thou takest up*, &c. This is a proverbial description of an unjust, rigorous character. The slothful servant, by impudently applying it to his lord, and assigning it as the true reason why he had not increased his pound, as the others had done theirs, aggravated his crime not a little. Many will doubtless finally perish from moral cowardice. The fearful, as well as the unbelieving, shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. (Rev. xxi. 8.) Obviously, the conception which this man had formed of his Master's character was the direct, efficient cause of his unprofitable idleness. The picture, at this point, represents a human heart secretly conscious of guilt, and reconciled through the Gospel, and dreading the wrath of the righteous Judge. When one is at peace with God in the Redeemer, perfect love casteth out fear; but here, in the absence of this reconciliation, perfect fear casteth out love. Many a man fears to make a profession of religion, because he thinks a hard Master demands more than he can render.

22. And he saith unto him, "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, *thou* wicked servant." "Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and repaying that I did not sow: 23. Wherefore, then, gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?"

2 Sam. i. 16; Job xv. 6; Matt. xii. 37. "Matt. xxv. 26. "Exod. xxii. 25, 27; Deut. xxiii. 19, 20.

From your own acknowledgment, you are condemned. That which the servant had contrived for his justification the Lord applies to his confusion. *Thou wicked servant*. Sloth does not appear so much in the condemnation of this man, as doing wickedly. He had not listened to the entreaty, "We beseech you that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." A man is wicked who does not improve the

gifts which God has bestowed upon him. The tree which brought forth no fruit was hewn down and cast into the fire. *Thou knewest*, &c. The master echoes the culprit, in order to condemn him on his own grounds. This is not an acknowledgment of the vile and detestable charge of God's demanding of men more difficult services than He has furnished them for, and would assist them in, which would be a most unrighteous thought of God, but the servant's lord only argues with him on his own base principles, and shows that, even on them, he would be justly condemned for his negligence.

The lord draws from the accusation brought against him a conclusion just the opposite of that which the servant had drawn. "If thou didst really believe me to be the rigorous person thou sayest I am, why didst not thou lend out my money on proper security, that I might have received mine own with interest?—a method of improvement of thy pound which would have occasioned thee no trouble at all. Thy excuse, therefore, is a mere pretense."

24. And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.

Them that stood by. The angels are here meant, who never fail to appear and take an active part in all scenes descriptive of the final judgment. *Take from him the pound*. Take what was intrusted to him, from that idle, suspicious, unfaithful servant, who otherwise might have had that and much more allotted him for his own property. All opportunity of serving Christ is now forever withdrawn. *And give it to him that hath ten pounds*. The lord ordered this pound thus to be disposed of, because it was agreeable to the rules of all wise administrations to bestow the most and the greatest trusts on them who, by their fidelity in offices already enjoyed by them, had shown that they best deserved them. By having another pound given to him, it was intimated that this man's "ability" had become greater than before. (Matt. xxv. 15.) It will be observed that in this parable no other punishment is inflicted on the indolent servant than the deprivation of his capital. This may possibly be intended to intimate that cul-

pable unfaithfulness in a true believer may sometimes descend so far as to be undistinguishable by human eyes from the entire neglect of the unbelieving. There is, however, in all cases, a dividing line, although we may not be able to trace it—"the Lord knoweth them that are His."

25. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

They—the angels. *He hath*, &c. They speak this in surprise at his assigning the pound taken from the wicked servant to one who had received so ample a reward, thinking there was no occasion to give an additional pound to one who had so many already. Perhaps they thought it more proper to give it to him who only had five pounds.

26. For I say unto you, "That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him."

See "Matt. xiii. 12 and xxv. 29; Mark iv. 25; Luke viii. 18.

Here the Lord unfolds the deep ground of His procedure, which, so far from being arbitrary, consists in the highest righteousness. (Matt. xxv. 29.) *Which hath*. Obviously from the whole circumstances of the case this means "which possesseth and useth aright." The wicked servant was distinguished from the others, not by not having, but by not using. The law announced here is, that they who employ well what they have shall retain it all, and receive more in addition; whereas, they who do not rightly employ what they have, will be deprived of that which they possess and do not use. "The earth which bringeth forth herbs, meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing," that is, a further blessing—the gift of a continued fruitfulness "from God." (Heb. vi. 7.) Nor is it merely that the one receives more, and the other loses what he had, but *that very gift* which the one loses the other receives; he is enriched with a pound taken from the other. We see this continually; one, by the providence of God, steps into the place and the opportunities which another left unused, and so has forfeited. (1 Sam. xv. 28.) *From him that hath not*, &c., i. e., from him that does not use. This is a natural as well as a penal effect, of not using what we were bound to turn to proper account. If we cease to use a limb,

its muscles die away, and its strength utterly departs. Corn hoarded up in the granary is soon destroyed. Intellect not drawn on, soon flags. This taking away is a process. It is steadily going forward in this world. It will be completed in the next, where all further probation and chance for doing service will utterly and eternally cease.

27. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

It can hardly be questioned that the destruction of Jerusalem is here primarily intended, but it would deprive the passage of its principal force to limit it to the temporal punishment of Christ's enemies. The language has a more extensive signification, and includes the final overthrow and punishment of all the enemies of truth in the world to come. (1 Cor. xv. 24-58.)

Those mine enemies. They are here named contemptuously, as they previously had named their lawful king. (Verse 14.) *Bring hither*. The command is given to those who were addressed in verse 24. *Slay them*, expresses strongly the severity and hopelessness of the coming retribution. The sudden breaking off of the parable heightens not a little its beauty. They who will not submit to Christ the Crucified will be crushed by Christ the King. Every eye shall see Him, they also who pierced Him. Meekly, now, he stands at the door and knocks; then He comes as the lightning comes. Those who surrender to Him now will be His friends then.

28. ¶ And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem. 29. ¶ And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples,

¶ Mark x. 32. ¶ Matt. xxi. 1 and Mark xi. 1, &c., on which see notes.

Ascending up to Jerusalem—being determined to appear there at the approaching Passover, though He knew that persecution and death awaited him there. This city was geographically several thousand feet above the Jordan, on which was the Plain of Jericho. It is our duty to follow Jesus toward the cross, ready to make any sacrifice that fidelity to Him may require.

Bethphage, i. e., "the house of figs," a village between Bethany and Jerusalem, near the summit of the Mount of Olives. No trace of it now exists. *Bethany*, i. e.,

"the place of dates," stood near the foot of the eastern side of the Mount of Olives, nearly two miles from the limits of Jerusalem. *The Mount of Olives.* The well-known eminence on the east of Jerusalem, separated from that city by the Valley of Jehoshaphat. It is, however, not so much a "mount" as a ridge, of rather more than a mile in length, running in general direction north and south, covering the whole eastern side of the city. The *two disciples* were probably Peter and John. (Compare xxii. 8.)

30. Saying, "Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither."—1 Sam. x. 2, 9; John xiv. 23.

Village over against you—Bethphage. *A colt tied.* This was an ass's colt. (Matt. xxi. 2.) The Messiah was predicted as coming on an ass. (Zech. ix. 9.) Asses and mules were in common use in Palestine; horses were seldom to be met with. The horse was an animal of pride and war; the ass, of humility and peace. (Hos. i. 7; Micah v. 10, 11.) Even Solomon rode on a mule in state. (1 Kings i. 38; see Gen. xxii. 3; Ex. iv. 20; Judges x. 4.) *Whereon yet never man sat.* Animals that had never been used were put to sacred purposes. (Num. xix. 2; Dent. xxi. 3; 1 Sam. vi. 7.) Jesus was born of a pure virgin, and laid in a new sepulchre. Thus his birth, triumph and tomb were alike. We have here a wonderful instance of Christ's prescience in very minute matters. He says, 1. You shall find a colt. 2. On which no man ever sat. 3. Bound with his mother (Matt. xxi. 2). 4. In a place where two ways meet (Mark xi. 4). 5. As you enter into the village. 6. The owners shall at first seem unwilling to have him loosed. 7. When they hear the Lord has need of him, they will let him go.

31. And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, "Because the Lord hath need of him."
*Ps. xxiv. 1; Luke x. 12; Matt. xxi. 2, 3, Mark xi. 3, 6; Acts x. 36.

Without doubt, the owners of the beast belonged to the many concealed friends of Christ, and He knew that a command addressed in His name to these men would not be in vain. *The Lord.* The Proprietor of all things. There is not, we think, one instance, in which this word, with the article, and without either noun

or pronoun, is used in speaking of any other person than Jesus, except when used of the glorious God absolutely. In His humility Christ is ever giving proofs of His Divinity. He has a right to everything, and He can so control men's hearts as to make them willing to obey Him.

32. And they that were sent went their way, and found even as He had said unto them. 33. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? 34. And they said, The Lord hath need of him.

Christ intended, by sending the disciples, to exercise them in unconditional obedience, even where something remained inexplicable to them; also to establish their confidence in His superhuman foreknowledge. God's promises shall all at last prove to be true.

The owners, i. e., persons belonging to the family of the owner. What the Saviour foresaw actually occurred. Objections were raised, but at the appointed watchword they were withdrawn. We must not hesitate to obey when God commands.

35. And they brought him to Jesus; and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon.

*2 Kings ix. 13; Matt. xxi. 7; Mark xi. 7; John xii. 14.

The owner allowed the beast to be taken, assured that it would be safely and speedily restored, and satisfied that it was now to be appropriated to the Master's use. *Cast their garments.* The disciples spread their mantles, instead of a saddle, upon the colt, which, though never used before for riding, was now perfectly tractable. This was done as a token of honor. It was the custom of the people, as an acknowledgment of an appointed king. (See 2 Kings ix. 13.) *And they set Jesus thereon,* more literally, *they assisted Jesus to mount thereon.* We are to be workers together with the Lord.

36. "And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way."—Matt. xxi. 8, on which see notes.

Spread their clothes in the way. This was in conformity with the very ancient and still existing custom on state occasions, of honoring royal and illustrious persons, by covering the ground over which they are to pass. Clothes and rich tapestries were regularly employed for the purpose, but when the occasion was extemporaneous, and no other provision was made, the robes and mantles of the persons in at-

tendance supplied the deficiency. It is generosity well becoming a Christian to make everything subservient to the triumph and reign of Christ in the Church. We must, if necessary, strip ourselves of all, that He may rule in our hearts.

37. And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen;

At the descent of the mount of Olives, i. e., where the road over the summit begins to descend toward the valley of Kedron. *Multitude of the disciples.* Most probably many of the disciples here mentioned were not really disciples in heart, but had followed our Lord in much ignorance, and under very mistaken expectations. The enthusiasm which broke forth when the point was reached from which the city could be seen, spreading itself like a grand panorama, increased in intensity while the way began to descend. *Began to rejoice and praise God,* more literally, *began rejoicing, to praise God.* *With a loud voice*—all speaking at once, and very earnestly. This is added as a heightening circumstance. *For all the mighty works, &c.* Matter for praise and jubilant joy was not wanting. Doubtless some of Christ's wondrous works were recounted to them by one another. The sight of the capital city awakened the remembrance of many miracles, and the name of Lazarus was upon the lips of all. (John xii. 17.)

38. Saying, "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

^aPs. cxviii. 26; Luke xiii. 35. ^eLuke ii. 14; Eph. ii. 14.

Blessed be the King. Christ was, indeed, a king, but His kingdom was not, as they supposed, of this world. (John xviii. 36.) They expected the kingdom of "our father, David," to be restored, enlarged and glorified by this His more glorious Son. (See Mark xi. 10.) As David was the conqueror of surrounding nations, so, they supposed, this his illustrious descendant would emancipate Israel, subdue Rome, make Jerusalem mistress of the world, and thus be, in accordance with their desires, a temporal Messiah. *Cometh in the name of the Lord, i. e.,* in the name and authority of Jehovah, the ancient God of Israel, as His messenger and representative. "The Coming One" was an appel-

lation of the Messiah. *Peace in heaven.* This may refer to the blessing of peace to be dispensed upon earth as the gift of heaven, or it may have been a Scriptural phrase used at any period of great religious rejoicing. *Glory in the highest.* Glory and salvation be ascribed to Him in the highest heavens, and in the uttermost degree.

39. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

The Pharisees, who were present to watch Christ's movements, evidently considered the multitude to be treating Jesus as the Messiah, and Jesus to be claiming the Messiahship by His not checking the language His attendants used. Their spirit was just that of modern Socinianism; the prophetic expressions used, the lofty epithets applied to Him, who was simply, in their view, a *Teacher*, offended them.

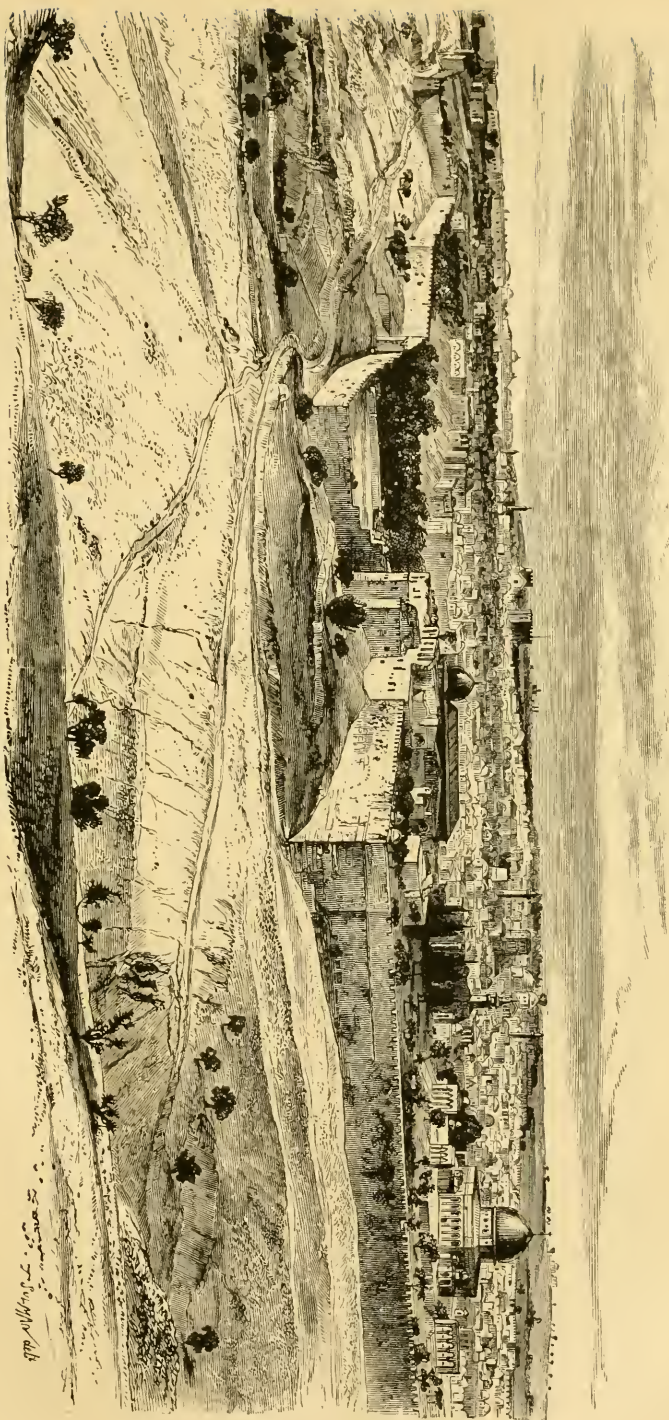
40. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.—Hab. ii. 11.

If these should hold their peace, &c. This is a proverbial expression, denoting the impossibility of repressing or concealing an important fact. "If, at a crisis so intense, so awful, even *these* should hush, and no human voice should welcome the Messiah, we might expect that God would literally rebuke the criminal indifference and stupidity of men by making the very stones upon which they trod utter voices and cry out." It is possible that the words also contain a covert intimation of the destruction of Jerusalem, in which the stones of the city and the temple should proclaim the majesty of our Lord.

41. ¶ And when he was come near, he beheld the city and wept over it.—John xi. 35.

Come near—descending the slope of the hill toward Jerusalem. *Beheld the city*—gazed upon the metropolis which was spread out before Him in all its beauty and magnificence, and which He was now about to enter in a more public manner than ever before. *Wept over it.* Men, generally, are glad when approaching a city, but Jesus now was sad. Here is evidence of Christ's true humanity. Whilst the multitude were in triumph, Jesus was shedding tears. This He did, notwithstanding He had already received much ill usage from the inhabitants of the city, and was at this very juncture to be put to

VIEW OF JERUSALEM, FROM THE SPOT WHERE JESUS WEPT OVER THE CITY.



death by them. A sense of the guilt and future ruin of the city overwhelmed the Saviour's spirit. The cause of the destruction of impenitent sinners is in themselves. Christ loves and pities all, even those who are His open enemies. None are hated, though none but believers are finally saved. The true Christian feels a deep concern about the souls of unconverted people. (Ps. cxix. 136; Rom. ix. 2.) The existence of a union between awful, inflexible justice, denouncing sentence against the criminal, and benevolence sympathizing in his misery, even to tears, is most affectingly shown in this verse and the two verses immediately succeeding. (Ez. xviii. 23; Rom. ix. 1, 2, 3; Jer. ix. 1, 2, 10, 11.) It is affecting to see a great man like Newton or Bacon weep. How tremendous the significance of the tears of the Son of God! They are awfully foreboding in regard to the incorrigible, and yet full of encouragement to penitent sinners.

42. Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which bring unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

If thou hadst known, or in the optative form which the phrase admits, "O that thou hadst known." It implies a wish. It is like Isa. xlviii. 18. *Even thou*, rather, *thou also*, thus placing the unbelieving inhabitants of Jerusalem in opposition to the disciples of our Lord. *At least in this thy day*. The language of the original is abrupt and interrupted, and peculiarly expressive of the deep interest felt by the Saviour for those of whom He was speaking. These words refer to the *time of thy visitation*, spoken of in verse 44. The whole time of Christ's public activity in Jerusalem was a respite of two years, which had been prepared for more than twenty centuries, and now, as it were, concentrated itself in the one day on which He entered as King into Jerusalem. There is a time when the offer of mercy may be withdrawn from the obstinately impenitent. *The things which belong unto thy peace*. Just as our Lord's words to the people, "would have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings" (Matt. xxiii. 37), do not mean that He would have been a temporal prince, which He so often and earnestly declined and disclaimed; so here, the things over

their ignorance of which He lamented, were not mainly the things pertaining to their continued amity with the Roman state, but to their peace with heaven. It was over the alienation of men's minds from God, their disaffection to the only means of recovery, their indifference to the time of their visitation, and their consequent subjection to Divine wrath, that Jesus wept. *But now they are hid from thine eyes*. They were hidden by a voluntary rejection of the evidence which our Saviour gave of His Divine mission. God's keeping silence is not approbation. His long suffering is not even connivance. He can be merciful, without allowing us to trifle, and insult Him, for even His patience has its rules and bounds.

43. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side.

^aIsa. xxix. 3, 4; Jer. vi. 3, 6; Luke xxi. 20.

This, with the next verse, is one of the most striking predictions ever uttered. It was literally fulfilled at the siege of Jerusalem under Titus. Josephus gives a very particular account of the building of this *trench*, by which we are to understand a mound set with palisades, or *abattis*. He says it was effected in three days, though it measured thirty-nine furlongs, or almost five miles, and the towers were thirteen in number, every one of them being ten furlongs in compass. By this means the inhabitants were kept in on every side, cut off from all hope of safety by flight, and reduced to the most terrible distress by the famine which ensued.

44. And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another: because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

¹Kings ix. 7, 8; Micah iii. 12. ²Matt. xxiv. 2, on which see notes; Mark xlii. 2; Luke xxi. 6. ³Dan. ix. 24; Luke i. 68, 78; 1 Peter ii. 12.

Lay thee even with the ground. Josephus says that the Roman emperor commanded the whole city and temple to be demolished, which command was so executed, that strangers coming thither would not believe that the place had ever been inhabited. (Comp. Ps. cxxxvii. 9.) *Thy children within thee*. Thy children and thyself shall be laid in one common ruin. By *children* is meant, not minors, but native-born inhabitants of any age. *One stone upon another*, literally, *they shall not leave in thee stone upon stone*. This was a

proverbial and figurative expression, to denote an utter destruction, and need not be interpreted that not a single stone would be left lying upon another. The city was burnt and destroyed. The Romans burned the extremest parts of it, and demolished the walls. Three towers only and some part of the wall were left standing, for the better encampment of the soldiers, and to show to posterity what a city, and how fortified, the valor of the Romans had taken. As for the temple, after it was burned the Roman general ordered the very foundations of it to be dug up; and, later still, Terentius Rufus ordered its site to be furrowed with the plowshare. *Because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation.* God's visitations are either of wrath (Ex. xxxii. 34), or of mercy (Jer. xxix. 10). The term is here used by our Saviour in the latter sense, and refers to His visiting them by the prophets, John the Baptist and Himself. Churches, nations and even individuals, are sometimes visited with special manifestations of God's presence, and the neglect of these manifestations is the turning point in their spiritual ruin.

45. ¹And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought: ²Matt. xxi. 12, on which see notes; Mark xi. 15; John ii. 14, 15.

He went into the temple. He did not go up to the court, or to the palace, though He came in as a King, but to the temple; for His kingdom is spiritual, and not of this world. *And began to cast out,* &c. A similar transaction occurred about three years before. (John ii. 13-15.) Thus Christ purified the temple from profane uses at the beginning and at the end of His ministry. A large place, furnished with shops, was appropriated in the southern part of the spacious outer court of the temple, called the Court of the Gentiles, for the sale of animals and birds for sacrifices, and whatever else might be required for offerings and sacrifices, such as salt, wine, oil, &c. This arrangement, made at first for convenience, afterward became a mere matter of gain and exaction—a sad profanation of the sacred place. The house of God should not be devoted to secular purposes. Christ's zeal for the holiness of the Church and the sanctification of souls is here indicated.

46. *Saying unto them, "It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves."* Isa. lvi. 7. Jer. vii. 11.

Even in purifying the temple from profane uses, our Lord supports His conduct by a text of Scripture. All reformations in Churches should be built upon God's Word. It is more than probable that the Court of the Gentiles had become a harbor of wicked men who cheated in their traffic, and lived by *den* it and extortion. *Den of thieves* is a terrible antithesis to the house of God. The word *den*, probably, is an allusion to the caves and recesses of rocks in Judea in which the robbers and bandits found shelter. The offenders, when cast out from the place of their traffic, do not appear to have made the least resistance; doubtless, they were struck with a panic by the secret energy of Christ's omnipotence. (See Mark xi. 1-3.) Perhaps the casting out may be regarded as a miracle. Prayer is good in all places; but there is a particular blessing attends it when offered to God in the house of prayer. He who passes through religious exercises carelessly and negligently, robs God of that glory which he does not pay Him.

47. *And he taught daily in the temple.* But ¹the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him. 48. *And could not find what they might do:* for all the people were very attentive to hear him.—Mark xi. 18; John vii. 19 and viii. 37.

Having just called the temple "the house of prayer," our Lord proceeds to show, by His own example, that it is to be the house of "teaching," as well as praying. His crucifixion being near at hand, He employed Himself without intermission in instructing as many people as possible, and in the most public place. He exhibited courage, composure and energy of spirit. Christ's example furnishes the strongest motive for not being weary in well doing. *But the chief priests,* &c. All this time irreconcilable hatred and thoughts of murder were rankling in the breasts of the worldly aristocracy, which counted itself mortally endangered by Him. Jesus endured the contradiction of sinners, and was exposed to their wicked designs in accomplishing His mission.

Were very attentive; literally, they hung upon him, hearing. They listened with so great attention and pleasure, that they hung, as it were, on His lips while He

spake. Doubtless our Lord's words, in these His last days, were of peculiar depth, tenderness and solemnity. Meanwhile His enemies were visibly perplexed. They *could not find what they might do*, or rather, *could not find the (way) in which they might do it*. The Passover had brought numbers of Christ's friends from Galilee, His preaching had won many followers in the region

beyond Jordan, the raising of Lazarus in Bethany had made His name wonderful in and around Jerusalem, and thus the Saviour and the people alike were for the moment an obstacle to the accomplishment of the malicious purposes of His foes. A true Christian should think nothing troublesome and grievous when he finds himself useful in advancing the work of God.

1. Through what city did Jesus pass? 2. What is said of Zaccheus? 3. What parable did Jesus speak? 4. Explain it. 5. How are we to understand verse 26? 6. When Christ had thus spoken, where did He go? 7. Where did He send two of His disciples? 8. For what purpose? 9. What took place at the Mount of Olives? 10. What did Christ do in the temple? 11. What did He say there? 12. What was the result?

CHAPTER XX.

¹ Christ avoucheth his authority by a question of John's baptism. ⁹ The parable of the vineyard. ¹⁹ Of giving tribute to Cæsar. ²⁷ He convinceth the Sadducees that denied the resurrection. ⁴¹ How Christ is the son of David. ⁴⁵ He warneth his disciples to beware of the scribes.

This chapter is remarkable, because of the variety of attacks on our Lord which it describes. Whether the whole of the events here narrated took place on one day, is a question on which commentators do not agree. If they did not all happen on one day, they must, at any rate, have happened on two successive days.

AND it came to pass, that on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon him with the elders.

^aOn verses 1-8; see on Matt. xxi. 23-27.

One of those days. Supposed to have been one of the four last days of our Lord's life, mentioned in chap. xix. 47; probably the last Tuesday. *As he taught, literally, was teaching. In the temple.* Our Lord persisted calmly in the work of teaching, while He knew that danger beset Him, and that death was close at hand. *Came upon him.* This conveys at once the idea of suddenness and deliberateness.

² And spake unto him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority? ³ And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me: ⁴ The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?—^bActs iv. 7 and vii. 27.

Previous efforts had been made to ensnare our Lord in His own words, but

now this is attempted in a more refined way, and with united force. After three years' exhibition of proof, they ask Jesus again to tell them! *By what authority doest thou these things?* They could not deny that He had approved Himself by miracles, hence they felt justified only in asking Him for His authority. They asked this question, not because they did not know, but because they would not acknowledge. The *things* referred to were His entering the city with such a numerous train of attendants; His taking upon Him to reform the economy of the temple, and His receiving from the people the title of the Messiah. *Or who is he that gave thee this authority?* The first question related to the nature of the authority by which He acted, whether it was as a prophet, a priest or a king, no other person having a right to make any reformation in Church or State. This second question was, that if He claimed the authority of any or all of these characters, He should state from whom He derived it—what proof He had that it had a Divine source.

To an honest inquiry on the point mentioned, Jesus, notwithstanding He had already furnished such overwhelming proofs of His Divine mission, would, no doubt, have given a *direct* answer, but

He knew that their purpose was malicious, and hence adopted the method which He did.

The baptism of John, i. e., the religion of which the baptism was a profession. Baptism is mentioned as representing John's ministerial work. *From heaven, or of men.* A Divine or human institution? Our Lord's question, it will be perceived, was in reality an answer to the question of His inquirers. His meaning evidently was that John the Baptist had expressly testified that He was the Messiah. They knew this. They could not deny it. Now, if they really believed that John was a prophet, they would see by "what authority He did what He did"—it was as the Messiah, whom John had proclaimed Him to be.

5. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him no? 6. But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us; for they be persuaded that John was a prophet. 7. And they answered, that they could not tell whence it was. 8. And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. ^cMatt. xiv. 5 and xxi. 26; Luke vii. 29.

They retired an instant, and made the matter an object of common deliberation. They saw and felt the dilemma in which they were placed. *If we shall say, From heaven.* They knew that in acknowledging John's mission to be from God, which they believed it to be, their sagacious opponent would confound them with the inquiry, *Why then believed ye him not?* *i. e.,* Why did ye not believe the testimony which he, as my forerunner, bore to me as the Messiah? (John i. 29-34, iii. 28-36.) Here was the other horn of the dilemma. *Of men.* If they denied John's Divine mission, they feared violence from the people. Every way Christ's reply was calculated to silence His enemies. It subjected them to the charge of gross inconsistency on the one hand, or to personal peril on the other. *Stone us.* (See Acts vii. 54-60, xxi. 27-36.) *John was a prophet.* The rulers, from political motives, had deserted John; but with all the ranks of the common people, even to the publicans and harlots, there was a deep feeling that John was a messenger from God. These chief priests and scribes feared the people, as Herod did before them.

They did not like to confess. They feigned an ignorance which they did not

possess, for the two possible cases lay open to their discernment; but, in their depravity, they could not bring themselves to give honor to the generally admitted truth. Their internal thoughts and outward conduct were in discord and opposition to each other, which is the essence of hypocrisy.

If they had really not known and inquired in order to know, our Lord would readily have answered them. But it was useless to proffer any further proof of His Messiahship to men who, if they would not believe John's testimony in His favor, would not, of course, believe that which He should offer for Himself. He, therefore, simply exposed their obstinacy to themselves, leaving them to reflect upon it. Both were now silent—He, because on good grounds He would not speak; they, because through their own fault they could not speak. The people present could easily decide which had been victorious.

Practical Reflections. 1. Every true-hearted Christian who tries to do good in the world, must expect that the self-righteous and worldly-minded will dislike his ways. 2. It is a great sin for any one to be willing to acknowledge and proclaim the truth only so far as will subserve his selfish designs. 3. He who forbears speaking against the truth only through fear of men, has betrayed and dishonored it already in his heart. 4. Pharisaic pride, according to its different interests, either pretends to know everything, or affects to know nothing. 5. Many will say anything rather than acknowledge themselves to be in the wrong. 6. Lying is one of the commonest sins in the world. Gehazi, Ananias and Sapphira have more followers and imitators than Peter and Paul.

9. Then began he to speak to the people this parable. ^dA certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time. —^dMatt. xxi. 33 on which see notes; Mark xii. 1.

Planted a vineyard. This represents God's attention to Israel, His covenant people, "to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God and the promises." (Rom. ix. 4.) These eminent privileges were conferred upon them as a sacred trust to be cultivated and

improved. A vineyard was customarily used in both the Old Testament and the New as a figure for the Israelitish people. (See Deut. xxii. 32; Isa. v. 1-7; Ps. lxxx. and Matt. xx. 1.) This "*certain man*" was more than possessor of this vineyard. He had himself "*planted*" it. (Ex. xv. 17.) The planting of this spiritual vineyard found place under Moses and Joshua, in the establishing of the Jewish polity in the land of Canaan. It is described in Deut. xxxii. 12-14. (See Ezek. xvi. 9-14; Neh. ix. 23-25.) *Let it forth*—leased or rented it, with rent to be paid from the produce. *To husbandmen*—The Jewish people, especially their rulers and priests, who were the chief instigators in all those things which were bringing wrath upon the nation unto the uttermost. *And went into a far country for a long time*. This means either that after the open manifestation of Himself, which God made to Israel at the giving of the law from Sinai, and in the miracles which accompanied their deliverance from Egypt, and their introduction to Canaan, He did not, in so open and extraordinary a manner manifest Himself to the people again (Deut. xxxiv. 10-12), or it indicates the feeling of the vine-dressers, who think that God has no regard to their conduct. (Ez. viii. 12, ix. 9; Ps. x. 4, 5; Luke xii. 45.)

10. And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty.

At the season. An intimation of the period in which the proper prophetic activity began in Israel, which, as is known, was a considerable time after the founding of the theocratic state, so that the fruits had had abundant time to come to maturity. *Sent a servant*. By the servants mentioned are meant extraordinary ambassadors who were sent from time to time in the owner's name, to demand the stipulated tribute—prophets, such as Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, men not of the number or in the confidence of the ordinary rulers, but specially commissioned by the Supreme, to approach them with reproof and instruction. *That they should give him of the fruit, &c.* He had reason to expect fruit, because all the arrangements and agreements were to

this effect. So with the Jews, whom God had taken into solemn covenant, and otherwise highly favored. *Beat him, &c.* The established authorities of the nation, exercising their office for their own pleasure or profit, rejected the counsel, and assaulted the person of the messenger, dismissing him without any fruit. (See on Matt. xxi. 56.)

11. And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty. 12. And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out.

The repeated messages sent by the prophets, generation after generation, indicate not only the continued patience, long-suffering and wonderful compassion of God, but also the growing wantonness and wickedness of the people, by whom His servants, although sometimes effecting temporary reforms, were almost uniformly rejected and maltreated.

13. Then said the lord of the vineyard, "What shall I do? I will send my beloved Son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him." *Isa. v. 4; Hos. vi. 4, xl. 8. Matt. iii. 17, xvii. 5; John i. 34.*

What shall I do? The Lord of the vineyard is brought before us in soliloquy, that the act of love may be exhibited in the most striking and affecting manner. When men's hands were stained with the blood of the prophets, it might have been expected that the judgments of God would descend upon them and crush them, but He whose "ways are not as our ways," determined on another and far more earnest effort to win the wicked and rebellious people to love and obedience. *I will send my beloved Son*. The Lord Jesus here speaks of Himself. He is God's "beloved Son in whom He is well-pleased." God will send even *Him*, as the last trial of Divine mercy with His covenant people, *as such*. *It may be that they will reverence him, &c.* This expression is natural and appropriate in the lips of a human proprietor, but obviously, when applied to God, it means only that such reverence was claimed, was due, and might justly be expected. The Omniscient knew beforehand that the Jewish rulers would not yield even to this last and tenderest appeal.

14. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, "This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours."

This is the heir—the owner of the property.

They confess his being *the heir, among themselves*, but they offer no such confession to him. *Come, let us kill him.* The owner being absent, they imagined that if the son was dead they could find none to interfere with them in holding the vineyard without paying the rent. *That the inheritance may be ours.* These rulers were determined to retain the power over Israel. Their meaning here was, "If we let this man alone, all men will believe on him. Then the Romans will come and take away *our* place and nation. Thus *our* position will be irretrievably ruined. He will get the heritage, if we do not take instant measures to prevent it. It is expedient *for us* that one man die for the people. Let us therefore put him to death. This is our only hope for continued authority and power."

15. So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What, therefore, shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them? 16. He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid.

See on Matt. xxi. 39-41.

Out of the vineyard. A striking prophecy of the crucifixion outside of the city. (Heb. xiii. 12, 13; John xix. 17.) *What therefore, &c.* Christ makes an appeal to His hearers as if willing that they shall judge of the righteousness of the punishment so richly deserved by the vine-dressers. *Unto them.* It is observable how the successive generations, who for so many centuries had been filling up the measure of the iniquity of Israel, are considered, throughout the entire parable, but as one body of husbandmen. God will deal with nations as indeed *being*, as having a living unity in themselves, as in fact *bodies*. They are something more than mere aggregations of individuals.

The judgment pronounced is two-fold. *Destroy*, bring all sorts of evil upon *these husbandmen, i. e.,* the Jewish state and nation. *And give the vineyard, &c.* He was about to take their privileges from them and give them to the Gentiles, who should cultivate the ground on which they were placed, and render Him the fruits. *God forbid.* This sudden ejaculation by the people showed that they fully understood the awful application of the parable. The exclamation was either an expression of fear, desiring that such evil

might be averted, or of unbelief: "That shall never be, it is impossible that our privileges can ever be so forfeited."

17. And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, *"The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?"* [†]Isa. xxviii. 16; Acts iv. 11; Eph. ii. 20; 1 Peter ii. 6, 7; Ps. cxviii. 22; Matt. xxi. 42, on which see notes.

What is this then, &c. He thus gives them to understand that if they were right in their deprecation, the prophecy of the Scripture would not be fulfilled, which yet is an absolute impossibility. *The stone which the builders rejected.* This refers to Christ and His rejection by those who called themselves leaders and builders in the Jewish Church. He was cast off by them as a stone which the architect or workmen, thinking too unshapely to work into the structure, throws aside as unfit and of no value. *The same is become the head of the corner?* The very man Christ Jesus whom the official but false builders refused, dishonored and slew, God raised up and made King upon His holy hill of Zion. It is a dreadful discovery for those husbandmen to make, that the Son whom they murdered lives, and has become their Lord. *The head-stone of the corner* is the large stone placed in the corner of a stone edifice, for the purpose of binding the two walls firmly together. Jesus Christ is the strong and firm corner-stone of the new building of the Christian Church, in which those who were hitherto divided, Jews and Gentiles, have been united into one glorious body. (Eph. ii. 13, 20.)

18. Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

[†]Dan. ii. 34, 35; Matt. xxi. 41, on which see notes.

Two kinds of punishment are here referred to, not two different degrees of the same punishment. In the one, the person offending is active (he stumbles and is broken); in the other, passive (he is fallen upon and crushed). In the first case, whatever evil is experienced is self-inflicted by the person who endures it; in the second, that which is experienced rushes upon the sufferer with irresistible force, from the offended and now avenging Saviour. The one is a punishment only of this life, where alone sinners have the opportunity of stumbling on the rock of salvation, and consists in all the loss of

peace, consolation and blessing, together with all that judicial blindness, bitterness of spirit, hardness of heart, and manifold disquietudes of mind, which inevitably blight and desolate the moral condition of those who resist the claims of Messiah. The other punishment belongs to eternity, and consists in the fearful and everlasting retribution which Christ will inflict upon all His adversaries when He takes to Himself His power and great glory—consigning them to final perdition in utter darkness.

Practical Reflections. 1. Civil and religious liberty, the Bible and the Sabbath, the Church and its ministry, have been provided and preserved for us by our Father's care. We are permitted to enjoy all for our own benefit, under deduction of a tribute to the Giver. Our offerings cannot directly reach Him, but He has made them payable to the poor. 2. Men not only refuse to obey God, but are angry with those who *reprove* their disobedience. 3. Unconverted men become more and more hardened in sin, as they resist calls to duty. Every sin they commit, and do not repent of, prepares for the commission of a greater. 4. Abuse of God's ministers because of their character or faithfulness is a gross insult to Him who sent them. 5. God has done all to secure the salvation of men which, consistently with the highest wisdom and goodness, it was possible for Him to do. 6. God overrules the wrath of man so as to make it contribute to His glory. 7. The nation that will not render to God the fruits of His vineyard, may have their privileges in judgment taken away, and given to another nation. 8. The blessed Saviour, who might, like a stone, be a support and defense, will become, if we refuse to believe in Him, the instrument of our destruction.

19. ¶ And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them. 20. And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.—Matt. xxii. 15.

A guilty conscience needs no accuser. These enemies of our Lord, instead of yielding to conviction, were exasperated at Jesus as they saw the application to themselves of the truth He had just uttered. Only fear of the people prevented them

from at once putting Him to death. *Watched him*; better and more literally, *having watched* their opportunity. *Spies*. The Greek word so rendered means persons who *crouch* in some secret place to *spy, listen, catch or hurt*. Which should feign, &c., *i. e.*, pretend to be scrupulously conscientious in every point. *Take hold of his words*, &c., if He answered as it was hoped He would. *Might deliver him*, &c. The Roman power is meant.

21. And they asked him, saying, "Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly;" 22. Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar, or no?

*Matt. xxii. 16, on which see notes; Mark xii. 14. *Or, of a truth.

Acceptest, shonest no partiality to any man, not even Herod himself. *Truly*, teachest the true path of duty. There was something peculiarly artful in this flattering address. "Their words were smoother than butter," yet there was "war in their hearts." (Ps. lv. 21; Prov. xxvi. 23; Rom. xvi. 18.) Persons of this description will be met with as long as the world stands. The *language* of Christianity is precisely that part of religion which a false Christian finds it most easy to attain. The walk of a man's daily life, and not the talk of his lips, is the only safe test of his character. We ought always to suspect the praise which is given by men devoted to the world.

Tribute, the annual poll-tax of a denarius upon every person, levied by the Roman emperor. This was a matter of fierce dispute at this time, the Herodians holding the affirmative, and the fanatical Pharisees, on the ground of Deut. xvii. 15, the negative. *Cæsar*. This was the general title given to the Roman emperors, as Pharaoh was for the Egyptian kings. Tiberius *Cæsar* was at this time emperor. This question involved one of the most cunningly-devised snares which was ever laid for Christ. If He had answered in the affirmative, they calculated rightly that He would alienate and offend His disciples and all the people, for there was never a people by whom the yoke of bondage was felt more heavily than by the Jews. On the other hand, had Christ declared the tribute unlawful, or let fall one word which might have been tortured to that mean-

ing, they would doubtless have denounced Him to the Romans as a promoter of sedition, and, under the reign of Tiberius, His death would have been the inevitable consequence of such an accusation.

23. But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me?

Tempt ye me?—try me by such an ensnaring question, and endeavor to draw me into danger by it. Jesus saw at once the trap laid for Him by His enemies, and avoided it with the same admirable address which had confounded them the day before.

24. Show me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Cæsar's.

¹Matt. xviii. 28, and xxii. 19, 20, on which see notes.

A penny. This was the *denarius*, a Roman silver coin, the principal money at the time. It became the current coin of Judea after its subjection. It was the price of a day's labor in Palestine (Matt. xx. 2); a soldier's pay was less. *Denarius*, like our word *dime*, signifies *ten*; that is, ten asses, to which it was originally equivalent, hence its name. It does not follow that a single piece of this coin formed the entire amount of the tribute to be paid, but the amount, whatever it was, was paid in this coin. As the Jews were averse to this and other coins of idolaters, the Romans probably required the tax to be paid in this coin, in order to render it current, as an evidence of their dominion over the country. *Whose image and superscription hath it?* Our Lord, of course, knew whose effigy and inscription it bore, but He made the inquirers answer to their own confusion. *Cæsar's*. Thus they acknowledged that Cæsar's superiority is peacefully submitted to in the quiet of society and the commercial exchanges.

25. And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's.—See on Matt. xxii. 21.

Said unto them. "The meekness of wisdom" was never more beautifully manifested than in this answer of our Lord to so insidious a question, and nothing can be more worthy of imitation than this: that He always took occasion, even from the most captious and frivolous questions, which would have excited contempt or indignation in others, calmly to call the attention of the hearers to some very important instruction. *The things*

which be Cæsar's. What is Cæsar's? 1. *Honor.* The civil government under which a man lives, and by which he is protected, demands his honor and reverence. 2. *Obedience.* The laws which are made for the suppression of evil-doers, and the maintenance of good order, which are calculated to promote the benefit of the whole, and the comfort of the individual, should be religiously obeyed. 3. *Tribute.* The government that charges itself with the support and defense of the whole, should have its necessary expenses repaid by the people in whose behalf they are incurred, hence tax should be paid. Cæsar, however, has no right to infringe the rights of God. Human laws are limited by the Divine law. The Christian must, as far as possible, comply with both. Where the human law conflicts with the Divine, he must obey the latter and suffer the consequences. It is not an easy matter to determine precisely in all cases what are "the things of Cæsar," and what are "the things of God"—where the claims of Cæsar end, and where the claims of God begin. It would, perhaps, be safe to say that the former include things political, secular and temporal, and the latter include things sacred, moral and spiritual. Sometimes a question of a mixed character arises, involving both political and moral elements; in this case duty in relation to the question is to be performed by the individual under a sense of double responsibility, regard for the moral aspect always being supreme. Such a question is also to be treated by the Church and by the State according to the view of it which it brings under their control respectively. *And unto God the things which be God's.* We are not to recognize antagonism here, but unity. Their civil duties did not release them from religious obligations (1 Peter ii. 17), nor did their duties to God absolve them from duties to the State. (Rom. xiii. 1.) Instead of one class of duties being set at variance with the other, our Lord harmonizes and confirms them both. (1 Peter ii. 13, 14.) He has not divorced them, but united them. We must never do anything contrary to the rights of God in obeying the government, and never violate the rights of

government under pretense of doing service to God. Honor, love, obedience, faith, fear, prayer, spiritual worship, were payments to God which these "spies" might daily make, and payments with which the Roman government did not interfere. Such payments Jesus directed them to make.

26. And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.

By Christ's answer, *Cæsar* is satisfied; he got *his own* to the uttermost farthing. *God* is glorified; His honor is, in every respect, secured. The *Pharisees* cannot complain; for His decision is but their own confession put in shape. The *people* are edified. One of the most difficult questions that could possibly come before them is answered in such a way as to relieve their consciences, and direct their conduct. The very *Gaulonites* cannot complain, for He does not decide that there are no just grounds for revolutionizing the government and asserting independence. All He decides is that government is right; and that while *Cæsar's* government is the *acknowledged* government, it must receive its dues. This answer, moreover, contained a principle for all following centuries, by which, on the one hand, the independence, on the other hand, the practically social direction, of the religious life, is sufficiently secured. Well, therefore, might His listening enemies be vexed and ashamed, being clearly and unexpectedly confuted on their own principles.

27. ¶ Then came to him certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection, and they asked him. 28. Saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. 29. There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children. 30. And the second took her to wife, and he died childless. 31. And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children, and died. 32. Last of all the woman died also. 33. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife.

¶ Matt. xxii. 23. on which see notes: Mark xii. 18. Acts xiii. 6, 8. Deut. xxv. 5; Ruth i. 11, 12.

The attempt to entice the Saviour within the sphere of the controversy between politics and religion having entirely miscarried, they now seek to allure Him upon another not less dangerous territory, to entangle Him in the strife between the purely sensual and the strictly religious view of the world. Malice is ever active;

let it be defeated ever so often, it returns to the charge. Jesus and His Gospel give no quarter to vice; the vicious will give no quarter to Him or it. *Sadducees which deny, &c.* A Jewish sect often mentioned in the New Testament. Its founder was Sadoc, a disciple of Antigonus, who was president of the Jewish Sanhedrim, and lived about two hundred and sixty years before Christ. They taught, among other things, that God was not to be served from mercenary motives, that there were no future rewards or punishments appointed unto men, and, consequently, no world of retribution, and no angels or spirits.

As their object was to show that Moses could not possibly have presupposed a resurrection, they proposed to Jesus a difficulty that would grow out of their law, if the relations which it prescribed were to be extended beyond the grave, viz., if several brethren had come by the law to have successively the same woman to wife, who should claim her, of those seven, in the future world? The law referred to (Deut. xxv. 5, 6), which required a man to marry the widow of a deceased elder brother, and raise up children, as being his, was intended to prevent the loss of the memory of a son of Abraham. It was a part of the system by which the memory of the institutes of the old and true religion was to be preserved. *Seven brethren.* It is very likely that the Sadducees increased the number, merely to make the question the more difficult.

34. And Jesus answering, said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage:

Children of this world, &c. By this is simply meant those who live in this world, not such as are wholly given to the world, as before. (xvi. 8.) There is no reflection on matrimony. It is merely a declaration that the condition of men and women in a world to come is utterly unlike their condition in this world.

35. But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:

As the question of the Sadducees (briefly feigning to be orthodox), which Christ here answers, regarded solely the children of Abraham, who were assumed to be of course heirs of the *blessed* resurrection,

it is of the blessed resurrection, or the blessed side of the resurrection, only, that Jesus now speaks, to which the *worthy* alone do in fact attain. Nothing is said of the resurrection of the wicked, because it is only a resurrection to unmitigated suffering. (Acts xxiv. 15; John v. 29.) It will be an existence, but not the *life* which is promised to them that believe. (Matt. xxv. 46; Phil. iii. 11.) *That world.* The place where Christ reigns in glory. Those who "shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world" are not such as have personal merit (which no one can have), but such as are interested by faith in Christ's merit, who *purchased it for us*, and have a holy meetness for it wrought in them by the Spirit, who *prepares us for it.* *Neither marry.* Spoken of males. *Given in marriage.* Spoken of females. In the resurrection, the relations that are beautiful on earth shall be utterly unknown. Not that one shall fail to recognize another, but that the relationship that they have sustained the one to the other as man and wife shall have ceased, when all shall be perfectly holy and perfectly happy.

36. Neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

1 Cor. xv. 42, 49, 52; 1 John iii. 2. *Rom. viii. 23.

Neither can they die any more. Hence the necessity of marriage to perpetuate the race no longer exists. Soul and body are made incapable of separation, and both incapable of disintegration or extinction. *Equal unto the angels.* Our Lord here vindicates against the Sadducees the belief in the existence of angels as personal beings. (Acts xxiii. 8.) The meaning appears to be, that the saints shall be *angel-like*, in freedom from death and disease, in not being subject to the appetites and propensities of the body, and in complete deliverance from a condition of being in which marriage and birth are needful to supply the continual waste occasioned by death. From this comparison, it does not follow that the saints in heaven will not have bodies. Our Lord did not use the similitude at all to show this. The nature of the future bodies of the saints is described in 1 Cor. xv. 42, *seq.* *And are the children of God.* Not here in the sense of adoption through faith in Christ, but as partakers

of the Divine nature, so that they cannot die. This means, evidently, that the saints are introduced into a state of peculiar privilege, as members of God's family, and residents in God's house, after a fashion that they know nothing of here on earth. *Being the children of the resurrection*, literally, *sons, or sharers of the resurrection*, because they have attained everlasting life and blessedness with Christ. (Compare John xiv. 19; 2 Tim. i. 10.)

37. Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

*Exod. iii. 6.

Are raised. The present in a general and universal sense for the future. *Even Moses.* To whom ye appeal for the proof of the direct opposite. *Showed at the bush.* See Exod. iii. 6, 16, which was probably quoted because the Sadducees only acknowledged the Pentateuch. *When he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, &c.* Abraham was dead upward of three hundred years before these words were spoken by Moses, yet still Moses called Him *the God of Abraham, &c.* Now, the Saviour argues, as God is not "a God of the dead" (that word being equal, in the sense of the Sadducees, to an eternal annihilation), but of the "living;" it therefore follows, that, if He be the *God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, these are not *dead*, but *alive*—*alive with God*, though they have ceased, for some hundreds of years, to exist among mortals. A being who is elevated enough to have a true, immortal God to be *his God*, must himself be neither the creature of time nor annihilation. The same thing is true of all believers, for the promise is to them also, as Abraham's seed.

38. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him.—*Rom. vi. 10, 11.

Not a God of the dead, of those who, being (according to the Sadducean sense of the word "dead") destitute of life, and consequently of sensibility, can neither know nor honor Him. *But of the living.* He is the God only of those who love and adore Him, and are, by consequence, alive. Hence the patriarchs named must all be believed to be alive, in respect of God, whom they still worship and serve. *For all live unto him.* All those living on the earth, or who have long been dead,

buried and removed from the world, are, in the sight of Him who inhabiteth eternity, living. As Christians, the thought of the resurrection should cheer us in every sorrow. (Job xix. 26.)

39. ¶ Then certain of the scribes answering said, Master, thou hast well said. 40. And after that they durst not ask him any question at all. 41. And he said unto them, How say they that Christ is David's son? 42. And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand. 43. Till I make thine enemies thy footstool. 44. David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?

¶ Matt. xxii. 45, on which see notes; Mark xii. 31. ¶ Matt. xxii. 42; Mark xii. 35. ¶ Ps. cx. 1; Acts ii. 34.

Thou hast well said. This was extorted praise. It was probably uttered by the Pharisees who had not yet left the field, and who could never be more inclined to forget their own recent defeat, and frankly and openly to praise our Lord, than just now, after He had thus publicly humbled their deadly enemies.

They durst not ask, or, did not venture to ask any other question, for fear of being again confounded, as they had already been.

How say they. This expression implies that it was a common expression among Jewish theologians—an acknowledged and received opinion. *That Christ.* Christ is the Greek word for the Hebrew Messiah. The question was not asked by our Lord concerning Himself, whom most of His hearers were far from allowing to be “the Christ,” but concerning the Messiah whom they expected. *Is David's son.* This was a thing well known among the Jews, and universally acknowledged (John vii. 42), and is a most powerful proof against them that the Messiah is come.

The Psalm referred to is the 110th. Our Lord decides that David was the author of it, and that he wrote under *Divine inspiration.* (See Matt. xxii. 43.) This Psalm was pressed by Peter on the Jews, in the first public sermon he addressed to them on the day of Pentecost. (Acts ii. 34.) *The Lord said unto my Lord,* that is, God the Father said to God the Son, who was to be incarnate, whom David called his Lord, both as God and as Mediator, his Lord by right of creation and redemption. *Sit thou on my right hand.* Take the place of the greatest eminence and authority. *Till I make thine enemies thy footstool,* until I subdue both Jews and Gentiles under thee,

and cause them both to acknowledge thee as their Sovereign and Lord. It is not implied that the Messiah's royal state will cease when this result has been reached. *How is he then his son?* Here was the point to be explained. The question concerning the Messiah's person could only be answered by admitting that He must be God as well as man, and man as well as God—David's son, as man; David's Lord, as God-man. As the Jews did not attempt to deny the conclusion of our Lord's question, it is evident they could not. Indeed, there was no other way of invalidating the argument, but by denying that the prophecy in question related to Christ; but it seems the prophecy was so fully and generally understood to belong to the Messiah, that they did not attempt to do this.

45. ¶ Then in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples, 46. Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts: 47. Which devour widows' houses, and for a show make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation.

¶ Matt. xxiii. 1; Mark xii. 38. ¶ Matt. xxiii. 5. ¶ Luke ix. 43. ¶ Matt. xxiii. 14.

Beware of the scribes. Take heed that ye be not deceived by those who should show you the way of salvation. It is a great misfortune to be obliged to beware of those who ought to be our rule and pattern. *Long robes.* The Jews were required to wear a blue border, or fringe, on their outside garments, to remind them that they were God's people. (Num. xv. 38; Deut. vi. 8, xxii. 12.) These fringes the scribes made excessively large, in order to impress on the minds of the common people an opinion of their own holiness and their great reverence for the law. *Greetings in the markets.* They were fond of resorting to the markets and other places of public concourse, to receive the marks of deference and respect, which were generally given to men of rank and reputation by the great body of the people. There was nothing wrong in receiving such tokens of respect; but to “love” them, to court them, to put themselves in the way of receiving them, to be mortified if they were withheld, and elated if they were bestowed—all this was not only indicative of a weak, ill-judging mind, but it was also utterly inconsistent with the very elementary principle of a truly good

character—supreme regard to what is true and right, whether it pleases men or not. (John v. 24.) *Highest seats in the synagogues.* The synagogues were fashioned in imitation of the temple, with a central erection, supported by pillars, and a space surrounding it. In the center of this a place was prepared for reading the law and the prophets—an elevated platform, next to which were the seats for the rulers, which were raised above the other seats. The “highest seats” here probably refers to the highest of the seats appropriated to the rulers—the highest of the uppermost seats. It was not wrong for the scribes to occupy the seats set apart for them, but to be eager to get the most honorable of these showed a vain-glorious mind. This is self-idolatry; bad anywhere, but especially in places of worship. There to seek honor to ourselves, where we come to give glory to God, is to mock God, instead of to serve Him. It savors much of pride and hypocrisy, when people do not care to go to church unless they can present a fine appearance and make a figure there. *The chief rooms at feasts,* literally, the uppermost reclining-places round a table at a feast. Here the same radical defect of character shows itself. *Devour*

widows' houses. This was done sometimes by plotting with the children to deprive their widowed mother of her estate, and sometimes by inducing the widow to give up her estate to them for superstitious purposes. *Make long prayers.* A religious rabbi would pray nine hours a day. It was not the length of the prayers which was their crime, but the fact that they were a mere pretense—“for a show.” *Greater damnation.* For this hypocrisy, doing the most despicable deeds under the show of piety, they should be the more severely punished in the future world. Whatever else we are in religion, let us be true. However feeble our faith, hope, love and obedience may be, let us see to it that they are real, genuine and sincere. Let us abhor the very idea of part-acting and mask-wearing in our Christianity. God requires “truth in the inward parts.” The very first piece of Christian armor recommended by Paul is “truth.” (Eph. vi. 10.) As the Bible teaches distinctly that there will be degrees of glory in heaven, so it teaches, with no less distinctness, both here and elsewhere, that there will be degrees of condemnation and misery in hell.

1. What did the chief priests, scribes and elders ask Jesus in the temple? 2. How did He reply to them? 3. What effect was produced? 4. Explain the parable of the vineyard. 5. For what purpose were “spies” sent forth? 6. What question was asked of Jesus in regard to giving tribute? 7. How did He dispose of it? 8. Explain His answer. 9. How did Jesus reply to the question of the Sadducees? 10. How are we to understand the reasoning in verses 41-44? 11. Why were the disciples warned to beware of the scribes?

CHAPTER XXI.

1 *Christ commendeth the poor widow.* 5 *He foretelleth the destruction of the temple, and of the city Jerusalem.* 27 *The signs also which shall be before the last day.* 31 *He exhorteth them to be watchful.*

The time was near when Jesus would leave the temple, never to return. Before He left it, He sat for a while (Mark xii. 41) in the court called the *women's court*. The inner court was called the court of Israel, and there no one was permitted to

sit down, but in the women's court sitting was allowed.

AND he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury.

^aMark xii. 41, on which see notes.

And he looked up. This expression conveys the idea of watching attentively for some time. Seating Himself in self-possessed repose, He watched the doings at the temple treasury. *Saw the rich men casting,* more literally, *the rich who were*

casting. Their gifts into the treasury—the chests which were placed in the court of the women, under the pillars that adorned the court, to receive offerings and contributions.

2. And he saw also a certain poor widow, casting in thither two *mites.

*Mark xii. 42, on which see notes.

A certain poor widow. She is singled out from the whole crowd of donors. She may have been one of those whose houses the proud had devoured. (xx. 47.) She had to earn her own livelihood. She must have been a believer in the promises of God, or she could not have presented an acceptable offering. (Heb. xi. 6.) *Two mites.* A mite was the smallest copper coin in use among the Jews in our Saviour's time. It seems to have been a native coin. Two made one Roman *quadrans*, which was equal to the fourth of an *as*. Ten or sixteen *ases* were equal to a *denarius*. (See on xx. 24.) It was equal to the fifth part of our cent. We call it *mite*, from the French, *mièr*, which signifies a crumb, or very small morsel.

3. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, *that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: 4. For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offering of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.—b2 Cor. viii. 2; see Mark xii. 43, 44.

Cast in more than they all. More in proportion to her means; more in the faith and love which prompted the gift; more in God's sight, who looks at the motives and the circumstances of givers. Our Lord does not at all censure or lightly esteem the gifts of the rich, only He extols far above their beneficence the gift of the poor widow, whose offering was brought, not like that of most of the Pharisees, from ignoble impulses. *Of their abundance.* This means that what the rich gave, they gave, as the original literally signifies, *of their overflow*, and thus hardly felt what they contributed, because much was left behind. *Unto the offerings* is equivalent to *into the treasury* (verse 1), implying the additional idea that these were offerings made to God. *Of her penury.* Both representations are substantially the same, and mean that what the widow gave, she gave out of a store so small that, after giving, nothing seemed to be left. *All the living that she had.* Her offering was the whole of her income for that day, or, perhaps, the whole of the money in her possession

at that time. A person so poor as she would necessarily live from hand to mouth, and possess no capital or property, except what was received from one source or another, day after day.

Note, 1. Christ is omniscient. He knows and observes all men and all things—all we do in public and in private. (Jer. xvii. 10; Prov. xv. 3; Heb. iv. 13.) 2. He observes our state and situation. He knew the abundance of the rich men, and the poverty of the widow; how much they had given, and what they had left. 3. He sees the motives which lead men to perform their actions, and the *different* motives from which they perform the *same* action, whether we act from vanity and hypocrisy, or from love and zeal for His glory. 4. We are to judge *impartially* in cases of this kind, not permitting ourselves to be carried away to decide for a person by the largeness of the gift on the one hand, or *against* him, by the smallness of the bounty on the other. 5. The Saviour estimates liberality according to the ability of the giver. Men judge the heart according to the deeds; the Lord judges the deed according to the heart. It is not said that He loveth a *liberal* giver but a *cheerful* giver. *He accepteth the gift according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.* 6. Jesus measures littleness and greatness by a very different measure from the measure of man. Those actions only are great in His sight which are done with a true Christian heart. He looks with gracious favor upon the least offering which is only presented in the right spirit. He is now the same as when He marked the gift of one "poor widow" as attentively as the gifts of many "rich men." 7. There is great power in little things. Penny clubs have done much for the cause of Christianity. 8. The poor are expected to give to God what they can, trusting in His Providence, and looking for His blessing. 9. If people would "give their mite" really and literally as the widow gave hers, many would have to give far more money than they ever give now. 10. "O, our God!" says one, "the poorest of us, Thy servants, have our two mites also, a soul and a body. Persuade and enable us

to offer them both unto Thee. Though they are Thine already, yet Thou wilt graciously accept them, and O, happy shall we be in Thy acceptance!"

5. ¶ And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones, and gifts, he said, "Matt. xxiv. 1, &c., on which see notes, Mark xiii. 1.

The feeling with which all Jews, in our Lord's time, regarded the temple, was something far beyond what we can imagine in the present day. *Goodly stones.* As the whole temple was built with the greatest cost and magnificence, so nothing was more stupendous than the uncommon measure of the stones, some of which, particularly those employed in the foundations, were in magnitude forty cubits, and the superstructure was worthy of such foundations. A cubit was about twenty-two inches of our measure. Some of the stones were of the whitest marble, forty-five cubits long, five cubits high and six broad. "The appearance of the temple," says *Josephus*, "was such as to strike the mind, and astonish the sight. For it was on every side covered with solid plates of gold, which reflected, when the sun rose upon it, such a strong and dazzling effulgence, that the eye could not sustain its radiance. At a distance, it appeared a huge mountain covered with snow. For where the plates of gold were not, it was extremely white and glistening." *Tacitus* describes it as "of immense opulence." *Gifts*, which persons had, in gratitude for deliverance from imminent dangers or from respect to the building, hung on the walls and pillars. The hanging up of *consecrated gifts* in their temples was common among the ancients.

6. *As for these things which ye behold, the days will come in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*

¶ Luke xix. 41; 1 Kings ix. 7, 9; Isa. lxxv. 10, 11; Jer. vii. 14. See on Matt. xxiv. 2, &c.

This prediction will strike us the more, if we bear in mind that these huge stones were bound together with lead, and fastened with strong iron cramps. *Josephus* says, "Cæsar gave orders that they should now demolish the whole city and temple, except the three towers, Phaselus, Hippicus and Miriamne, and a part of the western wall, and these were spared, but, for all the rest of the wall, it was laid so completely even with the ground, by those who dug it up from the foundation, that

there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe it had ever been inhabited." (See on xix. 44.)

It is a very common practice in the prophetic writings, to carry on two subjects together, a principal and a subordinate one. In Isaiah, there are no less than three subjects, the restoration of the Jews from Babylonish captivity, the call of the Gentiles to the Christian covenant, and the redemption of man by the Messiah, which are frequently adumbrated under the same figures and images, and are so blended and interwoven together, that it is extremely difficult to separate them from each other. In the same manner, our Saviour seems to hold out the destruction of Jerusalem, which is His principal subject, as a type of the dissolution of the world, which is the under-part of the representation. By thus judiciously mingling these two important catastrophes, He gives at the same time a most interesting admonition to His immediate hearers, the Jews, and a most awful lesson to all His future disciples, and the benefit of His predictions, instead of being confined to one occasion, or to one people, is by this admirable management extended to every subsequent period of time, and to the whole Christian world. Learn hence, 1. That sin has laid the foundation of ruin in the most flourishing cities and kingdoms; Jerusalem, the glory of the world, is here by sin threatened to be made a desolation. 2. That the threatenings of God are to be feared, and shall be fulfilled, whatever apparent improbabilities there may be to the contrary. 'Tis neither the temple's strength nor beauty that can oppose or withstand God's power.

7. And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?

See on Matt. xxiv. 3.

The disciples inquired concerning two things: 1. The precise time of the approaching catastrophe. 2. The sign of it. Our Lord answered only the last question, while He in reference to the first gave to them only general intimations. (Comp. Matt. xxiv. 34-36.) The signs which He gives are at the same time of such a nature that they, in fact, are only to be seen precursorily at the destruction of Jerusalem,

but will appear decisively and in their full force only at the end of the world. Happy were it if we were as anxious to obey the declaration of God's revealed will, as we are to pry into the counsels of His secret will.

8. And he said, *Take heed that ye be not deceived; for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.*
 *Matt. xxiv. 4; Mark xiii. 5; Eph. v. 6; 2 Thes. ii. 3.
 *Or, and, *The time.* Matt. iii. 2 and iv. 17.

Take heed, &c. The disciples, it is probable, believed that the time when Jerusalem would be destroyed would be the end of the world. Our Lord, therefore, wishing first of all to set them right upon that point, warned them that no future false Christ should tempt them to believe that His second advent had arrived. This caution is very significant. The mistakes that have been made about the fulfillment of prophecy, in every age of the Church, have been many and great. In our own day we see some persons putting a literal meaning on figurative prophecy, and others putting a figurative meaning on literal prophecy. Amidst this tangled maze of discordant opinions we need greatly the solemn warning of our Lord, "Take heed that ye be not deceived." *For many shall come in my name, &c.* This part of the prophecy began soon to be fulfilled. *The time draweth near, i. e.,* the time of the Messianic kingdom. These are the words of the false Christs. How much were they like the enthusiasts and fanatics who have in our day, at different times, filled the whole land with their predictions of an immediate end of the world! *Go ye not therefore after them*—become not their followers, countenance not their schemes.

9. But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is now at hand by.

*Ps. xxvii. 1, 3; Prov. iii. 25, 26; Isa. ii. 12, 13.

That there were wars and great disturbances during the interval of forty years, appears from all the historians of that period, especially Josephus. To relate the particulars would be to transcribe a great part of the history of the Jewish wars. *But the end*—the end of the Jewish State. *By and by.* This phrase, which by a singular reverse of meaning now signifies *after a while*, meant, in the old English of our translators, *immediately*.

10. Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.
 *Matt. xxiv. 7, on which see notes.

Nation against nation. This portended the dissensions, insurrections and mutual slaughter of the Jews, and those of other nations who dwelt in the same cities together, as particularly at Cesarea, where the Jews and Syrians contended about the right of the city, which contention proceeded so far that about twenty thousand Jews were slain, and the city was cleared of the Jewish inhabitants. *Kingdom against kingdom.* This portended the open wars of different tetrarchies and provinces against one another, as that of the Jews who dwelt in Peræa against the people of Philadelphia, concerning their bounds, while Cuspius Fadus was procurator, and that of the Jews and Galileans against the Samaritans, for the murder of some Galileans going up to the feast at Jerusalem, while Cumanus was procurator, and that of the whole nation of the Jews against the Romans and Agrippa, and other allies of the Roman empire.

11. And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.
 *See on Matt. xxiv. 7.

In the time of Claudius and Nero there were great earthquakes at Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, Samos, Laodicea, Hierapolis and Colosse, in Crete also, and Campania, and one at Rome in the reign of Galba. In Judea, likewise, there were judgments of the same kind. *Famines.* It is evident from Josephus, as well as Eusebius, Suetonius and several other profane historians, that, in addition to earthquakes, there were famines and pestilences in divers places. *And fearful sights, &c.* Josephus enumerates a great variety of astonishing signs and prodigies, which he says preceded the calamities that impended over the Jews, and which he expressly affirms, in perfect conformity to our Saviour's prediction, were signs manifestly intended to forebode their approaching destruction. This account is confirmed by the Roman historian Tacitus, who says that many prodigies happened at that time; armies appeared to be engaged in the sky, arms were seen glittering in the air, the temple was illuminated with flames issuing from the clouds, the doors of the temple sud-

denly burst open, and a voice more than human was heard, "that the gods were departing," and soon after a great motion as if they were departing. War, pestilence and famine are judgments and calamities inflicted by God upon a sinful people for their contempt of Christ and Gospel grace.

12. ¹² But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers ¹³ for my name's sake.

¹⁴ Mark xiii. 9; Rev. ii. 10. ¹⁵ Acts iv. 3, v. 18 and xvi. 21. ¹⁶ Acts xxv. 23. ¹⁷ 1 Peter ii. 13.

Before all these—before all these events and ominous sights. Our Lord here appears to have a special reference to the persecutions undergone by the early Christians between the time of His ascension and the destruction of Jerusalem. There is a noticeable climax in the indicated persecutions. Every circumstance here mentioned was minutely and exactly verified in the sufferings of the Apostles and disciples. We learn from the Acts of the Apostles, that the lives of the Apostles were one continued scene of affliction and distress of every kind. They were imprisoned, beaten, brought before councils, and sanhedrims, and kings, such as Herod, Agrippa and the Roman emperor, for the sake of Christ, that is, for being called by His name. Most, if not all of them, except John, suffered violent deaths from the hands of their enemies before the Romans beleaguered Jerusalem.

13. ¹³ And it shall turn to you for a testimony. 14. ¹⁴ Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: 15. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. 16. ¹⁶ And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends; and ¹⁷ some of you shall they cause to be put to death. 17. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.

¹⁸ Phil. i. 28; 2 Thes. i. 5. ¹⁹ Matt. x. 19; Mark xiii. 11; Luke xii. 11. ²⁰ Acts vi. 10. ²¹ Mi. vii. 6; Mark xiii. 12. ²² Acts vii. 59 and xii. 2. ²³ Matt. x. 22.

To you for a testimony. This means either that their persecutions would prove an evidence of the truth of Christianity, or that they would be, in the judgment day, a testimony to their faithfulness in behalf of Christ.

The Apostles being, in general, persons of ordinary education, and wholly unacquainted with the laws of the different countries whither they were to go, and with the forms of their courts, might have been painfully anxious at the thought of appearing before kings and rulers, and other persons of distinction, and might

have feared lest, in their agitation, they should be betrayed into some impropriety of language or behavior by which the cause of the Gospel might be injured. Our Lord, therefore, bade them renounce all earthly tempers and human ingenuity, and cast themselves in simple dependence on His aid. He would give them a mouth to utter, and wisdom in the matter of utterance. None but One who was very God could have made such a promise as this.

Ye shall be betrayed, &c. We learn from Tacitus, that Christians were delivered up by their parents, brethren, kinsfolk, friends; from Josephus, that contention sprang up in their very houses, and that the Idumeans slew many of their own kindred, and from the Scripture, that the Jews persecuted those of their own country. (1 Thes. ii. 15.)

Of all men, that is, of all men out of the Christian community. Tacitus, the Roman historian, says, like a true pagan, that "the Christians were convicted of enmity to the human race"—Jews hated them as revolters from their own religion. Pagans could tolerate each other, and respect and worship each other's gods. But the Christians abhorred all paganism, and so all pagans abhorred them; thus Christians were hated of all men, whether Jews or Gentiles. *For my name's sake.* For your attachment to me and my cause. (See Rom. viii. 35-37; 1 Cor. iv. 9, 10; 2 Cor. xi. 23-29; Heb. x. 32-34.)

13. ¹³ But there shall not a hair of your head perish. 19. In your patience possess ye your souls. 20. ²⁰ And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. 22. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

²³ Matt. x. 30. ²⁴ Matt. xxiv. 15; Mark xiii. 14. ²⁵ Dan. ix. 26, 27. ²⁶ Zech. xi. 1.

But, literally, and (notwithstanding this universal and deadly opposition), a hair from your head shall not be lost. A strong proverbial expression, indicating that they should be inviolable upon earth so long as they were necessary for the service of the Lord; and that life and happiness, in the higher, truer sense, would not be affected in the least by these temporal persecutions.

In your patience, &c. Be calm and serene,

masters of yourselves, and superior to all unreasonable and disquieting passions, trusting in God, and waiting the performance of His promises. By keeping the government of your spirits, you will both avoid much misery, and guard the better against all dangers. There are three degrees of Christian patience: 1. Silent submission to God's will. 2. A thankful acceptance of God's fatherly rod. 3. Serious cheerfulness under sorrowful dispensations. This patience gives us the possession of ourselves.

When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies. Luke here explains the language of the prophet Daniel, and that of the other Evangelists. (Matt. xxiv. 15; Mark xiii. 14.) The same general idea of an array of the idolatrous ensigns of Rome against the devoted city is referred to in both forms of expression. *The desolation thereof*, i. e., the process of its desolation.

In Judea. In the heart of the population. *Flee to the mountains.* Lonesome and inaccessible retreats, to which an army could not follow them. There is a commendation of a hasty flight as the only means of deliverance. *In the midst of it*, i. e., Jerusalem. *Countries*, i. e., the open country, or fields round about the city. These kind admonitions were not lost upon the disciples. Ecclesiastical history informs us that no Christians perished in the siege of Jerusalem.

Days of vengeance. Not days in which the one people takes vengeance on the disobedience and refractoriness of the other people, but in which God accomplishes His judgment upon His enemies. *May be fulfilled.* Our Lord thus declares that the fall of the city and the temple was already prophesied in the Old Testament. (See Lev. xxvi. 14-40; Dent. iv. 25-28, xxviii. 49-67; Ps. lxxix. 22-28; Dan. ix. 25-27; Zech. xi. 1-3; Mal. iv. 1.)

23. "But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

^aMatt. xxiv. 19. ^bDan. ix. 27 and xii. 7; Rom. ii. 25.

This is not an imprecation, but a bitter lamentation, in which the compassion and sympathy of the Saviour expresses itself. Sad would it be for those who, in such a

time of terror and distress, had any natural impediments to obstruct their flight. *In the land*, i. e., Judea. *Great distress.* The anguish and suffering brought upon the people by the siege was terrible. Although the seat of war was eventually and finally transferred to the city of Jerusalem, yet the whole land had previously been overrun by the Roman soldiery, and suffered the most dreadful calamities.

Fall by the edge of the sword. Josephus computes the number of those who perished in the siege at *eleven hundred thousand*, besides those who were slain in other places. *Shall be led away captive into all nations.* The number of the Jews taken by the Romans during the war amounted to about ninety-seven thousand, besides eleven thousand who were either starved through neglect, or starved themselves through sullenness and despair. Some of the youngest and handsomest were sent to Rome to adorn the triumph of Titus; many were distributed to the several cities of Syria, where they perished in the theaters, being compelled to fight with wild beasts, and to engage in mortal combats with each other. The remainder of those above seventeen years of age were sent to labor in the Egyptian mines, and those under that age were sold for slaves. *And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles.* Their city has remained for the most part in a state of ruin and desertion, from its destruction by the Romans to the present time, and never has been under the government of the Jews themselves, but oppressed and broken down by a succession of foreign masters, the Romans, the Saracens, the Franks, the Mamalukes, and the Turks. *Until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.* The times of the Gentiles will be fulfilled when Israel is gathered into the Christian Church. (Rom. xi. 26.) *Until that time Jerusalem shall continue to be subjugated and debased, but then God will look again with favor upon His long-rejected people, and restore them to the spiritual rights and immunities of which they had so long been deprived. Jerusalem will cease to be trodden down, and recover her ancient glory. Then shall there be one Shepherd and one fold, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that*

day. It cannot but seem probable to every reflecting mind that the Jewish race is preserved for some great and providential reason.

25. [¶] And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;
[¶] Matt. xxiv. 29, on which see notes; Mark xiii. 24; 2 Peter iii. 10, 12.

The prophecy, from this verse down to the end, describes the last days of the world, the coming of Jesus Christ for the judgment, the circumstances which will attend that coming, and the duties which the prospect of it entails on all Christians. *Signs in the sun . . . moon . . . stars.* By some, these are regarded as figurative expressions. There is, however, no good reason for doubting that they will receive a literal fulfillment. The frame of nature was convulsed when the law of God was given at Sinai, and when Christ died on the cross. It was known, even from the Old Testament, that fearful signs in the realm of nature would herald the day of the Lord. (See Jer. iv. 23; Joel ii. 30, &c.) It may well, therefore, be expected that Christ's return to judge the world will be accompanied with cosmic revolutions. *And upon the earth distress of nations, &c.* As in the animal world important alterations in the atmosphere are instinctively perceived, as often an inexplicable presentiment of a terrible calamity, whose breaking in is feared, makes even the most courageous pale with terror, so does our Lord give us to expect that an obscure presentiment of a great event, shortly before His coming, will produce in many a heart "oppressive anguish." The "roaring of the sea and waves," as it seems excited from its lowest depths, and surges with tempestuous violence, will remind even those who do not live in expectation of the judgment, of terrible things, nevertheless, which are about to come upon the earth, while the evil conscience testifies to them that they have the worst to expect therefrom, and they feel at a loss what to do in order to avert impending ruin.

26. Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. — Matt. xxiv. 29.

Failing them. The original signifies "to faint from fear, to become, not dead, but

as if dead." *For looking after, i. e.,* through fearful apprehension of still greater calamities. *On the earth.* The Greek word so translated, in all the other fourteen places in the New Testament where it is used, is rendered, "the world." *For the powers of heaven shall be shaken.* This indicates, probably, a disturbance for the time of the fixedness of the planetary system.

27. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.
[¶] Matt. xxiv. 30, on which see notes; Rev. i. 7 and xiv. 14.

The signs above referred to are the effects of Christ's coming, and hence there is no contradiction here of the repeated declaration that the coming will be without warning, and sudden. *See the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory.* The appearance of Jesus will be visible to all. "Every eye shall see Him."

28. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. — Rom. viii. 19-23.

We have in this verse a parallel between the events predicted as preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, and those to go before the world's judgment. When the former events, however ominous of evil, and however depressing and distressing, began to occur, Christ's disciples were to be no longer dejected and alarmed, but to be cheerful and joyfully expectant, for under His protection their deliverance from the horrors and carnage which accompanied the siege of the city was at hand. When the latter events occur, which are to precede the judgment, and on which the world shall gaze with helpless terror, believers are to rouse themselves to joyful expectation, for their complete deliverance from the power and consequences of sin is just about to take place. The heads which hitherto had often been bowed under all manner of misery and persecution, must then be lifted up. (Comp. Rom. viii. 19; James v. 8.)

29. And he spake to them a parable, Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; 30. When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves, that summer is now nigh at hand. 31. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. — Matt. xxiv. 32; Mark xiii. 28.

This comparison was designed by our Lord to show that the signs of which He had spoken were as indubitable precursors of the appearance of the Son of man, as

the sprouting of the fig tree, and other trees, was an indication of the approach of summer. Whoever sees the one, knows then of himself that the other is at hand. As in the kingdom of nature, so in the kingdom of Providence, there is a sequence of one event on another.

Come to pass, literally, *coming to pass*. *Know ye*, &c. Our Lord here teaches that His kingdom will not be nigh at hand until after a period of fearful wars and tribulation.

32. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. 33. ^aHeaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away. ^bMatt. xxiv. 35.

Commentators widely differ as to the meaning of this difficult verse. It would only be perplexing to state the numerous and various interpretations it has received. Its true signification appears to be, "This generation shall not pass away without the beginning of the end of the world, here foretold you, having come to pass, in the actual destruction of Jerusalem." The justness of this interpretation is rendered the more probable if we connect the verse with the first question in verse 7, which referred to the destruction of the temple. Jerusalem was taken A. D. 70, or forty years after this prediction. It was, therefore, within the lifetime of many then living.

Heaven and earth, &c. This was a peculiarly strong and solemn mode of declaring the certainty of the whole prophecy being fulfilled. The words evidently reach far beyond the destruction of the Jewish State. The heavens were to pass away like a scroll at our Lord's coming. But His word was to stand forever. Nothing could prevent its being accomplished. Possibly there is an allusion to the new heavens and new earth which are to succeed the destruction of the earthly economy.

34. ^aTake heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. ^bRom. xiii. 13; 1 Thes. v. 6; 1 Peter iv. 7.

Having disclosed as much as He thought fit with respect to His departure and return, our Lord now teaches how His disciples ought to act during His absence. *Hearts*. The heart is the part which the Christian must guard, if he would live ready to meet Christ. *Overcharged*, literally

made heavy, which is generally one of the hateful consequences of intemperance in eating or drinking. *And cares of this life*, anxious cares about visible and temporal things, and the inordinate pursuit of them. The former constitute the temptation of those given to their pleasures; *these*, the temptation of men of business in acquiring or possessing riches. *Unawares*—sudden, unexpected, unforeseen. Do not make an improper use even of lawful things; do not make this earth your portion; expect its dissolution and prepare to meet your God.

35. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

^a1 Thes. v. 2; 2 Peter iii. 10; Rev. iii. 3 and xvi. 15.

Here is an announcement of the suddenness and unexpectedness of our Lord's coming. A snare has a three-fold property, to catch suddenly, to hold surely, to destroy certainly. The destruction of Jerusalem was not a sudden but a very slow, long-foreseen, well-forewarned event. But Christ's coming to judgment shall be as the falling of a trap upon a thoughtless bird or animal, in which it finds itself inextricably taken. *On all them that dwell*, &c., literally, *that are sitting*, but the additional idea of carnal ease and security is also conveyed. They are to be taken at once, as soon as the snare is sprung upon them. (See Amos vi. 1-16; Jer. xxv. 29; Rev. xviii. 7, 8.)

36. ^aWatch ye therefore, and ^bpray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. ^cMatt. xxiv. 42 and xxv. 13, on which see notes; Mark xlii. 33. ^dLuke xviii. 1. ^ePs. i. 5; Eph. vi. 13.

This is the general conclusion of all that precedes. *Watch ye therefore*, guard against every temptation to negligence and sin. The uncertainty of the event requires an unremitting vigilance. *And pray always*, i. e., continually, or, be always in a prayerful frame of mind. *That ye may be accounted worthy*, not "become worthy," but regarded as worthy, through the mercy and grace of God. *To escape all these things*, &c. Here, as in verse 32, the premonitions of Christ's coming are considered exclusively on their terrifying side. To escape, is not to be carried away by persecutions, brought to apostasy by misleaders, or robbed of courage by trial. *And to stand before the Son of man*, i. e., before His throne, with courage

and acceptance, acquitted and approved, in order to view Him, to serve Him, and to glorify Him. This "standing" is not only the beginning, but also the substance, of the highest happiness, the opposite of which is described, Ps. i. 5; Nahum. i. 6; Rev. vi. 16, 17.

37. *And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives.

*John viii. 1, 2. †Luke xxii. 39.

This appears to relate to the four last days of Christ's life already mentioned. *In the temple*, where the people would naturally assemble for religious instruction. *At night he went out*, &c. He taught all day in the temple, and in the evening withdrew, and lodged with hospitable friends in Bethany, a village on the south-east side of the Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem. This was done that He might not, at night, fall into the hands of His enemies, who had now fully resolved to effect His death, and who were afraid to attack Him in the midst of His followers by day.

38. And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

Early in the morning. According to East-

ern custom, as thus described in *Dr. Hackett's Biblical Illustrations*: "During the greater part of the year, in Palestine, the heat becomes so great, a few hours after sunrise, as to render any strenuous labor inconvenient. The early morning, therefore, is the proper time for work, midday is given up, as far as possible, to rest, or employments which do not require exposure to the sun. The arrangements of life adjust themselves to this character of the climate. It happened to me often to observe how universal was the habit of early rising. Men and women may be seen going forth to their labors in the field, or starting on journeys, at the earliest break of day." (See Luke xxii. 66; Mark xv. 1; Gen. xxii. 3, xxviii. 18; Ex. xxxiv. 41.)

Our Lord, having exhorted His disciples, in the foregoing verses, to diligence and prayer, here set an example of both before them. Busy in God's service all day in the temple, He spent much time at night in prayer on the Mount of Olives. What an example of indefatigable zeal and diligence has He set before His ministers and members!

1. Whom did Jesus see casting their gifts into the treasury? 2. What did He say of the poor widow? 3. Why did He say this? 4. What did He say of the stones of the temple? 5. What reply did He make to the question, "When shall these things be?" 6. What is meant by verses 14 and 15? 7. What were the disciples to do when they saw Jerusalem compassed with armies? 8. What parable did our Lord speak? 9. Where did He retire after teaching in the day time in the temple? 10. Who assembled early in the morning to hear Him preach in the temple?

CHAPTER XXII.

1 *The Jews conspire against Christ.* 3. *Satan prepareth Judas to betray him.* 7 *The apostles prepare the passover.* 19 *Christ instituteth his holy supper.* 21 *covertly foretelleth of the traitor.* 24 *dehorteth the rest of his apostles from ambition.* 31 *assureth Peter that his faith should not fail:* 34 *and yet he should deny him thrice.* 39 *He prayeth in the mount, and sweateth blood.* 47 *is betrayed with a kiss:* 50 *He healeth Malchus' ear.* 54 *He is thrice denied of Peter.* 63 *shamefully abused,* 66 *and confesseth himself to be the Son of God.*

*NOW the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. 2. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people.
*Matt. xxvi. 2; Mark xiv. 1, on which see notes. †Ps. ii. 2; John xi. 47; Acts iv. 27.

The Passover was the great festival

among the Jews, in celebration of their deliverance from Egypt, when the destroying angel that slew the Egyptian first-born had *passed over* the houses of the Israelites marked with blood, and they escaped from Pharaoh. (Exod. xii.) This was associated in the type, and to be associated in the fact, with a greater deliverance of God's people by the blood of Christ. This joyous festival lasted seven days. Here, and elsewhere, it is called *the feast of unleavened bread*, because the people

were forbidden to allow any *leaven*, or fermented food or yeast, in their houses during this time. (Exod. xii. 18.) *Drew nigh*. This feast was to be celebrated within two days after our Lord had delivered the prophecies and admonitions above recorded.

Sought how, &c. This consultation was held in the palace of the high priest. (Matt. xxvi. 3.) They were determined to remove Jesus out of the way at any cost, but they felt it important to be yet further agreed upon the manner in which to carry out their purpose. *For they feared the people*, because it remained at least doubtful which side the people would take, and the attempt was certain to breed some kind of tumult, which would hardly fail to bring down upon them the Roman garrison (always present during the Passover), who would probably, after their manner, smite right and left, and defile the sacred courts with blood, without regard to the cause or circumstances. It was therefore desirable to obtain possession of His person privately by some craft or contrivance.

3. ¶ Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. 4. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains how he might betray him unto them. 5. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. 6. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them *in the absence of the multitude.
*Matt. xxvi. 11, &c., on which see notes; Mark xiv. 10; John xiii. 2, 27. †Zech. xi. 12. ‡Zech. xi. 12. §Or, without tumult.

Iscariot is the Greek form for Isch Kerioth, or man of Kerioth, which was a small town of Judea, mentioned in Joshua xv. 25. *Dr. Hackett* identifies it with Khureitun, "a few miles south of Bethlehem." "A dark spirit would find its own element in the gloomy scenery of Khureitun." (See chap. vi. 16.) *Entered Satan into*, &c. This is not to be interpreted as an actual possession of Judas, but as an infusion into his soul, by Satan, of his devilish spirit and purpose. His heart was filled with *avarice*. *Being of the number of the twelve*. This circumstance, which was so high an aggravation of the baseness of treachery, is mentioned with emphasis by all the Evangelists.

He went his way. He went from Christ and His company, who were at Bethany, in the house of Simon (Matt. xxvi. 6, 14), to the house of Caiaphas, the high priest, whom he knew to be a most bitter enemy

of Jesus. *Communed*—conversed—with the chief priests and captains. The captains were not Roman officers, but commanders of the Jewish guard of the temple. *How he might*, &c. The experience and judgment of these captains would be of great use to determine the question whether the proposal of Judas was worthy of acceptance. It is no uncommon thing for the vilest sins to be committed by such persons as make the most eminent profession of holiness.

And they were glad. Not only because there was now a prospect of the fulfillment of their murderous purpose, but also because in the band of the Apostles a spirit of unfaithfulness and hatred began to reveal itself. *Covenanted*—bargained and agreed at once. *To give him*. This shows that the money was not to be paid until Jesus had been actually delivered into their hands. *Money*, literally, *silver*. Matthew says (xxvi. 15), "thirty pieces of silver"—or shekels. (Zech. xi. 12.) The sum which the traitor received seems trifling, if we estimate it by the immense consequences. But, after all, the whole service Judas did was to inform the foes of Jesus where He might be found and taken without tumult, and guide them to the place. Besides, why may we not assume that the sum received was only intended as a preliminary payment, to be followed by a more considerable one if the plan should be carried out successfully? Covetousness is the root of sin, and eager and insatiable thirst after the world is the parent of the most monstrous and unnatural sins. Hence our Saviour doubles His caution. (Chap. xii. 15.)

He promised. The original conveys the idea that he promised with professions of thankfulness. *Sought opportunity to betray him*, kept on the watch for a convenient occasion to put Him into their hands in as private a manner as possible. *In the absence of the multitude*—that, knowing nothing of what was done, they might not raise a tumult and rescue Him out of the hands of those that seized Him.

7. ¶ Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. 8. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. 9. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? 10. And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man

meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. 11. And ye shall say unto the good man of the house, The Master saith unto thee, where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? 12. And he shall show you a large upper room, furnished; there make ready. 13. And they went, and found as he had said unto them; and they made ready the passover.

(Matt. xxvi. 17, on which see notes; Mark xiv. 12.)

They called the day on which the *passover* or paschal lamb was *killed*, one of the days of unleavened bread, and the "first day thereof" (Matt. xxvi. 17), because it was preparatory to that feast, and on that day the Jews began to eat unleavened bread (Exod. xii. 18), though properly speaking, the feast of unleavened bread did not begin till the day after the passover, the *fifteenth* day of the month Nisan. (Lev. xxiii. 5, 6; Num. xxviii. 16, 17.)

He sent Peter and John—from the place where He had spent the night before in retirement with them, *saying, Go and prepare us the passover*. They were to buy a lamb, have it inspected by the priests, get it killed, have the blood sprinkled at the foot of the altar, obtain bread, and wine, and bitter herbs, and make other necessary preparations, as to a room, &c. The inhabitants of Jerusalem prepared rooms, with the necessary furniture, in their houses, where strangers might celebrate the passover. These apartments were not let out for the occasion, nor was any compensation taken, but were of common right for any persons by whom they were wanted, and were freely allowed to any one who came to claim them. *That we may, once more, eat it together*.

Where wilt thou, &c. They meant at what house. As in Matthew and Mark, the question would seem to have been put first by the disciples, whereas here we see that it arose from the previous command of our Lord, it is probable that at a preliminary inquiry of the disciples, as to the *where*, our Lord gave Peter and John a definite command to go away to prepare the passover, and that now they repeated with more definiteness the natural inquiry as to the place.

Into the city—the city of Jerusalem, for a paschal lamb could be eaten at no other place. *There shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water*—doubtless a servant who was a water-carrier. *Follow him, &c.* The man came with water from the western

part of the city, as the Apostles entered the eastern part. They were directed to follow him, without saying anything to him, because, as he was carrying the water home, he would lead them straight to his master's house, with which, it seems, the Apostles were not acquainted. This direction, in connection with the others given by Jesus to His Apostles, as well as the predictions He uttered, were intended to show them how completely He foreknew everything that should befall Him, and to convince them that His sufferings were all predetermined of God, and that, on His part, they were all submitted to voluntarily.

Ye shall say. Not a prophetic, but an imperative future. *The good man of the house*—the master of the family. *The master saith unto thee*. The word *Master* is correlative to the word *disciple*, and thus it is clearly implied that the householder is a *follower* of Jesus. Indeed, when we recollect that the rulers were afraid of the multitude, as being adherents of Jesus, we may reasonably infer that the number of those who would call Him "*Master*" was not a few. *Where is the guest chamber, &c.* (See on verse 8.)

Large upper room. Such as those which the Jews used for the same purposes as those to which our dining-rooms, parlors and closets are applied. *Furnished, i. e.*, with beds, couches or sofas, carpets, pillows, stools, &c., such as among Oriental nations supply the place of chairs, tables, and, indeed, almost all the other furniture of a room. *There make ready*. (See on verse 8.) Our Lord did not direct one or both of these disciples to return and inform Him and the others where they had made this preparation, and to direct them to the house. This was unnecessary, for as Jesus could predict these circumstances, of course He could at once find the house. *A large room*, is the emblem of a heart enlarged with love, joy and thankfulness; *an upper room*, is an heart exalted, not puffed up with pride, but lifted up by heavenly meditations; and a *room furnished*, is a soul adorned with all the graces of the Holy Spirit.

And they went, &c. The disciples, at Christ's bidding, went into the city, and

found everything to happen exactly as Jesus had foretold. This would tend no little to confirm their faith in Him, and prepare them for the trial they would so soon have to pass through in His death, as well as to proclaim the everlasting Gospel to the guilty world. The foretelling and fulfilling of all these circumstances furnishes the strongest evidence of our Lord's knowledge of every event, and of His influence over every heart. *And they made ready, &c.* (See on verse 8.)

14. *And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve Apostles with him.

*Matt. xxvi. 20, &c., on which see notes; Mark xiv. 17.

When the hour was come—the hour of partaking of the paschal feast. Between three o'clock and nine was the time for killing the lamb, called, also, *between the evenings* (Ex. xii. 6), in the Hebrew. *They sat down.* At the ancient meals there was no sitting in chairs, but reclining on *couches*, at the table. *And the twelve apostles with him.* All the Apostles were present, Judas not excepted.

15. And he said unto them, *With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:

*Or, I have heartily desired.

The present passage (15–18) narrates that part of the supper which belonged to the Passover. That which belonged to the institution of the Lord's Supper is verses 19, 20. *With desire I have desired.* The Hebrew mode of saying I have had a most intense desire. Some refer the reason of our Lord's great desire to the whole work of redemption, which He was about to accomplish that week, and the strong desire which He felt to accomplish it. Others, and with much greater plausibility, refer it to the institution of the Lord's Supper, and the affectionate desire which our Lord felt, not only to manifest Himself further to His own disciples, but, also, to establish and celebrate for the first and only time during His brief sojourn on earth this sacramental festival, which has ever since bound together and cemented the hearts of His followers, and served more than any ordinance to keep in vivid remembrance His dying love for men. *With you, my beloved disciples. Before I suffer.* This is the only place in the Gospels in which this absolute use of the word is found. It is like the expression in the Apostles' creed, "He suffered."

16. For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, *until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

*Luke xiv. 15; Acts x. 41; Rev. xix. 9.

Eat thereof. Whether as Passover or Lord's Supper, both being the same thing in successive stages of development. *Until it be fulfilled, &c.* That is, until that of which the Passover is a type is fulfilled in my death, through which the kingdom of God, or of heaven (see Matt. iii. 2), shall be established among men. The particle "until" does not imply that after the accomplishment of the salvation of men our Lord was to eat the Passover. It is a Hebrew form of expression, signifying that the thing mentioned was no more to be done forever. (See I Sam. xv. 35.)

17. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves.

Jesus took into His hands the cup of wine which it was customary to bring at the beginning of the paschal solemnity. *And gave thanks,* to Almighty God for His great goodness to His people, mentioning, no doubt, some of the principal instances of it, especially their redemption from Egypt, and then from Babylon. *Take this, and divide, &c.* Pass the cup from one to another, until all have partaken of it. Some maintain that Christ did not drink it Himself, but there seems little reason to doubt that He did, as He had just spoken of His desire to eat of the Passover, of which this cup was a part.

18. *For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

*Matt. xxvi. 29, on which see notes; Mark xiv. 22.

I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, i. e., wine. This may have been an intimation that this was the last paschal supper Christ would partake of with His disciples, and though He ate and drank with the disciples, after His resurrection, as we know He did, in order that they might know that He was really alive (Acts x. 41); yet He would not make use of any wine, and we do not find that He was ever present at any feast; at least we are sure He never celebrated another Passover with them. Nor does it appear that He partook of the Eucharist with them, or ever administered it, but at this time of its institution. *Until the kingdom of God shall come.* (See verse 16.)

19. * And he took bread and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you; *this do in remembrance of me.

*Matt. xxvi. 26, on which see notes; Mark xiv. 22. *1 Cor. x. 16.

And he took bread, unleavened bread. It was in the form of cakes. As we are not under the ritual law, and as nothing in this respect is spoken in the New Testament, it does not appear that unfermented bread is essential to the Lord's Supper. *And brake it.* The breaking, under the old dispensation, represented the breaking which Israel suffered in Egypt, but in the new, it symbolizes the violence by which our Lord's body was put to death. (1 Cor. xi. 24.) *And gave unto them.* Not only the breaking, but also the distribution of the bread are necessary parts of the rite. Saying, *This is my body which is given for you, i. e.,* this bread signifies or represents my body, &c. This statement is made in accordance with the style of the sacred writers. Thus it is said, "The three branches are three days." (Gen. xl. 12.) God says of the paschal lamb, our Lord's grand type, "This is the Lord's passover." (Ex. xii. 11.) Paul, speaking of Sarah and Hagar, says, "These are the two covenants." (Gal. iv. 24.) He also says, "They drank of the spiritual rock which followed them, and the Rock was Christ." (1 Cor. x. 4.) Our Lord could not have meant that the bread was His real body, because His body was present at the table breaking the bread, and He was speaking and acting in person among them. Observe too, He broke it *after* it was blessed, when Papists think it was transubstantiated. *Which is given for you,* as a sacrifice for your sins, to purchase your redemption. *This do, break, take, eat this bread—keep up the ordinance I have just appointed; in remembrance of me,* no longer in remembrance of the deliverance from Egypt, under which your fathers groaned, but in remembrance of me, who, by dying for you, will bring you out of spiritual bondage, a bondage far worse than the Egyptian, and establish you in the glorious liberty of God's children. We thus learn that the celebration is to be a permanent memorial institution. The word rendered *remembrance* is, literally, the *recalling to mind*, and refers here to the vivid sense of Christ's sufferings and death, which this Supper is designed and adapted to produce in such as partake of it in penitence, humility and faith.

20. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, *This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*—1 Cor. x. 16.

Likewise also the cup, i. e., having offered thanks to God, and holding it in His hand to give to His disciples. *Saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood.* The Greek word for testament should be rendered *covenant*. The same word is employed here as in Heb. viii. 8. It signifies a covenant or promise on the part of God to His people, sanctioned with the blood of victims, and depending upon certain stipulated conditions. The old covenant made by God through Moses is found in Ex. xxiv. 3-8. *The fruit of the vine* is the symbol of the ratification of the new covenant; that is, the covenant of the new dispensation, so called in contradistinction rather from the Mosaic than from the Abrahamic covenant. (Gen. xv. 1-18, xvii. 1-19; Gal. iii. 17.) The old covenant was ratified by the blood of bulls, goats and calves; the new covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ. (See Heb. ix. 11-28.) Here is an undeniable figure, whereby the cup is put for the wine in the cup. And this is called the *new covenant* in Christ's blood, which could not possibly mean that it was the new covenant itself, but only the seal of it, and the sign of that blood which was shed to confirm it. In other words, as the expression, *this is my body*, signifies, *This is the representation of my body*, so, *this is my blood of the new testament*, must signify, *This is the representation of my blood. Which is shed for you.* The emblem of the death of the Lord's body substituted in the place of the death of your soul. The meaning of Christ, in the passage, is: "All of you, and all my disciples in all ages, must drink this cup, because it represents my blood, shed for the remission of sins—my blood, in which the new covenant between God and man is ratified."

21. ¶ "But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table."

¶ Ps. xli. 9; Matt. xxvi. 21, 23, on which see notes; Mark xiv. 18; John xiii. 21, 25.

As Matthew and Mark both represent the incident referred to here by Luke, as taking place while they were eating the Passover, and before the institution of the Lord's Supper, no one who compares the order of those two Evangelists with John xiii. 21-35, can well avoid the conclusion

that Judas left the table on his dark and traitorous errand before the Lord's Supper was established. It is certain that it was our Lord's purpose to get rid of the presence of the traitor before the ordinance of the Supper was administered to His true-hearted disciples. Hence His warning, John xiii. 10, 18. *The hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.* Our Lord had said to the twelve, "One of you shall betray me." (Matt. xxvi. 21.) Here He narrows the circle and makes the exposure still more direct. The expression was an Oriental one to denote that a person was reclining at the same table with another.

22. "And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined; but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!"

"Matt. xxvi. 21, on which see notes. "Acts ii. 23 and iv. 28.

The Son of man. By this appellation we are to understand that Christ was a real man—a perfect man—the representative man, the predicted man. *Goeth.* This denotes His marching with unfaltering step to the scene of His crucifixion, His return to His Father through death and the resurrection, His going down to the lowest point He could reach in this world—the depths of the grave—and His going up to the highest point He could reach in the world to come—the throne of God; and by the words, *as it was determined*, is meant that He did both in the character, for the purpose, with the dispositions and in the circumstances, in which it was determined that He should go. The Divine foreknowledge and prediction of events does not affect their moral character. Judas was not the less guilty because, by his perfidy, a Divine purpose was fulfilled, a Divine prediction accomplished. It was "by wicked hands" that Jesus, being "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," was "crucified and slain." (Acts ii. 23.) If God determined to leave Judas to himself, and foreknew how he would act, this did not interfere with his free agency and accountability—it did not necessitate his treachery. *Augustine* remarks that "God is said to will things, in the way of permission, which He does not will in the way of approbation." *Bishop Hall* says, "It is the greatest praise of God's wisdom

that He can turn the sins of man to His own glory."

23. "And they began to inquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing."

"Matt. xxvi. 22; John xiii. 22, 25.

It is not wonderful that the disciples should have been amazed and shocked at our Lord's announcement. To think that their beloved Master was to be exposed to shame, and torture, and death, was most painful. Peter expressed the mind of all the rest, when, on His Lord speaking of His approaching sufferings, he said with eagerness, "Lord, this be far from thee." But how much more painful to think that the treason of a professed friend, and that professed friend one of themselves, was to be the means of bringing on their Master sufferings which they so deeply deprecated. Then the question comes up, "*which of them* it was that should do this thing?" All but one felt as if they could sooner die than betray their Lord to death, and none of them seems to have thought his brother capable of doing what he knew he himself was incapable of doing.

24. "And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest."

"Matt. ix. 34; Luke ix. 46.

This was when they first took seats at the table, as above remarked. (Verse 14.) The competition seems to have been as to who should have the chief reclining place at the table. The immediate introduction of "the kingdom of God" was doubtless considered by them as implied in what our Lord had before spoken; and they overlooked all He had said of His sufferings, as what they could not understand. The couch of honor was the more earnestly desired, because it was supposed that it would indicate its occupant's claim to the highest office or post of honor in the Messiah's kingdom, of the temporal character of which their minds were far from being wholly dispossessed. It is wonderful that when this strife arose, Christ did not at once state that Peter was he to whom all the rest must be subject, as a prince or head, if, indeed, Peter, according to the Roman Catholic theory, was the recognized head of the Apostles. A desire to be great, and to be *greater* than others, is deeply rooted in our sinful nature. Even after we have turned to God we are troubled by this evil propensity. We

often indulge *feelings* of self-complacency, and are elated when others notice and commend us. It would not be thus with us if we were engrossed with the glory of Christ. Then we should desire only to speak of His wondrous works, and to talk of His power, and of the glory of His kingdom.

23. *And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

*Matt. xx. 25; Mark x. 42.

Kings of the Gentiles—especially of the Romans. *Exercise lordship*. Both the original words here used imply arbitrary, domineering authority; authority for authority's sake. They exercise dominion to gratify their love of rule. Jesus here does not condemn the exercise of a just governmental authority, in which the ruler, acting for the public good, is, in fact, the public servant. *Benefactors*. The Greek word so translated was a title often assumed by heathen monarchs, who prided themselves on being special benefactors of their subjects. One of the Ptolemies, king of Egypt, was so called.

26. *But ye shall not be so: that he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

*Matt. xx. 25; 1 Peter v. 3. *Luke ix. 48.

But ye shall not be so—your greatness shall not be like that of them who dwell in earthly courts—shall not consist in temporal power over your fellow-creatures, or in honor or dignity among them, though it should be joined with an affection of titles which denote qualities truly honorable. Our Lord here condemns, not a true ecclesiastical government, but all ecclesiastical ambition, and all aspiration after selfish power. *Greatest* may here, perhaps, mean “greatest in age,” the oldest. It is opposed to *younger*. The sentiment is, that the eldest, to whom the pre-eminence and respect due to age would naturally and properly belong, should be as condescending and humble as the youngest of the number. The same idea is enforced and expanded in the corresponding clause—*he that is chief, &c.*, where there is a strong antithesis between *chief* and *he that doth serve*, i. e., is servant of the company.

27. *For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

*Luke xii. 37. *Matt. xx. 28; John xiii. 13, 14; Phil. ii. 7.

Our Lord, by proposing the question so easy of answer, as to the relative superiority of the guests over those who serve at the feasts, illustrates His own humility and condescension. *And he that serveth*. There is an evident reference here to the act of washing the disciples' feet, recorded by John xiii. 14, and which had taken place a very short time before the conversation we are now considering. At the same time the expression describes the whole tenor of our Lord's course on earth. “He took on Him the form of a servant.” “He came not to be ministered to, but to minister.” Usefulness in the world and Church—an humble readiness to do anything, and put our hands to any good work—a cheerful willingness to fill any post, however lowly, and discharge any office, however unpleasant, if it can only promote happiness and holiness on earth—these are the true tests of Christian greatness.

28. Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.—*Heb. iv. 15.

Temptations, literally, *trials* and afflictions. Christ's whole life was little else than one continued series of them, particularly from the time of His entering on His public ministry. We know the weakness and infirmity of our Lord's disciples during the whole period of His earthly ministry. But here we find Him graciously dwelling on one good point in their conduct, and holding it up to the perpetual notice of His Church. They had been faithful to their Master, notwithstanding all their faults. Their hearts had been right whatever had been their mistakes. They had clung to Him in the day of His humiliation. If we are true believers, let us remember for our comfort that Jesus looks at our graces more than at our faults, that He pities our infirmities, and that He will not deal with us according to our sins.

29. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; 30. That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

*Matt. xxiv. 47; Luke xii. 32; 2 Cor. i. 7; 2 Tim. ii. 12. *Matt. viii. 11; Luke xiv. 15; Rev. xix. 9. *Ps. xlix. 14; Matt. xix. 28; 1 Cor. vi. 2; Rev. iii. 21.

Our Lord having mentioned what His disciples had done for Him (verse 28), now adds an intimation of what He has proposed for them. *I appoint*. The Greek word so rendered might be translated, “I

appoint unto you by covenant." *A kingdom.* The meaning of this phrase must probably not be pressed too closely. It signifies honor, dignity, reward, majesty, of which a king's position in this world furnishes the only emblem. *That ye may eat and drink, &c.* This language is derived from the custom of ancient and Oriental kings, to invite to their own table their chief ministers and confidential servants, as a mark of royal favor and esteem. *And sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* (See Matt. xix. 28.) In ancient times kings performed all the functions of judges. (See 2 Sam. xv. 4; 1 Kings iii. 9; 2 Chron. i. 11; Ps. lxxii. 2.) When Christ shall come to judgment, then, as great kings have officers around them, dignitaries of the kingdom, ye Apostles shall be exalted to special honor, and shall sit on thrones of majesty, judging the people of God—the twelve tribes of Israel. The primary design of our Lord in this verse seems to have been, to say to the Apostles: "As the honors which I shall hereafter confer on you are incomparably beyond those about which you seem so solicitous, let a consideration of this awaken a nobler ambition in your minds than that which now seems to influence them, and, instead of contending for superiority over each other in my Church militant, in which you must expect to meet with continual reproach and suffering, aspire after higher degrees of that celestial glory which you are to share with me in my Church triumphant."

31. ⁵ And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may ⁶sift you as wheat:—1 Peter v. 8. ⁴Amos ix. 9.

Simon, Simon. Peter had probably had his full share; would seem, indeed, to have been one of those most forward in the contention for pre-eminence, in the preceding verses. Our Lord addressed him in particular, and in a very emphatic manner, although the other disciples who also had that day been in a most fearful danger, were likewise concerned, and the pronoun is plural, *you*, not *thee*. The repetition of Simon's name implies solemnity and importance in the statement about to be made, his insensibleness to the danger impending, and deep concern by Christ on behalf of Simon's soul, than whom none was more imperilled. *Hath desired to have*

you, ardently entreated for you, or demanded you, as Satan demanded Job to be put in his power, to test his integrity, *that he may sift you as wheat.* The word *you* is here again plural, and, therefore, includes all the disciples, except Judas, who had now left them to consummate his deed of treachery. The sifting Satan desired was to agitate their minds by his inward suggestions, concurring with their outward perils and difficulties, as the wheat is tossed about in the sieve, to be separated from the chaff. Probably the sifting process spoken of includes the idea of an endeavor of Satan to effect the separation of some of the disciples, and Peter in particular, from fidelity to Jesus. He would gladly have had the men who were to spread abroad the name of Jesus. Satan is continually making efforts to test and ruin all Christians. (1 Peter v. 8.)

32. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. ⁵John xvii. 9, 11, 15. ⁴Ps. li. 13; John xxi. 15, 16, 17.

I—in this discourse of our Lord, also, His person forms the immovable center. The pronoun *I* emphasises the idea that Jesus had opposed Himself in person to the adversary. *For thee*, concentrates the danger and final deliverance again upon Peter, as the special and repeated address, *Simon, Simon*, had done in the first instance, but which had been made by the plural, *you*, to include the whole. *I have prayed for thee.* For thee as a believing Christian, and for thee as a tempted Christian. It is not said, *I will pray for thee*, but, *I have prayed for thee.* Christ prayed for Peter before Peter understood that he had need of His prayer. Christ prayed for Peter as soon as ever Satan desired to sift him. Our Intercessor is as prompt in His prayer for us, as Satan is in his accusations against us. Christ by no means prayed that Peter might entirely escape the sifting. (Comp. John xvii. 15.) *That thy faith fail not.* Not that thy faith be not assaulted, not that thy faith be not shaken and become very feeble, but that thy faith may not fail by an absolute and total extinction. "Faith" is the root of the whole Christian character, and the part which Satan specially labors to overthrow. (2 Tim. iv. 7.) Peter's faith did not fail as *life fails in death.* His faith was grievously

interrupted in its *exercise* and *effects*, when he denied His Lord, but the *principle* did not fail in His heart. (Rom. v. 7-10, viii. 32-34; 1 Peter i. 2-5.) *And when thou art converted*, that is, recovered from thy fall, when restored, upon thy repentance, to the Divine favor. *Strengthen thy brethren*, that is, establish others in the faith in which thou didst grievously decline. Our Lord does not here say "*my*" brethren, as in John xx. 17, nor yet "*our*," but *thy* brethren, *i. e.*, those who will have been shaken and enfeebled by thy fall, and who are afflicted with the same weakness which shall have brought thee to so deep a fall. After his fall and recovery, Peter was peculiarly earnest in encouraging the disciples to hope for a happy issue of their trials, and in animating them boldly to profess and preach the Gospel, while the humiliating lessons which he learned by those events, had a very salutary effect on his own spirit, and tended to qualify him especially for encouraging and warning the tempted, the fearful, the desponding or the fallen, even to the end of his days.

33. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death.

These words indicate how little Peter was *yet* fitted for the strengthening of others. He places himself first to designate the source from which his exultant feeling of strength proceeds. He doubtless felt all that he said, and his resolution to accompany Christ both to prison and to death was holy and good; but his too confident opinion of his own strength and ability so to do, without Divine aid and assistance, shows that he had not yet found out the weakness of his faith and the deceitfulness of his heart. There would seem to be an intimation that the Lord's intercession for him had not been so especially necessary. Self-confidence is a sin too incident to the holiest and best of men. Men little know what they will do till the time of temptation actually comes. (2 Kings viii. 13.) 'Tis an humble fear of falling that must enable us to stand.

34. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

^bMatt. xxvi. 34; Mark xiv. 30; John xiii. 38.

I tell thee, Peter. Now not *Simon*, though he might have doubly deserved it, but *Peter*, inasmuch as our Lord places Him-

self in the position of the man who, in his own eyes, stands there so rock-fast. It has been remarked that this is the only place in which our Lord addresses Peter by this name, the name which signified "stone." It was surely meant to remind him how weak even the strongest disciples are. What had been previously hinted at by Jesus in regard to Peter's defection, is now openly and emphatically asserted. *The cock shall not crow this day*, &c. Our Lord is forced by Peter's boasts to bring out the clear, precise, sorrowful truth. This prediction of what seemed at the time to be most improbable events, is a striking evidence of Christ's foreknowledge. The fall of Peter, thus foretold unto him, admonishes us to renounce our own light and knowledge, especially as to what regards the disposition of our heart. God and Christ, who is true God, know better than ourselves the use which we shall make of the freedom of our will, and yet this foreknowledge imposes no manner of necessity upon it.

35. And he said unto him, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing. 36. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip; and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. 37. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, (And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.

^bMatt. x. 9; Luke ix. 3 and x. ^cIsa. liii. 12; Mark xv. 23.

When Christ first sent out the Apostles to preach, He desired them to make no provision by the way. They were to take neither *purse* nor *scrip*; the means, figuratively, of conducting their ministry. (Matt. x. 9, 10.) They obeyed this command, and, according to their own testimony, wanted *nothing* during their journey. The disciples of Jesus can always testify that their Lord has kept His promises—not one of them has ever failed, or ever will. The providence of God is always watchful over such as forsake all to follow Christ, and continually mindful of their wants.

But now, &c. Childhood is past, and the Divine order is, that your powers be developed into the efficiency of manhood. They were not to expect such a constant miraculous interposition of God in their behalf as would make them independent of the use of means. *He that hath*. Whatever of means or instrumentalities you

have got, cultivate and put them to strenuous use. We are not to neglect human instrumentality in doing Christ's work. *He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.* The most satisfactory interpretation of this is, that according to which these words are understood in a parabolical sense, indicating that a time was drawing near when all human means, of which the "purse," the "scrip," and the "sword" are emblems, must be diligently used by the Apostles. "Our Lord will simply, in a concrete, pictorial form, represent to His disciples the right and duty of necessary defense, in order that they may, by the very opposition to the former command (verse 35), finally come to the consciousness that an entirely peculiar danger shall break in upon them." Here is a warrant from our Lord for the standing up of His followers in their own defense. Christianity, however, has no license from this passage to draw the sword for its own propagation.

This that is written, &c. This is not the time for the true disciples of Christ to depend upon the good-will of men, when Christ Himself is to be reckoned and treated as a transgressor and a malefactor. Who would favor the followers of a crucified Master? He reminded them of the words of Isaiah (Isa. liii.): "He was numbered with the transgressors." One of the trials the Saviour endured was *disgrace*. He was put to death as a wicked man, with wicked men, and in the manner in which wicked men were put to death. The disciples of such a Master ought to expect disgrace. They should not be surprised when they are insulted, reviled and falsely accused. Let it be observed that our Lord, in speaking of His approaching crucifixion, does not speak of it as His "death" merely. He specially describes it as His being "reckoned among the transgressors." The expression was evidently meant to remind us that the chief end of His death was not to be an example of self-denial, but to be a substitute for us—a sacrifice for us—to become sin for us, and be made a curse for us. *For the things concerning me have an end.* This does not refer simply to the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies, but there was to be a complete and final close

to these predictions, and to that end all things were now rapidly tending. His sufferings and death were a part of the Messianic prophecy, and these also were to be fully accomplished.

38. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.

Here are two swords. From these words it is evident that the disciples took what Christ said about the swords literally. They had these two swords evidently concealed from our Lord. They may have provided them for defense against assailants, as even the priests did in the passage (Luke x. 31) from Jericho to Jerusalem. But they may have been knives for slaying the Passover lamb. *It is enough*—to illustrate my metaphor, quite enough, and too much, if it is real bloodshed you contemplate. If Jesus had intended that His servants should fight, He would not have said that two swords were enough. The words gently rebuke the Apostles' mistake. These two swords were enough, and even too much, for Him who designed to defend Himself only by delivering Himself up, to fight only by suffering, and to conquer only by dying. These were enough to give occasion to Christ to instruct the Church, in one of the chief of the Apostles, concerning the use she was to make of the sword, concerning the mildness we ought to show toward our enemies, and the submission we ought to have for authority, and to give Christ an opportunity of doing good to His persecutors, of making known His power to them, and of showing them plainly that His being seized by them, and His death, were altogether voluntary on His part. When temptations come upon us, let us use the sword of the Spirit. Satan cannot resist it.

39. ¶ And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives, and his disciples also followed him.
Matt. xxvi. 36; Mark xiv. 32; John xviii. 1. Luke xxi. 37.

Our Lord now changes the scene from the supper table to the garden. *As he was wont on the preceding days of this week of His passion. To the mount of Olives, and his disciples also followed him.* This mount overlooks Jerusalem on the east, so that every street and almost every house may be distinguished from its summit. It is about a mile in length, and about seven

hundred feet in height. To a spectator, on the west it has a gently waving outline, and appears to have three summits of nearly equal height. That our Lord went straight thither is a new proof that He no longer sought to go out of the way of His enemies; for, according to John xviii. 2, the place was known also to Judas, who would, therefore, undoubtedly seek Him there with the band, if he no longer found Him in the paschal hall. It is also a proof of the heavenly composure and clearness of mind which our Lord continually maintained, that He would surrender Himself over to the hands of His enemies, not in the city, in the midst of the joyful acclamations of the paschal night, but without it, in the bosom of open nature, after He had previously strengthened Himself in solitary prayer to His Father.

40. "And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

"Matt. vi. 13 and xxvi. 41; Mark xiv. 38; verse 46.

Pray that ye enter not into temptation. We are not to understand our Lord as having said this to all the eleven disciples, for from Matthew and Mark we know that He took three of them—Peter, James and John—to attend Him, at a little distance from the rest, in the moments of His agonizing prayer. Christ's exhortation to them was intended to keep them, when they were in the greatest alarm and danger, from having any inclination to desert Him. Prayers are a sure succor against the most perilous assaults of our enemies. We must not wait until the time of temptation before we pray, but we must pray before it comes. To be assaulted by temptation is one thing, but to enter into it quite another. To be tempted is a painful thing and a heavy trial, but to "enter into temptation" is a sin.

41. "And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast and kneeled down, and prayed, 42. Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done.

"Matt. xxvi. 39; Mark xiv. 35. *Gr., willing to remove, *John v. 30; vi. 38.

The ancients very frequently noted short distances by such expressions as a *stone's cast* or *arrow's flight*, and, indeed, we have the same usage in our expressions, *within gunshot*, *within a stone's throw*, &c. *Kneeled down*. This denotes the posture of prayer which He first assumed. Afterward, as

His mental agony increased, we see from Matthew and Mark, He prostrated Himself with His face upon the ground. *And prayed*. The disciples were entreated to watch with our Lord (Matt. xxvi. 38), but not to pray with or for Him. That work He does alone, and asks no participation. They cannot pray His prayer. He may intercede for them, not they for Him. The example of the great Head of the Church shows believers what they ought to do in time of trouble. Both the Old and New Testaments give one and the same receipt for bearing trouble. (Ps. l. 15; James v. 13.) *Father*. However near the paternity of God, it still leaves Him the right and the reason to inflict upon us terrible sorrows. Yet true faith looks up, even to His frowning face, with a filial claim. *If thou be willing, remove this cup from me*. "If it can consist with thy counsel." This was the language of that innocent dread of suffering which Jesus, being really and truly man, could not but have in His nature. The sentence is incomplete in the original, which is, literally, *if thou be willing to remove this cup from me*. This is, however, the natural expression of intense sorrow, the words, "I pray thee to do thus," being left to be supplied. The "cup" to which Jesus referred was the extreme inward anguish of spirit which He was suffering, the fear with which He was oppressed, the anxiety with which He was tortured, the sorrow with which He was overwhelmed, and the intense agony, mental and physical, which yet awaited Him. *Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done*. The prayer of Christ was, as it were, taken back, before it was entirely uttered. It must be remembered that He who spake these words, having two distinct natures in one person, had a human will as well as a Divine. *Nevertheless*, inasmuch as I have entered into covenant engagements, and have become surety for sinners, inasmuch as "for this cause came I unto this hour," and to offer up atoning sacrifice in my death is the great design of all the Divine decrees and operations which have brought me to this point; inasmuch as without this sacrifice the oracles of ancient prophecy will be falsified, and the redemption of men's souls, which is

precious, cease forever. *Not my will*—not the will of my human nature, but *thine*—the will of God (as it is written concerning me), *which I delight to do*, let that *be done* (Ps. xl. 7, 8), at whatever expense of agony. If we would imitate Christ in His prayer, we must, 1. Pray when alone; 2. Humble ourselves, internally, at least, and, if we are able, externally also; 3. Be fervent; 4. Lay our condition before God with plainness and simplicity; 5. Be full of trust and confidence; 6. Resign ourselves to the will of God, and choose rather to have that done than our own; 7. Persevere in praying. The sacrifice of our own will is that which God loves the most, and which ought ever to accompany all others.

43. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.—Matt. iv. 11.

The appearance of a holy angel to our Lord, in this conflict, and when thus weighed down with the feeling of the wrath of God against our sins, was intimation of approaching victory, and calculated to strengthen Him by the brightening prospect of future joy which was thus symbolized to Him. The angel could not *efficaciously* communicate strength even to His human soul, but he might suggest encouraging topics; and it was doubtless a part of our Saviour's humiliation, and an instance of His condescension, that He was pleased to be thus "strengthened" by "a ministering spirit," though "all the angels of God worship Him." This verse supplies additional proof that our Lord was really and truly man. As man, He was for a little time "lower than the angels." (Heb. ii. 9.) As very God of very God, and Lord of angels and men, Jesus of course needed no angel to strengthen Him. But as very man, in the hour of his greatest weakness, He allowed an angel to minister to Him. We must, after the example of Christ, not reject those external consolations which God sends us in our troubles.

44. And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.—John xii. 27; Heb. v. 7.

Being in an agony. There can be little doubt, that at this mysterious moment, our Lord's distress of body and mind was most intense and bitter. He was assaulted by the prince of darkness with peculiar

and special temptations. Hell came to meet Him in the garden of Gethsemane. Satan, who had been defeated in the wilderness, returned with his legions to make a last and fierce attack. But Christ's intense agony can only be satisfactorily explained by the fact that His death was a vicarious death. The sin of the world began to be laid upon Him in a special manner in the garden. He was being "made a curse" for us, by bearing our sins. *He prayed more earnestly.* Jesus summoned up all His energies to an unremitting struggle of prayer. (Comp. Hos. xii. 4, 5.) The most striking commentary on this expression is found Heb. v. 7-9, where strong crying and tears are spoken of with which our Lord offered up His prayers and supplications to Him who was able to save Him from death. The Divine nature, without separating itself from the human, leaves it to the weakness common to other men, to the end that the Head may be the consolation of the weakest of his members, and the instruction of the strongest. *And his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.* The physical frame of Jesus was now in full sympathy with His mental distress. Instances of what has been called bloody sweat are on record numerous and authentic. *Galen* says: "Cases sometimes happen in which, through mental pressure, the pores may be so dilated that the blood may issue from them, so that there may be a bloody sweat." The Latin poet, *Lucan*, in his poem, the *Pharsalia*, vividly describes a case in which *the sweat is ruddy*. Yet *Luke*, the only one of the four Evangelists who mentions the circumstance now before us, affirms not that the sweat was blood, but "*as it were great drops of blood.*" If we do not understand actual drops of blood, we must, at all events, conceive them as heavy, thick drops, which, mingled and colored for the most part with portions of blood, looked altogether like drops of blood.

45. And when he rose from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, 46. And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.—Verse 40.

Luke is the only Evangelist who mentions the cause of the disciples being asleep. Sorrow, it is true, makes men

sleepless sometimes, but when it is very great it may so weary down the whole outer and inner man that one, as it were, sinks into a condition of stupor. The same three who slept at the Transfiguration were the three who slept in Gethsemane. It seems as if the air of that night were dense with fearful, supernatural influences, weighing them down with stupor. In those circumstances of trouble and affliction which oblige us to pray, we must not forget even the wants of those who are intrusted to our care.

Why sleep ye? How gentle His reproof! "Is this a time to sleep, when your Master is in such danger, when He is going to lay down His life, and when all the powers of hell are seeking to thwart the work of human redemption?" *Rise* from your sleepy, recumbent posture. Some say of this, that a standing posture of the body is best suited for overcoming drowsiness in prayer. *And pray, lest ye enter into temptation.* Christ said this, because He knew what sharp trials were coming upon them. Prayer was their only safeguard at this awful crisis. How often shall we find, when we look back upon our past lives, that we received *warnings* before we fell into sin! While we exert our own energies against the evil powers, let us also supplicate Divine aid. As a fragile boat would avoid the rocks and the rifts, so should the feeble Christian avoid the dangers of trials that threaten him.

47. ¶ And while he yet spake, ⁴⁸behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew nigh unto to Jesus to kiss him.

*Matt. xxvi. 47; Mark xiv. 43; John xviii. 3.

Behold a multitude. They came in force, probably apprehensive of resistance from the disciples, or of some attempt of rescue by the way. (Mark xiv. 47; John xviii. 10; Matt. xxvi. 47.) The multitude who apprehended Jesus were of the following four classes: 1. *The band* (John xviii. 3), being a detachment from the garrison of five hundred Roman soldiers who, in the fortress of Antonia, overlooking the temple, kept the Jews in awe. A detachment was ever ready to be sent when the commander was informed that a disturber needed to be taken in custody. So that thus much Jesus was apprehended by the loan of a Roman body. 2. *The captains of*

the temple (Luke xxii. 52), who came, doubtless, attended by their guard or police—men who kept order at the temple. 3. Several of the Jewish dignitaries attended to see the work carefully done, namely: chief priests, zealous Pharisees and elders. 4. Servants of these dignitaries (John xviii. 18), both private and official, like Malchus. Our Lord was thus arrested by the Jewish authority, partly using Roman instrumentality. *One of the twelve.* With this name, as with a branding iron, Judas is designated even unto the end. *Went before them,* in order to point out to the multitude the one whom they were to apprehend, by the preconcerted sign. (See Matt. xxvi. 48.)

48. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

With a kiss—the hallowed token of friendship. "Must the Son of man be betrayed by one of His own disciples, as if He had been a hard Master, or deserved ill at their hands? Must the badge of friendship be the instrument of treachery?" To *betray*, is bad enough; to *betray the Son of man*, is worse; to betray Him *with a kiss*, is worst of all. There are some who behave to Jesus *now* that He is in *heaven*, as Judas did when He was upon *earth*. When it seems to be their interest to appear to love Him, they put on the mask of piety; but when they can gain worldly advantages by betraying His servants, they will do it, and yet all the time continue to observe the forms of religion. They do not consider how much their guilt is increased by their acts of apparent devotion. Satan employs such persons to do his darkest deeds. To bear the deceitful caresses of a false friend requires more virtue than to endure the most violent attacks of an avowed enemy.

49. When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?

Lord, shall we smite with the sword? By the approach of the band, and the insult of Judas, they are at once persuaded that they themselves are no longer a step distant from the dreaded hour. They believed themselves hitherto to have dreamed, and appear now all at once to awake. Looking upon the weapons brought with them out of the paschal hall,

they addressed this question to the Master, as if they would not have drawn the sword without permission from Him; but they were in too much haste and heat to wait for an answer; for already one of them has followed the ill-considered question with a hasty act. Christ and His cause are not to be defended by force of arms. He is very far from desiring to save His own life by exposing that of others, since He came to shed His blood, and to die for all mankind. There are many persons in the world who, like Peter, consult God, and yet suffer themselves to be hurried away by their passion or their false zeal before they know His will.

50. † And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.
Matt. xxvi. 51; Mark xiv. 47; John xviii. 10.

John tells us, this servant's name was Malchus, the Greek and Latin form of *Malck*, signifying *king*. We might have conjectured that it was Peter who committed this rash deed, but we are not left to uncertainty on this point. (John xviii. 10.) Perhaps, as the other Evangelists wrote their Gospels during the lifetime of that Apostle, they were afraid of exposing him to danger by revealing his name, whereas John, who (it is supposed) wrote his account after Peter's death, had no inducement to conceal it. *Cut off his right ear.* He meant, doubtless, to cut off his head; but, perhaps, the same power that healed prevented the true aim of the blow. It is much easier to fight a little for Christ than to endure hardness and go to prison and death for His sake. The zeal of Peter was very short-lived. His courage soon died away. The fear of man overcame him. By-and-by when our Lord was led away prisoner, He was led away alone. The disciple who was so ready to fight and smite with the sword had actually forsaken his Master and fled!

51. And Jesus answered his said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.

Suffer ye thus far. Our Lord sees how the band are just addressing themselves to take Him prisoner, with the greater bitterness, perchance, because blood had already flowed, and He Himself is not minded to counterwork their designs. He only desires that they would leave His hands yet a moment free, that He might

bestow yet one more benefit. "Leave me still free for the moment, that with my hand I may touch the ear of the wounded man." (See Matt. xxvi. 50; Mark xiv. 46.) *And he touched his ear, and healed him.* Although all the four Evangelists mention the cutting off of the servant's ear, yet Luke alone relates how it was healed. It seems this miracle was the *last* the Saviour performed. In one respect it was the *greatest*. No doubt the Lord's *power* was more fully displayed when the dead were raised, but His *grace* was most gloriously manifested when His *enemy* was healed. Multitudes had often surrounded Him, entreating Him with piteous cries to restore their blind parents to sight, and their sick children to health. But *this* multitude came, *not to entreat*, but to *assault*. Yet the gracious Saviour healed even one of this wicked company. Jesus permits evil, in order only to bring out of it a greater good. He teaches us to return good for evil. The sight of this miracle converted none. O, how insufficient are all outward means of conversion without the Spirit's inward operation!

52. "Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders which were come to him, Be ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves?"—Matt. xxvi. 55; Mark xiv. 48.

The chief priests. Some of these were in Gethsemane, in order to convince themselves of the fact of the arrest of Jesus, and, in case of need, to encourage their servants by their presence. *Captains of the temple.* These are supposed to have been the leaders of the priests and Levites, who alternately kept guard at the avenues of the temple. *Be ye come out*, voluntarily, not sent out by authority, like the poor soldiery. These dignitaries were the principal and guilty movers. *As against a thief, with swords and staves?* Rather, *as against a robber. Staves*, literally, *wood*, i. e., all kinds of sticks and cudgels. This was the *manner* in which they would have sought to take a highwayman of desperate character, and armed to defend his life. They knew His purity, His holiness, His mysterious power of rebuke. Yet they would slay Him as a malefactor. He expresses His indignation at this. It adds not a little to the depth of our Lord's humiliation, that He consented to be *hunted*

down thus by wicked men, and to be treated as if He had been the worst of mankind. The best of persons are more sensibly affected by the ill usage which wounds their reputation and honor, than they are by any other kind of injustice. It is in order to secure us from that excess to which this sense of human honor is apt to carry us, that Christ was willing to be treated as a thief—even He who had divested Himself of all, and who was now just going to lay down His life.

53. When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me; *but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.—John xii. 27.

Daily with you in the temple—for many days before the Passover. *Ye stretched forth no hands against me.* They refrained from violence, not through want of an eager desire to take Jesus, but because it was not permitted them of God. This utterance must have reminded them of many a fruitless plot which they had meditated, and many a word of rebuke which they had heard, although our Lord, who was not minded to eulogize Himself, was entirely silent as to the miracles which He had performed before their eyes, and as to the triumphs which He by word or deed had won over their perplexity and weakness. *But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.* (See John xii. 27.) “How hard soever it may seem that I should be thus exposed, I submit, for so it is determined. This is the hour *allowed* you to have your will against me; there is an hour *appointed* me to reckon for it.” Two parties are brought in here—the wicked Jews, who were about to deliver our Lord to Pilate, and the devil, under whose instigation they were acting. It was the brief “hour” of triumph which the unbelieving Jews, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, were to enjoy. It was the little season, during which the prince of the darkness of this world was to have “power,” and to all appearance to prevail over the second Adam, as he had prevailed over the first. And yet neither wicked men nor a malicious devil could go a hair’s breadth beyond the limit appointed by God, or triumph over the Son of God a minute beyond the time decreed by the eternal counsels. They knew it not, but so it was. Even now, our Lord would

have them know that they were only able to take Him prisoner, because He submitted, and because God permitted them a little season of “power.” Christ determines the hour of His death, as a voluntary victim, who offered Himself, not out of necessity, but out of choice and love. Such is the blindness of sinners, who think they reign and triumph when they accomplish their wicked desires, whereas they are only the instruments of the devil, who makes them serve His design, as the devil is himself an instrument whom God makes subservient to His.

54. ¶ Then they took him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest’s house. *And Peter followed after off. 55. *And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.
*Matt. xxvi. 57. *Matt. xxvi. 58, on which see notes; John xviii. 15. *Matt. xxvi. 69; Mark xiv. 66; John xviii. 17, 18.

Into the high priest’s house. We are here to understand Caiaphas. (Matt. xxvi. 57.) *And Peter followed after off.* By this he evinced two things: 1. Real attachment to His Master—a desire to be near Him, and to witness His trial. 2. Fear respecting His personal safety. He therefore kept so far off as to be out of danger, and yet so near as that he might witness the transactions respecting his Master. Perhaps he expected to be lost and unobserved in the crowd. Many, in this, imitate Peter. They are afraid to follow the Saviour closely. They fear danger, ridicule, or persecution. They *follow Him*, but it is at a great distance, *so far* that it is difficult to discern that they are in the train, and are His friends at all. Religion requires us to be near Christ. We may measure our piety by our desire to be near Him, to be like Him, and by our willingness to follow Him always, through trials, contempt, persecution and death.

Kindled a fire. It is well known that the nights in Palestine, especially in the early year, are often very cold, particularly at Jerusalem, from its great elevation above the sea. *The hall.* The Greek word so rendered is more frequently translated “palace.” Some suppose that here it means “an open court enclosed by buildings—a court-yard exposed to the open air.” In Rev. ii. 2, it is translated “court,” and can there bear no other sense. *Peter sat down among them.* While the servants

were warming themselves in the open court, Peter, assuming as well as he could the appearance of an indifferent observer, took his place in the midst of them, in order to be able to be eye and ear-witness, in the immediate vicinity. He who loves danger, and takes no care to avoid the occasions of sin, runs the hazard of perishing. It is infinitely better for a man humbly to retire, acknowledging his weakness, and having recourse to Him who is the strength of the weak, till He vouchsafes to show him mercy, than willfully to persist in performing a presumptuous promise, by endeavors which are still more presumptuous.

56. But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. 57. And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.

As he sat by the fire. The Greek word here rendered "fire" means, literally, "the light." It is evident that the word was used intentionally by Luke, in order to show us that it was "by the light of the fire" that Peter was recognized and charged with being a disciple. Had he kept in the background, and been content with a darker position, he might have escaped notice. *A certain maid earnestly looked upon him, &c.* She did this because he was a stranger, one whom she had not seen before, and concluding that, at this time of night, there were no neutrals there, and knowing him not to be any of the retinue of the high priest, she judged him to be one of the retinue of this Jesus, or, perhaps, she had some time or other looked about in the temple, and seen Jesus there, and Peter with Him, and remembered him, hence she said, *this man was also with him.* Every enemy is formidable to a person not supported by God. An occasion which we entirely disregard is sometimes very fatal to our virtue.

And he denied, &c. The very unexpectedness of the assault demands an instantaneous repulse, and already Peter rejoices that he can preserve the guise of an external composure, and his answer is quick, cold, indefinite: *Woman, I know him not.* The love of life and the fear of death make men forget the best resolutions, when they have not been formed by God, and are not supported by our humble prayer.

58. And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.—^aMatt. xxvi. 71; Mark xiv. 69; John xviii. 25.

The first cock-crowing, which Mark, xiv. 68, alone mentions, immediately after the first denial, is not even noticed by Peter. He appears, meanwhile, to have succeeded in assuming so indifferent a demeanor that he at first is not further disturbed. The disquiet of his conscience, however, now impels him toward the door (Matt. xxvi. 71); unluckily he finds this shut. He does not venture to seek to have it opened, that he may not elicit any unfavorable conjectures, and is therefore obliged to return to his former place. This very disquiet again excites suspicion. *Another* is masculine, referring probably to some male attendant to whom the maid had communicated her suspicions, and who charged Peter directly with having belonged to the company of Jesus. *Man, I am not.* One sin hardens the heart, and disposes it for the commission of another. God permits Peter to fall more than once, that he may have no room to excuse his sin as proceeding from surprise, and that he may seek the cause thereof in his own presumption.

59. And about the space of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him, for he is a Galilean.

^aMatt. xxvi. 73; Mark xiv. 70; John xviii. 26.

Another confidently affirmed, &c. Peter had now returned into the hall, and as he was discovered, by his peculiar manner of speaking, to have come from that part of Israel called Galilee, and as it was well known that most of Christ's disciples were Galileans, it was immediately supposed that he was one of them. We know from Jewish authorities that the rough provincial accent of the Galileans was very distinguishable from that of the metropolis. The space of one hour was allowed Peter to recover himself; and he made no use of it: in vain God gives men time for repentance, if He do not give them likewise a penitent heart.

60. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

On this occasion Peter not only denied his Lord, but he began to curse and to swear. (Matt. xxvi. 74.) He was now irritated beyond endurance. He could no longer resist the evidence that he was

known. It had been repeatedly charged on him. His language had betrayed him, and there was a positive witness who had seen him. He felt it necessary, therefore, to be still more decided, and he accordingly added to the sin of denying his Lord, the deep aggravation of profane cursing and swearing, affirming what he must have known was false, that he knew not the man. Immediately, then, the cock crew, that is, the second crowing, or not far from three in the morning. Let us not be weary of considering the deplorable depravity of the heart of man when left to himself. These three falls are, as it were, three witnesses of human weakness, and show plainly that none but God knows perfectly how great it is.

The steps by which Peter fell, or the things which successively contributed to his fall, were the following: 1. Self-confidence, arising from too high an opinion of himself. 2. His worldly views and expectations, and his aversion to the cross of Christ. 3. His unbelief, as to the warnings Christ had given of his weakness and danger. 4. As a consequence of his unbelief, he fell into unwatchfulness, and neglected also to pray. 5. Venturing upon forbidden ground, by going in among the wicked servants of the high priests. 6. Yielding to distrust, dejection and cowardice. The aggravating circumstances of Peter's sin were these: 1. The character of his person, a disciple, an Apostle, and one who had been specially honored by his Master. 2. The person whom he denied—His Master, Saviour and Redeemer. 3. The repetition of the sin—denying Christ first with a lie, then with an oath and next with a curse. 4. The persons before whom the denial took place—the chief priest's servants. 5. The time of the denial—a few hours after he had received the holy sacrament from Christ's own hands. 6. The smallness of the temptation to deny his Lord—a damsel only at first spake to him.

61. ^dAnd the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, «Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. 62. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

^dMatt. xxvi. 75; Mark xiv. 72. ^cMatt. xxvi. 74, 75, on which see notes; John xiii. 38.

Looked upon Peter. Probably our Lord cast this glance as He was led from Annas

to Caiaphas. Or, at this third denial, the door of the apartment where Jesus and Annas were, may have been opened upon the court, and Peter may have painfully found himself denying and swearing under his Lord's glance. That glance, doubtless, was turned full upon him with a significance that called Peter to his recollections. It does not appear that Peter came into the examination-room, or was present with his Lord. *And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, . . . and went out, and wept bitterly.* By a tender and compassionate look—a single glance of His eye—the injured Saviour brought to remembrance all Peter's promises, His own predictions and the great guilt of the disciple. He overwhelmed him with the remembrance of his sin, and pierced his heart through with many sorrows. The consciousness of deep and awful guilt rushed over Peter's soul, he flew from the palace, he went alone in the darkness of the night, and *wept bitterly.*

63. ^fAnd the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him. 64. And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee? 65. And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.

^fMatt. xxvi. 67, 68; Mark xiv. 65.

The most remarkable night that has been known since the beginning of the world, was the night before the crucifixion of the Lord. There was an ingenuity in the torments inflicted on Jesus, worthy of Satan, their author. (See Matt. xxvi. 67, 68; Mark xiv. 65.) Perhaps there was a burst of applause when it was first proposed to blindfold those meek and sorrowful eyes, and no doubt a profane laugh was heard, as each blow was struck, and the question asked, *who is it that smote thee?* How much astonished those men would have been had Jesus told them who had smitten Him! They little thought how well He knew their names, but they will find hereafter that He *did* know who struck Him that night. *Many other things blasphemously spake they against Him,* though only a *few* of their blasphemies are recorded as a specimen of the rest. But insults could not degrade the Son of God. He bore all their taunts with Divine patience. (1 Peter iii. 23.) He regarded every injury as a drop in the cup His Father had given Him to drink. He knew

the prophecies that had been made concerning His sufferings. (Mi. v. 1; Isa. l. 6.) Could we receive all that happened to us as the appointment of God, we should not be so easily provoked as we often are. Yet the malice of our enemies could never be vented against us, except by the permission of God.

66. [†]And as soon as it was day, ^bthe elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying, ^cMatt. xxvii. 1. ^bActs iv. 26; xxii. 5.

As soon as it was day. There were three stages or processes of proceedings against Jesus: 1. The preliminary examination, which probably took place while the full Sanhedrim was assembling. (Matt. xxvi. 57; Mark xiv. 63; Luke xxii. 54; John xviii. 13, 19-24.) 2. The trial before the Sanhedrim. (Matt. xxvi. 59-68; Mark xiv. 55-65.) 3. The subsequent consultation as to the best method of effecting the death of Jesus. (Matt. xxvii. 1; Mark xv. 1.) After the council had condemned Jesus the first time, they seem to have separated, and met again early in the morning. It is to this second meeting of the council the words, "as soon as it was day," most probably refer. The sun rose at that season of the year, in Judea, not far from five o'clock. According to the Talmud, capital cases were prohibited from being heard in the night, as was also the institution of an examination, pronouncing a sentence and carrying it into execution, on one and the same day. These rules were flagrantly violated in this case. *The elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes*—the classes of which the Sanhedrim was composed, which consisted of seventy persons, of whom the high priest was the chief. There were other members of this great council, such as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea.

67. [†]Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe. ⁶⁸. And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. ^bMatt. xxvi. 63; Mark xiv. 61.

Art thou the Christ? As Jesus had already acknowledged Himself to be the Son of God, there was no necessity for repeating this question. The resource which the Sanhedrim adopted was one which our own rules of evidence would declare most infamous, and which was also wholly adverse to the first principles of Mosaic jurisprudence, and the like of

which occurs in no circumstance of Hebrew history. It was that of putting the prisoner upon His oath to answer questions framed for His own crimination. (See Matt. xxvi. 63.) When Jesus was asked, *Art thou the Christ?* he showed by His answer that He would have proved His claim had His judges been willing to listen. *If I also ask you, &c.* They would not reply fairly to any questions which He might propose, and by which His innocence might be proved, and His true character and mission vindicated. On former occasions He had asked them various questions by which He had shown He was the Christ, and that the Christ was the Son of God. This is the great truth that Jesus sealed with His own blood. By confessing it, men are saved. "Whosoever shall confess," &c. (John iv. 15.) By denying this truth, men are lost. "Who is a liar," &c. (John iv. 22.)

69. [†]Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.

^bMatt. xxvi. 64, on which see notes; Mark xiv. 62; Heb. i. 3 and viii. 1.

Hereafter . . . Son of man . . . right hand . . . God. There is a plain reference in these words to the prophecy of Daniel. (Dan. vii. 9-14.) Our Lord evidently implies that He was the person to whom that prophecy pointed; and that, although condemned by the Jews, He would shortly be exalted to the highest position of dignity in heaven. The Jews saw this at once, and proceeded to put the question of the next verse.

70. Then said they all, *Art thou then the Son of God?* And he said unto them, [†]Ye say that I am. ^bMatt. xxvi. 64, on which see notes; Mark xiv. 62.

Art thou then the Son of God? Our Lord in the preceding verse had called Himself the "Son of man." His enemies in this question, ask Him if He is the "Son of God." They did so because His solemn saying about sitting at God's right hand showed them that He claimed to be the Messiah, and very God. *Ye say that I am*, which is a form of assenting or affirming, and equivalent to saying, "Ye say rightly that I am." The same in sense is given by Mark xiv. 62, "I am." Seldom in the course of His ministry did our Lord announce Himself as the Messiah. But here, in the great and trying moment, when questioned by the repre-

sentatives of the Jewish nation, "Art thou the Son of God?" He returned the solemn reply, "Ye say that I am"—a Hebraistic form of affirmation. The incarnation and resurrection of the Son of God being the fundamental mysteries of the Christian religion, which were to make so many martyrs, it was necessary that Jesus Christ, as the head of them, should be Himself a martyr for those truths. He knew very well that they would cost Him His life, but He knew likewise that life is a debt which all men owe to the truth, and that to sacrifice it to God is not to lose it.

71. "And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth."

^aMatt. xxvi. 65; Mark xiv. 63.

How different is the joy of these men, upon hearing the truth out of the mouth of Christ, from that of His true disciples! These find therein the words of eternal life, but those convert it into words of death, both for Christ and themselves, by the abuse they make of it.

The bold confession of our Master upon this occasion is intended to be an example to all His believing people. Like Him, we must not shrink from speaking out when occasion requires our testimony. The fear of man and the presence of a multitude must not make us hold our peace. (Job xxxi. 34.) A confessing Master loves bold, uncompromising and confessing disciples.

1. What feast drew nigh? 2. Who sought how they might kill Jesus? 3. Who entered into Judas? 4. What did Judas do? 5. Where did Christ send Peter and John? 6. For what purpose? 7. What directions did He give them? 8. What did our Lord say to His Apostles in eating the passover with them? 9. How was the Lord's Supper instituted? 10. What strife arose among the Apostles? 11. What did Jesus say to them? 12. What did He say to Simon? 13. What took place at the mount of Olives? 14. How did Peter deny Christ? 15. How and why did he repent? 16. How did the men that held Jesus treat Him?

CHAPTER XXIII.

1 *Jesus is accused before Pilate, and sent to Herod.* 8 *Herod mocketh him.* 12 *Herod and Pilate are made friends.* 13 *Barabbas is desired of the people, and is loosed by Pilate, and Jesus is given to be crucified.* 27 *He telleth the women, that lament him, the destruction of Jerusalem:* 34 *prayeth for his enemies.* 39 *Two evil doers are crucified with him.* 46 *His death.* 50 *His burial.*

AND the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.
^aMatt. xxvii. 2, on which see notes; Mark xv. 1; John xviii. 23.

The whole multitude. Not of the people, who were not as yet turned against Jesus, but of the parties mentioned in verse 66 of the last chapter, namely, the ruling classes. *Unto Pilate.* Pilate was at this time the governor or procurator appointed by the Romans over Judea. He was placed in this office by Tiberius, then emperor of Rome. The governor commonly resided at *Cæsarea*, but he came up to Jerusalem usually at the great feasts, when most of the Jews were assembled, to administer justice, and to suppress tumults if any should arise.

2. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this *fellow* perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ a king.

^bActs xvii. 7. ^cSee Matt. xvii. 27 and xxii. 21, on which see notes; Mark xii. 17. ^dJohn xix. 12.

We found—a judicial expression, intimating that they had brought Christ, as one convicted of guilt after diligent examination. *Fellow*, is not expressed in the original; but it is rightly inserted, being understood in what is expressed. *Pervverting the nation*, &c., &c. They charged him with the political offense of forbidding the people to pay tribute to Cæsar (the very trap into which they had vainly tried to draw Him) and making Himself a king, a claim which they alone had desired Him to make in a form hostile to the emperor. This charge, if proved, would have exposed Him to inevitable death, for never were *persecutions for treason* more severe than under the reign of Tiberius.

3. "And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it. 4. Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, 'I find no fault in this man. 5. And they

were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. 6. When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean. 7. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.

^cMatt. xxvii. 11; 1 Tim. vi. 13. ^f1 Peter ii. 22. ^gActs x. 37. ^hLuke iii. 1.

Pilate, not unacquainted with the prevailing Messianic hope, formulated his question very precisely, and sought to find out whether Jesus was really the promised and long-sighed-for King of Israel. To this question our Lord could not possibly answer otherwise than, without delay and without the least equivocalness, with yes. *Thou sayest it.* (See note on xxii. 70.) Christ is still willing to be called the King of this people, though they are so disloyal and ungrateful to Him as to clamor for His death.

How Pilate came to the conclusion that a claim to be a king is *no fault* in this man, we learn from John xviii. 36, 37, where it is shown that Jesus satisfied Pilate that His kingdom was no way dangerous to the imperial power. He was king in the realm of truth, where Cæsar was no rival. It is something, indeed, for a judge not to suppress and stifle the knowledge which he has of innocence, but he becomes the more guilty upon this account, if he abandons the defense of it, and delivers it up to its enemies.

Were the more fierce—grew more desperate, more violent, more urgent. Since now they see that their last charge of the assumption of royal dignity finds no acceptance with the judge, they come with so much the stronger emphasis back to the first—namely, that He is perverting the people; and told Pilate that this man had set the whole country in an uproar from Judea even unto Galilee.

Heard of Galilee, &c. As they expected, Pilate caught at the name of Galilee, which had lately supplied more than one dangerous demagogue; and having ascertained that Jesus belonged to the territory of Herod (see chap. iii. 1), he concluded to get rid of this troublesome affair by sending the accused to the tetrarch, whose immediate subject He was, and whom he might suppose better qualified than himself to judge in this case; nor did it escape him that he would be thus enabled to show a gratifying mark of attention to

Herod, with whom he had lately been on ill terms. How many Christians are there who, like Pilate, make Christ subservient to their temporal affairs and designs!

8. ^fAnd when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad, for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him, and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. ^gLuke ix. 9. ^hMatt. xiv. 1; Mark vi. 14.

The expressions in this verse are very remarkable. They bring before us the fearful history of Herod's sins, and throw light on the power of conscience. Herod had not forgotten John the Baptist and his testimony. Moreover, he had probably heard much about our Lord from his steward Chuza, whose wife Joanna was one of our Lord's disciples. (Luke viii. 3.) He had long desired to see Him, in the hope of witnessing the performance of some wonder by one so renowned for His miracles. Many people of the world learn the truths of Christianity with a joy arising only from curiosity, and not from any desire of being instructed in them and of putting them in practice.

9. Then he questioned with him in many words, ^kbut he answered him nothing. 10. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. 11. ^lAnd Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. ^mPs. xxxviii. 13, 14; Isa. liii. 7; 1 Peter ii. 23. ⁿIsa. liii. 3.

In many words. It was an extended examination, conducted probably before the tetrarch's courtiers, with many a cross-question and device to draw out the wonder-worker. *Answered him nothing.* It was no part of our Lord's calling to gratify an idle curiosity, nor could any object be gained by declaring His doctrine to one so utterly worldly. He therefore performed no miracle, and was silent to all the questions put to Him. A respectful silence is an instruction for some, and a refuge against others. That person says a great deal who speaks by his modesty, humility and patience.

Vehemently accused him. They saw very well that their interest required them to paint Him to Herod in colors as black as was any way possible, and accuse Him; therefore, they did so, with visible emphasis (comp. Acts xviii. 28), as if they feared that even Herod himself, perchance, might be too equitable with their victim, seizing, as it would seem, the favorable moment when the chagrin of Herod disposed him

to listen. An affected moderation would have rendered those accusers less suspected, their accusations more probable and their envy less visible, than this vehemence; but envy seldom or never consults prudence.

Set him at nought, &c. Herod was acute enough to see that Jesus was not really open to any capital charge, and after the odium he had incurred on account of John the Baptist, he was not willing to add the death of Jesus to the number of his crimes. Yet, being exasperated at the dignified passiveness of Jesus, he, with his guards, treated Him as though He was nobody, a nothing, then scoffed at Him, then caused Him to be arrayed in a gorgeous purple robe (doubtless one of his own, and probably the same robe which was afterward used by the soldiers of Pilate), in derision of His Messianic dignity; then, not wishing to be outdone in a complimentary act by Pilate, he waived his claim of jurisdiction over Jesus, and sent Him back to the Roman governor, at whose tribunal He had first been arraigned.

12. [¶] And the same day [¶] Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves, — [¶] Acts iv. 27.

The cause of the enmity between these two men is unknown. Some think it may have been the massacre of the Galileans. (Luke xiii. 1.) It probably grew out of a conflict in regard to their respective jurisdictions. The method of the reconciliation seems to indicate the nature of the previous alienation. The courteous act of Pilate in sending Jesus to be tried before Herod, and the equally courteous return made by the Galilean prince in remanding Jesus to Pilate's judgment seat, it would appear, furnished the occasion for the renewal of friendship. Both these men agreed in despising Jesus, and insulting Him, and were utterly unbelieving as to His claim to faith and respect. The circumstance of their reconciliation struck the Apostles very much. They regarded it as a fulfillment of part of the second Psalm. They mentioned in prayer to God the union of Pilate and Herod and the Jews against their Master. (Acts iv. 23-30.)

13. [¶] And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, 14. Said unto them, [¶] Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and behold, [¶] I, having ex-

amined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: 15. No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him, and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.

[¶] Matt. xxvii. 23, on which see notes; Mark xv. 14; John xviii. 38 and xix. 4. [¶] Verses 1, 2. [¶] Verse 4.

Pilate was doubtless embarrassed to find the case turned back upon his hands. *Called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people.* It was not enough for Pilate to communicate his peculiar views merely to the sanhedrists. He therefore convened the people, the number of whom had considerably increased during the sending of our Lord back and forth, and who took a lively interest in the matter, in order that the declaration of our Lord's innocence might be as public and unmistakable as possible. *Have found no fault.* We ought to notice how many and what various persons bear testimony to the innocence of Jesus—Pilate, Herod, Pilate's wife, Judas Iscariot, the thief on the cross, and the centurion who superintended the crucifixion. We cannot doubt that this was specially overruled and ordered by the providence of God. *Nothing worthy of death.* As a representative man, this Gentile stands before the Jew, and pronounces Jesus innocent. But while He thus confessed Him innocent, he did not make himself so. He shed innocent blood. So the Gentile nations pronounce Jesus innocent, yet it is their sin that ever crucifies Him afresh.

16. [¶] I will therefore chastise him, and release him. 17. [¶] For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.

[¶] Matt. ii. xxvii. 26; John xix. 1. [¶] Matt. xxvii. 15; Mark xv. 6; John xviii. 39.

Chastise. It was the Roman custom to scourge those who were about to be crucified, especially *slaves*, making this the most ignominious punishment. The scourge was composed of ox nerves, extremely sharp, interwoven with sheep bones, so as to lacerate the flesh. The victim was bound to a low pillar, in order that, stooping forward, he might curve his bare back to receive the full, fair stroke.

Of necessity. This habit of releasing a criminal unto the people at the feast of the Passover was one of such invariable practice and long continuance, that it became a fixed and necessary custom. From what the custom arose, or by whom it was introduced, is not known. It was probably adopted to secure popularity among the

Jews, and to render the government of the Romans less odious. Any little indulgence granted to the Jews during the heavy oppression of the Romans would serve to conciliate their favor, and to keep the nation from sedition. It might happen often, that when persons were arraigned before the Romans on charge of sedition, some peculiar favorite of the people, or some leader, might be among the number. It is evident that if they had the privilege of recovering such a person, it would serve much to allay their feelings, and make tolerable the yoke under which they groaned.

18. And they cried out all at once saying, 'Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas': 19. Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.—^aActs iii. 14. ^bActs xxi. 36.

All at once, literally, *the whole multitude together*. *Away with this man*, literally, *away this (fellow)*. Barabbas is called (Matt. xxvii. 16) "a notable prisoner." He was distinguished for great crimes. He was, perhaps, a leader of a band who had been guilty of sedition, and had committed murder in an insurrection. As he and his adherents probably lived by plunder, he is called a "robber." As a fierce and brave Jewish patriot, he had become famous among the populace. He was, perhaps, like Robin Hood among the old English, hateful to the government, but popular with the masses.

What guilt there was in the few short words of the people, "Release unto us Barabbas!" They preferred a robber and a murderer to Him who came to give life unto the world! It was not one man only who made this wicked choice, but a whole multitude! Shame! The world prefers the vilest of the vile before Christ! And yet rejoice. Christ's death is the only hope for the vilest of men! Christ dies, and thus only is any Barabbas set free. (1 Tim. i. 15; Acts iii. 13.) Jesus and the guilty sinner exchange places. The sinner, condemned and awaiting his dreadful death, is now freely released by this wonderful *substitution* of Christ. Not that the sinner has been found innocent, but that Christ has taken his place, and he is set free. Yet Barabbas will, after all, die eternally if he believe not in Jesus. Christ's interposition will do us no saving

good, if we see not in Him our glorious and Divine substitute—on whom our sins were laid, and who freely died for us.

20. Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them.

See on Matt. xxv. 11.

The word rendered *willing* expresses the idea of will combined with choice or purpose, and not simply one of mere inclination. *Spake again to them*. His address probably consisted of a few words, and those not essentially different from the ones which are communicated to us a little before and a little later. Pilate's desire to acquit our Lord and set Him free, coupled with his great desire to please the Jews and get the praise of man, is a striking picture of the slavery to which a great man, without principle, may be reduced.

21. But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.

For the first time the terrible cry is here heard, which, as the secret wish and thought of the chief priests, is now by these placed upon the people's lips, and with fanatical rage raised by these. *Crucify him*. The cross was a Roman mode of execution, reserved for slaves and the vilest of the race, and was expressive of the strongest contempt. The halter, among us, is scarce so ignominious a term of shameful suffering. What sad evidence have we here of the inconstancy of the friendship of the world! The very same persons but six days ago cried out, "Hosannah to the Son of David," who now cry out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him."

22. And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.

^aVerse 16.

What evil hath he done? Luke alone states that the governor, at this point of the trial, raised, for the third time, his voice in favor of our Lord. *I have found no cause of death in him*. Miserable temporizer! If he had found no fault in Him, why permit Him to be thus wantonly insulted, thus cruelly tormented? The fact is, for we see it through every feature and lineament of Pilate's character, that he would have been the friend of Christ if he could have been at no sacrifice of popularity or self-interest; he would have liberated Him, for His conscience told him that he ought to do so, but he feared

the people, and therefore hoped, by taking a middle course, to satisfy his conscience, to please the people, and to save Jesus. It should be remembered that it was not open animosity, not undisguised and reckless hostility, but this middle course, this temporizing policy, which placed the crown of thorns upon the Saviour's head. *Chastise him, &c.* (See notes on verse 16.)

23. And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. 24. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. 25. And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired, but he delivered Jesus to their will.

*Matt. xxvii. 26; Mark xv. 15; John xix. 16. *Or assented.

Instant—urgent. The rabble, and the chief priests, by whom they were excited, joined in the infuriated cry.

Pilate at length yielded to their importunity. The clamor of the people and chief priests overruled him to act contrary to his reason and conscience. He had not courage to stem so strong a stream, but gave sentence as they required. Here was judgment turned away backward, and justice standing afar off, for fear of popular fury. Barabbas would thus be hardened in wickedness, and do the more mischief, yet him he released, but he delivered Jesus to their will, i. e., to the will of the Jews. He who loves anything more than truth, will abandon it sooner or later. Christ is delivered up to the will of man, that man may deliver himself up to the will of Christ through His grace.

26. *And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.

*Matt. xxvii. 32, on which see notes; Mark xv. 21; see John xix. 17.

Led him away to the cross. The places of execution were always outside the walls of towns. At Jerusalem it was upon a swell of ground called Golgotha—the place of a skull—some say on account of the skulls of dead criminals that lay there, forgetting that the Jews never suffered either the bodies or bones even of criminals to remain unburied. *They laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country.* Cyrene was a city of Libya, in Africa, lying west of Egypt, in which, though consisting mostly of Greeks, a Jewish colony was located. Having much intercourse with Jerusalem, they maintained a regular synagogue at that

city. Simon appears at this time to have been a resident, at any rate, temporarily, either of Jerusalem or its adjacent country, inasmuch as it is from the country he is coming when he is so sadly met by the procession of our Lord's executioners. *And on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.* It was a part of the usual punishment of those who were crucified, that they should bear their own cross to the place of execution. It was accordingly laid first on Jesus. Weak, however, and exhausted by suffering and watchfulness, He probably sank under the heavy burden, *and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus*, either entirely in Christ's room, or sharing a part of its weight.

It is a great favor to be chosen of God to accompany an afflicted soul, and to keep it from sinking under the burden of its cross. Jesus, though now in heaven, can never forget that hour on earth in which He bore His cross, and never does He see a weak and fainting sufferer, upon whom fresh trials are accumulating, without calling to mind that heavy cross, the toilsome journey up Mount Calvary, or without stretching forth a hand to help and succor him. To bear the cross of Jesus, and to share His reproach, is reckoned in heaven more honorable than to govern kingdoms, or to discover worlds.

"We tread the path our Master trod,
We bear the cross He bore;
And every thorn that wounds our feet,
His temples pierced before.

"O, patient, spotless Lamb!
My heart in patience keep
To bear the cross so easy made,
By wounding Thee so deep."

27. † And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.

A great company of people—a great crowd, as might be expected, followed the sad procession, many of them the same persons who, a few days before, had made themselves hoarse in shouting hosannas as Jesus entered, in Messianic triumph, the gate of the city opposite to that which He was now leaving as a prisoner condemned to die. Doubtless there were in the company also disciples and friends of Christ, and persons who were moved to pity by the sight of an innocent person suffering. *And of women.* The most of these were probably drawn together from

motives of curiosity, but among them we know to have been those noble women who followed Him from Galilee, and who were first to visit His sepulchre on the morning of His resurrection. *Which also bewailed and lamented him.* They wept deeply for the sorrowful fate of the Just One. It has been remarked that no woman is mentioned as speaking against our Lord in His life, or having a share in His death. On the contrary, He was anointed by a woman for His burial—women were the last at His grave and the first at His resurrection—to a woman He first appeared when He rose again—women ministered to His wants—women bewailed and lamented Him—a heathen woman interceded for His life with her husband, Pilate—and, above all, of a woman He was born.

28. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

As He had now been relieved, at least in part, from the weight of the cross by Simon, He was enabled to turn partially around as He walked along, so as to address these women. *Daughters of Jerusalem*—a Hebraism for persons born and living in Jerusalem, or who resorted to it as the capital of their country. *Weep not for me.* Our Lord does not overlook the fact that the compassion of these women had not the three condemned, in equal measure, but Himself personally, as its object, therefore He does not say, “weep not for us.” A mere natural sympathy, awakened even over the narrative of the Saviour’s crucifixion, though serving to attract attention to the solemn subject, and to be the entrance to deeper views, has in itself no saving power. *But weep for yourselves, and for your children.* The Saviour does not condemn their tears for Him, but warns them that they have not more than enough for their own fate and that of their children, alluding, in the latter, to the imprecation of the Jews. (Matt. xxvii. 25.) Many of the women to whom our Lord here spoke might easily have been living forty years after, when Titus took Jerusalem, to see and experience the indescribable horrors of the siege, but it must have been mostly the generation of their *children* who suffered the destruction itself.

29. *For, behold the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.

*Matt. xxiv. 19; Luke xxi. 23.

These *days* mean primarily the period of the last wars between the Jews and the Romans, and in particular the siege of Jerusalem, but in all such predictions of judgments to come a more fearful doom lies far in the future, when all God’s enemies and those of His Son shall be arraigned at His bar, and receive the award of their impenitence and unbelief in the righteous retributions of eternity. *They shall say.* Here is a significant change from the *second* person to the *third*, from *ye* to *they*. Perhaps the *they* refers to *children*, perhaps impersonally to the wicked in the day of Jerusalem’s destruction. *Blessed are the barren, &c.* In those “days,” viz.: when, at the destruction of Jerusalem, all hope of deliverance would be cut off, those would be regarded fortunate who had never borne children. Although we have not any reason to fear the very evils which were to happen at the siege of Jerusalem, yet those calamities prefigure those of the lost, who shall seek death without being able to find it, and shall suffer an eternal confusion. Nothing but repentance and faith can prevent these miseries.

30. *Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us.

*Isa. ii. 19; Hos. x. 8; Rev. vi. 16 and ix. 6.

At the time referred to, a sudden, even though a terrible death, would be regarded as a benefit. (Comp. Hos. ix. 14, x. 8; Rev. vi. 16.) Here again, while immediate reference is had to the destruction of Jerusalem, yet, in a higher sense, the great day of God’s wrath at the final judgment is referred to, and the expressions, though figurative, signify the intense misery and distress, and the desperate helplessness of all on whom that wrath shall fall. If now we will say to Jesus, “Pardon us,” we shall never say to the mountains, “Fall on us.”

31. *For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

*Prov. xi. 31; Jer. xxv. 29; Ezek. xx. 47 and xxi. 3, 4; 1 Peter iv. 17.

What is the meaning of these words? In the prophecy of Ezekiel, xx. 47, there is a little parable, in which the Jewish nation is compared to a *forest*, and the

anger of God to a *fire*. A fire quickly destroys *dry* trees, but *green* trees less easily. *Dry* trees represent the *wicked*, who are prepared for destruction, *green* trees the *righteous*. God gives this explanation of Ezekiel's parable: "Say to the land of Israel, Behold, I am against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee the *righteous* and the *wicked*." (Ezek. xxi. 3.) When Jesus, therefore, spoke of a *green* tree, he meant *Himself*; and when He spoke of a *dry* tree, His enemies. This seems to be the explanation of His words. "If *they* (that is, the Romans) treat me who am *innocent* so cruelly, what will be done to the *GUILTY*?"

32. *And there were also two others, malefactors, led with him to be put to death.

†Isa. liii. 12; Matt. xxvii. 38, on which see notes.

Pilate did not reside in Jerusalem. When he came there on the great feasts, or at other times, it was, in part, to hold courts for the trial of criminals. These robbers had probably been condemned at that time, and to show greater contempt for Jesus, He was crucified with men of that abandoned character, and on a cross which should have been occupied by their companion and leader, Barabbas. Their names were joined with that of Jesus in the history of the executions of that day. Thus the prophecy spoken by Isaiah was fulfilled, "He was numbered with the transgressors." (Isa. liii. 12.) Shame was one of the ingredients in His bitter cup. Shame is the consequence of sin, and He who bare *our sins* bare also *our shame*.

33. And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

†Matt. xxvii. 33, on which see notes; Mark xv. 22; John xix. 17. *Or, the place of a skull.

The place which is called Calvary. All the four Gospel writers speak of it as "a place." Not one of them calls it a "mount." It is usually supposed to have been on the north-west of Jerusalem, without the walls of the city, but at a short distance. Jesus was put to death *out* of the city, because capital punishments were not allowed within the walls. (See Num. xv. 35; 1 Kings xxi. 13.) *There they crucified him*. The cross was composed of two pieces of wood, one of which was placed upright in the earth, and the other crossed it. The upright part was commonly so high that

the feet of the person crucified were two or three feet from the ground. On the middle of that upright part there was a projection, or seat, on which the person crucified sat, or, as it were, *rode*. This was necessary, as the *hands* were not alone strong enough to bear the weight of the body, as the body was left exposed often many days, and not unfrequently suffered to remain till the flesh had been devoured by vultures, or putrified in the sun. The feet were fastened to this upright piece, either by nailing them with large spikes, driven through the tender part, or by being lashed by cords. To the cross-piece at the top, the hands, being extended, were also fastened, either by spikes or by cords, or perhaps in some cases by both. Our Lord was nailed both by the hands and feet, as the prophets had foretold (Ps. xxxii. 16; Zech. xii. 10; John xx. 25, 27, &c.; Rev. i. 7), a method more exquisitely painful at first, though tending to shorten the torture. He was fastened to the cross as it lay upon the ground, and the shock, when it was dropped with a sudden jerk into the hole or socket prepared to receive it, must have been terrible. Death did not ensue, usually, for many hours after the criminal was affixed to the cross. *And the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left*. (See notes on verse 32.) Christ, in submitting to the punishment of slaves, joins the greatest of ignominies with the most violent of all pains, that nothing may be wanting to the example of patience and humility which He intends to give us in His death, and to the remedy which He prepares thereby for the cure of all our wounds.

34. † Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

*Matt. v. 44; Acts vii. 60; 1 Cor. iv. 12. ‡Acts iii. 17. §Matt. xxvii. 35; Mark xv. 24; John xix. 23.

Christ had often preached the doctrine of forgiving enemies, and praying for them. He practices it here Himself in a most exemplary manner. Observe, 1. The time—*then*, this prayer was probably uttered directly after His suspension on the cross. As soon as the blood of the Great Sacrifice began to flow, the Great High Priest began to intercede. 2. The character in which He prayed—*Father*—it was as Son He both

atoned and interceded with the Father. 3. The mercy prayed for, forgiveness. *Forgive*—for the sacrifice which makes forgiveness possible is now being made. 4. The persons for whom this prayer was offered. *Forgive them, for they know not what they do.* The persons for whom the prayer was offered were those who were ignorant of the real nature of the act they were performing. This was undoubtedly true of the Roman soldiers. How far the rulers and priests, the real murderers of our Lord, were included in the terms of this prayer, we cannot say. Our Lord does not mention the ignorance of those He prays for, as a plea for pardon, but as a description of their state. On the one hand, we must beware of supposing that ignorance is not blameworthy, and that ignorant persons *deserve* to be forgiven their sins. At this rate ignorance would be a desirable thing. All spiritual ignorance is more or less culpable. It is part of man's sin that he does not know better than he does. His not knowing God is only part of his guilt. Ignorance, to be an excuse, or to diminish the intensity of a crime, must be sincere and unavoidable, and it must be the ignorance of a will that would have done right had it known the truth. That those who aided in bringing our Lord to the cross were guilty, is evident, not only from the fact that Peter, in his sermon (Acts ii. 23), declared, "Him ye have taken, and by *wicked hands* have crucified and slain;" but also from the fact that three thousand were "pricked in their hearts," and said: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" In this prayer of Jesus, He "made intercession for the transgressors," as had been foretold of Him, and afforded a grand example of magnanimity to all His followers who might suffer for righteousness sake. Not that the Gospel requires of us an insensibility of wrongs and injuries, or that we deliver up our rights and properties to the lusts of every one that will invade them; but it forbids us to revenge injuries, and requires us meekly to receive evil, and readily to return good. *And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.* The literal fulfillment of the twenty-second Psalm, in this verse and the following one, ought to be care-

fully observed. (Ps. xxii. 17, 18.) Jesus gave up to His executioners these garments, made by the hands of men; but He left us garments far more precious than these—even His righteousness and grace to cover the nakedness of our hearts.

35. And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also, with them, derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God. (Ps. xxii. 17; Zech. xii. 10. *36* Matt. xxvii. 39, on which see notes; Mark xv. 29.

The impious throng mocked the dying Saviour. It would appear that the *people* joined in this with the rulers. *He saved others, let him save himself.* Instead of addressing the Son of God Himself, they spoke to each other. It is more trying to hear our enemies speak against us to *others*, than to hear them address the same reproaches to *ourselves*. There is more contempt shown in such a way of attack than in a direct assault. It does not seem probable that they meant to admit that He had actually saved others, but only that He *pretended* to save them from death by miracles, or that He claimed to be the Messiah, and thus affirmed that He *could* save them. This is, therefore, cutting irony.

36. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar. 37. And saying, If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself.

Luke is the only one who communicates to us the fact that the soldiers also took part in the mocking, which the example of the chief priests had excited. The soldiers, rather from the natural inclination of persons of their profession to join in any popular excitement and clamor, than from deep feelings of hatred, like that which rankled in the bosom of the priests and rulers, left their previous composed demeanor, and approached Jesus, pretending to share with Him their stimulating drink. *Vinegar.* This was *posca*, a mixture of vinegar and water, a common drink for the Roman soldiers, not the medicated drink of wine and myrrh which was given to intoxicate and benumb, and which Jesus refused, because He would die undisturbed and unclouded in His mind. The soldiers also appropriated to themselves the words of the chief priests quite as eagerly and willingly as they had previously done the garments of the condemned, exclaiming, not without bitter-

ness toward despised Judaism, *If thou be the King of the Jews, &c.*

38. ^bAnd a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

^cMatt. xxvii. 37; Mark xv. 26; John xix. 19.

It was usual for the Romans to put a "title" or inscription at the top of the cross, to denote the offense of the crucified person; a custom observed also by the Turks, in their analogous punishment of impalement. In the provinces, these inscriptions were in different languages, so that all might be able to understand for what offense the criminal was executed. The title set upon our Lord's cross was in Greek, the language most generally spoken in the eastern parts of the Roman empire; in Latin, the language of the Romans, and in the vernacular "Hebrew," or rather Chaldo-Syriac, the language of Judea. John says (xix. 19) that Pilate wrote the title and put it upon the cross. Probably Pilate wrote it, or caused it to be written, and directed the soldiers to set it up. The difference in the accounts the Evangelists give of this title (Matt. xxvii. 37; Mark xv. 26; John xix. 19) may be easily removed. It is not at all improbable that the inscription *varied* in the languages in which it was written. One Evangelist may have translated it from the Hebrew, another from the Greek, a third from the Latin and a fourth have translated one of the inscriptions a little differently from another. Besides, the Evangelists all agree in the main point of the inscription, viz.: That He was the King of the Jews.

39. [†]And one of the malefactors which were hanged, railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself, and us.—Matt. xxvii. 41; Mark xv. 32.

Malefactors. Thieves, robbers, or highwaymen. *Railed on him.* Matthew and Mark say both the thieves railed. It seems probable that if the penitent thief had railed at Jesus, he would have confessed that sin when he rebuked his companion for the same. It is probable that they use the plural number in the general way that people sometimes use it, when describing a transaction. For example, it is said (Heb. xi. 33), "*they* stopped the mouths of lions," when, in fact, it was but one, namely, Daniel, who did so, and "*they* were sawn asunder," when, in all likeli-

hood, the allusion is but to one, namely, Isaiah. (See on Matt. xxvii. 41, 42, 43.) *If thou be Christ.* This was not a prayer, it was a reproach.

40. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41. And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

^dLev. xxvi. 40; Josh. vii. 9, 20; Ezra ix. 13.

The other answering rebuked him. Who this malefactor was, and what first struck his conscience and moved him to repent, we are not told. Perhaps it was witnessing the patient sufferings of Christ. *Dost not thou fear God?* The pronoun is emphatic in the original, and gives this shade of sense: *dost not even thou, i. e.,* have you no fear of Divine justice, that at this awful moment, when, as a justly-condemned criminal, you are about to be ushered into God's presence, you can afford to unite with this mob in taunting one whom we both know to be innocent? *In the same condemnation, i. e.,* condemned alike with Him at whom you are railing. Community of suffering might well have inspired forbearance and pity. *We indeed justly,* so that the criminals are truly railing at the innocent. *We receive the due reward of our deeds.* He acknowledged that they had been so great sinners, that even crucifixion was not too severe a punishment. *Nothing amiss*—nothing censurable, evil. The mild expression denotes innocence the more strongly. This testimony of the malefactor presupposes a knowledge of the past history of Jesus. The rebuke with which the penitent malefactor rebukes his fellow, sounds not at all like the remonstrance of one—would have fitted ill, in that shape at least, to the lips of one—who had just before been joining in the blasphemies, which all of a sudden he condemns.

42. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom.

There is abundant proof that this thief's repentance was genuine. (See on verse 41.) He used for the honor of Christ his heart and tongue, the only faculties at liberty. His prayer was that of a believer. *Lord.* He acknowledges Jesus to be the King Messiah. He was concerned about eternal salvation. *Remember me.* Here was humility. He did not say, "Let me

sit on thy right hand, or on thy left, in thy kingdom." *When thou comest into thy kingdom*—the sentiment is, *when thou comest to abide in thy kingdom*. What a wondrous faith proclaimed itself in these words. To believe that He, whose only token of royalty was the crown of thorns, that still clings to His bleeding brows, was a king and had a kingdom—that He, on whose eyes the mists of death were already hanging, was indeed the Prince of life, wielding in those pierced hands, nailed so helplessly to the cross, the keys of death and of hell, that He could shut and none could open, could open and none could shut, that it could profit something in that mysterious world whither they were both hastening to be remembered by this crucified man—that was a faith indeed. It was itself one of the miracles of the crucifixion.

43. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Jesus said unto him. Over against all the voices of blasphemy Jesus had thus far observed steadfast silence, but such a petitioner He permits not to wait a moment for an answer. He does not upbraid Him with his past thefts and other vices. He accepts his repentance and faith, though at the eleventh hour. *To-day*—this day. Perhaps the thief had feared that he should have to languish slowly away, hanging one or several days on the cross, as was not unusual before death ensued. *Shalt thou*, guilty as thou art, vile and debased as thou hast been, being renewed by grace and made meet, *be with me*; instead of being merely remembered, thou shalt be *with me*—perfect fellowship and communion is promised. *In paradise*—a word whose whole sweetness in such a mouth, for such ears, could only be experienced if one had himself hung there with the Saviour upon the cross. The word *paradise* is a strictly Oriental one, signifying a *park*, or *pleasure-ground*. The word here denotes the state of faithful souls between death and the resurrection, when, like Adam in Eden, they are admitted to immediate communion with God in Christ and to a participation of the true tree of life. Not that we should reject the idea of some locality where the bless-

ed union of the thief with his Lord would take place. But this is not the main element in the promise of our Lord to him; it is simply, to-day shalt thou be *with me* (which expression, of course, implies some place in the world of spirits) *in paradise, i. e.*, in a state of ineffable bliss.

From this answer of our Lord we learn, 1. That the soul does not die with the body, and may and does live when separate from it. 2. That no purification of any kind after death is needed for the person that dies a penitent believer. 3. That as soon as believers die they are "with Christ." (See Phil. i. 23.) 4. That whilst there is life there is hope. It was like the Son of God to close His life upon earth by an act of *especial mercy*—the salvation of a notorious sinner. It has been well observed that *one* such instance is recorded, that none may *despair*, and *but one*, that none may *presume*. Certainly the *impenitent* thief is a striking proof that pain, suffering and the approach of death, are not sufficient, without grace, to convert a soul. Let no one abuse God's goodness, which is intended to lead to repentance.

44. *And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the *earth until the ninth hour. 45. And the sun was darkened, and the vail of the temple was rent in the midst.
*Matt. xxvii. 45; Mark xv. 33. *Or, land, ¹Matt. xxvii. 51; Mark xv. 38.

About the sixth hour, that is, our twelve o'clock. The Jews divided their days into twelve hours, beginning to count at sunrise. *There was a darkness over all the earth*—over all the land, as it is translated in Matt. xxvii. 45. Not the globe (for it was night at the antipodes), nor, perhaps, was even all Palestine covered, but the vicinity and adjacent country. Nor was it an eclipse, since the Passover was at full moon. As the darkness was not universal but local, so it was not astronomical but atmospheric. *Until the ninth hour, i. e.*, three o'clock. *The sun was darkened*. It left the world in darkness while He who was the Light of the world was about to expire. The darkness here, and in the preceding verse, was not what is sometimes called the sympathy of nature over the scene, for that is too poetical for the plain reality of the facts before us. But it was a token of Divine displeasure, calcu-

lated to dismay the hearts of those wicked men, and awaken in them some misgiving as to the being they were crucifying. How much thicker was the darkness which covered the hearts of the Jews! *And the vail of the temple was rent in the midst.* This was doubtless the vail, curiously wrought, which separated the holy from the most holy place, in which the Divine presence was supposed to dwell, thus dividing the temple into two apartments. (Ex. xxvi. 31-33.) This vail or curtain was some sixty feet long, and it was impossible for it to be thus rent, as some have imagined, by the force of the earthquake. This miracle must have been as striking and terrible to the priests who ministered in the temple as the darkness was to the inhabitants of Palestine. It signified the opening of the way into the holiest by Christ's death—the passing away of the Jewish dispensation—and the revelation of the Gospel way of salvation to all mankind. God speaks even yet by inanimate creatures to the obdurate people who refuse to hear His Son. He makes use of everything to awaken the sinner, but the sinner, by his obduracy, renders everything ineffectual when God works not an internal and invisible miracle upon his heart. How is it that they do not now at least know that it is the Sun of their souls, whose light and life they have extinguished and put out, and that His death rends the vail of types and shadows, discovers the truth, and opens heaven? But the time is not yet come.

46. [And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. "Ps. xxi. 5; 1 Peter ii. 23. "Matt. xxvii. 50; Mark xv. 37; John xix. 30.]

Cried with a loud voice. This shows that there was something peculiar and uncommon about our Lord's death. A dying man's voice is generally not "loud," but feeble. This was the expiring cry of nature. Inasmuch as the agony of the cross extorted from Jesus no cry of pain, and His only complaint had been His apparent desertion of God, may we not attribute, in part, at least, this last cry to His anguish of spirit, which was so great as to hasten His death much beyond what was usual? There are seven sentences recorded as spoken by Him while

on the cross. *Three* were uttered *before* the darkness overspread the land, and *four* near its conclusion. The first three concerned others, not Himself. (See verses 34, 43; John xix. 26, 27; Mark xxvii. 46; John xix. 28, 30.) The *last* sentence spoken by Christ while on the cross was, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.* These are the words of David, in the thirty-first Psalm. (Ps. xxxi. 5.) *Father.* As soon as Christ was nailed to the cross He called upon His Father, and now, when He was just expiring, He again said "Father." (See Ps. lxxxix. 26.) *Commend.* The original word thus rendered would be better translated "commit." *My spirit.* Our Lord possessed a true body and reasonable soul, united in close and mysterious union with His Divine nature, yet each so distinct that acts and emotions could be predicated of the one which belonged not to the other. This soul He committed into the hands of His Father. These words of Jesus are full of faith and comfort, fit to be the last breathings of every gracious soul in this world. Dying believers are both warranted and encouraged by Christ's example believingly to commit their precious souls into the hands of God as a gracious Father. (See Gal. iii. 26; John i. 12; Acts vii. 59; Rom. viii. 15; 2 Tim. i. 12.) Jesus trusted in God. Even His enemies said, when they scoffed at Him, "He trusted in God." Worldly people cannot trust Him, for they do not *know* Him. They cannot trust Him to guide them one step which they do not *see*, nor to give them one blessing which they do not already *hold in their hands*. This is *not* to trust Him. But the children of God can trust Him while they live with their *earthly concerns*, and, when they come to die, with their *immortal spirits*. *Martin Luther*, the great Reformer, was remarkable for his trust in God. Three hours a day he set apart for calling upon his Father, and he received the most wonderful answers to his prayers. When he was dying, he was often heard to say, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." These were *almost* his last words. He added, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish."

And having said this, he gave up the ghost. The proper meaning is, resigned His spirit, or *expired*. It is evident that the Lord Jesus did not die because He was obliged, but because He chose voluntarily and of His own free will to submit to death. Finding Himself in deepest dependence, He yet exhibited and used His true freedom. (John x. 18.) His death was "His own act." He "*offered Himself* without spot to God." None of the Evangelists say that Jesus *died*, although that expression is ever after used of His death, when stated as one great fact.

47. "Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man."

"Matt. xxvii. 54, on which see notes; Mark xv. 39.

The centurion—a captain of a hundred men. He was doubtless the commander of the quaternion of soldiers who watched Jesus' death. *Saw what was done*—saw the supernatural darkness, the trembling of the earth, the rending of the rocks, and the opening of the tombs, and heard the Saviour's dying words. *He glorified God.* He had never seen such amazing instances of Divine power, and, therefore, took occasion to adore God as the *Almighty*. *Certainly this was a righteous man.* The centurion knew that Christ was executed for claiming to be the Son of God. Christ was *righteous*, in that His claim, for which He was executed, was sustained by God, by the supernatural phenomena. The utterance of the centurion is less the expression of an exactly defined conception of the understanding, than the outgush of a deeply-moved sensibility, and it is as unreasonable to deny the echo of superstition as the voice of sincere faith in his manly words. Christ had a testimony of His innocence and righteousness given by all sorts of persons. Pilate and Herod pronounced Him innocent; Pilate's wife proclaimed Him a righteous person; Judas, the traitor, declared it was innocent blood; the thief on the cross affirmed He had done nothing censurable; and the centurion owned Him to be a righteous man, yea, the Son of God.

48. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.

At the time of the Passover, there were

*12

from two to three millions of Jews, gathered from all lands of the earth, in the capital, a multitude almost as great as that which had come out of Egypt, and of these it may be supposed that there was no stranger among them that had not heard of Jesus of Nazareth. (See Luke xxiv. 18.) So far as the hills and plains around Calvary gave room for it, all were covered with beholders, who now, however, were found in a wholly different mood from that which is described, verse 35. As the centurion glorified God by his confession, so did these beholders accuse themselves as sharers in the guilt of the death of Jesus, and as objects of the holy displeasure of God.

49. And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.

"Ps. xxxviii. 11; Matt. xxvii. 55; Mark xv. 40; see John xix. 25.

These women (as we are informed, Mark xv. 41; Luke viii. 2, 3) ministered unto Jesus of their substance while He was in Galilee. They had now come to Jerusalem for the same purpose. *Stood afar off.* They were, probably, not suffered to come near the cross, because it was surrounded by soldiers. *Beholding these things, i. e.,* the convulsions of nature and other wonders which attended the crucifixion of Jesus. These women stood the ground more firmly than the disciples of Christ. They witnessed, with intense feelings, His sufferings, from some convenient place, as near as they could approach. Christ has often curious and inquisitive spectators of His mysteries, who are only present in body, but love and fidelity were the things which kept these pious women there, as they were those which caused them at first to follow Jesus. His grace drew them to Him; His grace detained them.

50. ¶ And behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counselor, and he was a good man, and a just: 51. The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them: he was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the Kingdom of God.

"Matt. xxvii. 57, on which see notes; Mark xv. 42; John xix. 38. "Mark xv. 43; Luke ii. 25, 38.

Joseph, a counselor, probably, a member of the Sanhedrim. *Good man, and a just.* Good is here used of one who is kind, benevolent, compassionate, *just*, of one who is a strict observer of the law. *Had not consented, &c.* He had not agreed with his colleagues in conspiring to bring about

the death of Jesus, but he seems to have lacked the courage to protest against their judgment. *Of Arimathæa.* This was probably Ramathaim Tophim, lying a few miles west of Jerusalem. *Waited for the kingdom of God.* Waited for, or expected the coming of the Messiah. But this expression means more than an *indefinite* expectation that the Messiah *would* come, for all the Jews expected that. It implies that he believed *Jesus* to be the Messiah, and that he had waited for *Him* to build up the kingdom of God, that he was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews. He was a believer in Christ, but a timid one, not willing at first to acknowledge his faith. But God called him to a public profession of attachment, and gave him grace to evince it. So men often delay a profession of attachment to Christ. They cherish a secret love, they indulge a hope in the mercy of God, but they conceal it for fear of man. Whereas God requires that the attachment should be made known. Those who love the Saviour have no right to hide their light under a bushel. They are bound to profess Him before men. This is the command of God, and this is the way of peace.

52. This *man* went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. 53. And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.

*Matt. xxvii. 59, on which see notes; Mark xv. 46.

No one had a right to remove the body but the magistrate. God had raised up this distinguished counselor, and secret disciple for a special and most important vocation. The disciples of Jesus had fled, and if they had not, they had no influence with Pilate. Unless there had been a special application to Pilate in behalf of Jesus, His body would have been buried *that night* in the common grave with the malefactors, for it was a law of the Jews that the body of an executed man should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath. It needed no small measure of courage to do this. Jesus had just been condemned, mocked, spit on, crucified—the death of a slave, or the most guilty wretch. To show attachment for Him *now* was proof of sincere affection. *Begged the body of Jesus.* This shows that Joseph believed our Lord to be dead. As Joseph was a “rich man,” he could afford an honorable tomb. It is

a hopeful sign when men's faith grows in time of danger. Who shall despise the bruised reed, or the smoking flax, or the day of small things? Many a timid follower of Jesus, if he be sincere, is in time strengthened by God's grace for the front rank of the battle, and the most fearful onset of the enemy. *And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen*—a large square shroud or sheet. The head was wrapped separately in a napkin of this material. *Laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone.* We must figure to ourselves a large room cut horizontally into the solid rock for a vault. In this room we enter, from the open air, by a large door. On entering you would see small, long cells, or niches, cut into the solid, adamantine sides, as depositories of the corpses; or from this first main room you may enter one or several smaller apartments, in whose walls the niches for corpses are cut. A person could enter into the first main vault, and then into either of the smaller apartments. *Wherein never man before was laid.* Probably Joseph had the new vault made for his own family. It was so ordered, in the providence of God, that Jesus was laid in a tomb where never man before was laid, that there might be no suspicion about His identity when He rose, that it might not be alleged that another person had risen. Besides, by being buried here an important prophecy was remarkably fulfilled. (Isa. liii. 9.)

54. And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.—Matt. xxvii. 62.

As Saturday was the Jewish Sabbath, so Friday, the day of the crucifixion, was the *day of preparation*. The *preparation of the Jews* began strictly at three o'clock in the afternoon, but the name *preparation* was properly applied to the whole day. *The sabbath drew on*, i. e., the evening was approaching, at which time the Jewish Sabbath commenced.

55. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. 56. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments, and rested the sabbath day, according to the commandment.

*Luke viii. 2. *Mark xv. 47. *Mark xvi. 1. *Exod. xx. 10; see on Matt. xxvii. 61; xxviii. 1.

Which came with him from Galilee. (See chap. viii. 2.) *Beheld the sepulchre, &c.* The affection of these pious females never forsook them in all the trials and suffer-

ings of their Lord. With true love they followed Him to the cross; they came as near to Him as they were permitted to come, in His last moments; they followed Him when taken down and laid in the tomb. The strong, the mighty, the youthful had fled, but female love never forsook Him, even in His deepest humiliation. This is the nature of true love. In scenes of poverty, want, affliction and death, it shows its genuineness. That which lives there is genuine. That which turns away from such scenes is spurious. Let it be noted that these friends of our Lord, who could not possibly be mistaken as to His identity, were witnesses to the fact of His burial, and actually saw His body laid in the grave. They saw the linen in which He was wrapped, and could therefore testify two days after, that the very same linen was found wrapped together in the empty tomb. *And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments.* As but a short time remained until sunset, they must have hasted home with great diligence to the purchase and preparation of those ointments and spices. What they lacked, however, they procured when the Jewish

Sabbath had ended, which was at sunset preceding the morning of the resurrection. *Spices and ointments.* The former refers to myrrh, aloes and other preventives of putrefaction, and odorous perfumes, the latter to the ointments and oils with which bodies were anointed. *And rested on the sabbath day according to the commandment.* (See Exod. xx. 10.) Eager as they were to perform the last offices of love to their Lord, yet these pious women would not transgress the commandment. How blessed was the result! How unblest would have been the impatient yielding to their own inclination! Had they presented themselves sooner at the grave, they would have been grieved by the presence or molested by the rudeness of the Roman soldiers, while their purpose could not possibly have been effected. By waiting till the Sabbath was past, they found the guard dispersed, and their Lord already risen. They unbound those limbs alive which they had come to weep over and anoint in death. Let us bury and serve Jesus in the poor, since He has left them in His place, and has in them continual wants and necessities to be supplied.

1. By whom was Jesus led unto Pilate? 2. What was their accusation? 3. Why were they "the more fierce?" 4. To whom did Pilate send Jesus? 5. How did Herod receive Him? 6. Did he send Him back again to Pilate? 7. What course did Pilate pursue? 8. Who was made to carry the Saviour's cross? 9. What did Jesus say to the women that followed Him? 10. Who were led with Jesus to be put to death? 11. What prayer did Christ offer on the cross? 12. How did His enemies treat Him? 13. What supernatural events occurred. 14. What is said of the centurion? 15. What of Joseph of Arimathea? 16. What is said of the women approaching the sepulchre with a view to embalming our Lord's body?

CHAPTER XXIV.

1 *Christ's resurrection is declared by two angels to the women that came to the sepulchre.* 9 *These report it to others.* 13 *Christ himself appeareth to the two disciples that went to Emmaus: 36 afterwards he appeareth to the apostles, and reproveth their unbelief: 47 giveth them a charge: 49 promises the Holy Ghost: 51 and so ascendeth into heaven.*

In the histories of the resurrection, as given by the Evangelists, we may discern a Divine, overruling plan, giving a unity to the whole. This symmetry of plan could not have been fabricated by them; for

each, with evident unconsciousness, furnishes his share without knowing what the other contributes, so that the whole is made up of unintentional parts. Luke is less detailed and exact than the other historians, so that he must rather be complemented from them, than they from him. But, on the other hand, he furnishes us new contributions to the knowledge of the risen and glorified Lord, the contents and

tendency of which are in the most beautiful agreement with the broad humanistic character of his Gospel, as will appear from an examination of the individual accounts. (See note at close of John xx.)

NOW upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.
•Matt. xxviii. 1, on which see notes; Mark xvi. 1; John xx. 1. •Luke xxiii. 56.

Upon the first day of the week. This grammatically answers to the word *sabbath day* in verse 56 of the preceding chapter. The Jewish Sabbath was our Saturday. The first day of the week was our Sunday. Hence, this day of the week was called the Lord's day. (Rev. i. 9.) It is therefore recognized by inspiration as the sacred day in the Christian week. The day of the Saviour's sepulchral repose was the last of Jewish Sabbaths. The first day of the week has from that time to this succeeded to the honors of the fourth commandment. *Very early in the morning.* The visit of the women to the sepulchre may have covered hours, extending from the first start from home until they left the sepulchre. *They came unto the sepulchre.* The account is immediately connected with chap. xxiii. 56; and the women of whom Luke here makes mention can be no others than those of whom he said (verse 55), that they had come with Jesus from Galilee. This early visit of those holy women to the sepulchre is a strong proof of their love and affection. It has been said of woman:

"Not she with trait'rous kiss her Master stung,
 Not she denied Him with unfaithful tongue:
 She, when Apostles fled, could danger brave,
 Lest at His cross, and earliest at His grave!"

A woman was the first to eat the forbidden fruit. It was merciful in God to permit her to be the first to visit the sacred tomb. *Bringing the spices which they had prepared.* (See verse 56 of preceding chapter.) The spices brought were aromatics, substances used in embalming. The process of embalming and applying spices to dead bodies was usually repeated for several days together, in order that the aromatic and antiseptic compounds might have their full effect. (See Gen. i. 3.) *And certain others with them.* (See verse 10.) The diligence and earnestness of a soul which seeks God is represented in these holy

women. The good works which we would offer God ought to be preceded by two conditions: we must prepare ourselves to perform them with holy dispositions, and we must set about them without delay. (See on Acts xvi. 13.)

2. ^cAnd they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

^cMatt. xxviii. 2, on which see notes; Mark xvi. 4.

Rolled away. The stone was lying in the hollow, cut deep into the rock, so as to form the door; and must accordingly be rolled forth from this recess outward. How often there seems to be a great stone in the way of pious undertakings! How apt are Christians to be discouraged, and to say, "Who shall roll it away?" Let their answer be, "God." When he designs that a work should be performed, He removes every obstacle.

3. ^dAnd they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

^dMark xvi. 5; verse 23; see on Matt. xxvii. 2-6.

The Lord Jesus. This is the first time in the New Testament that our Saviour is so termed. The Lord—Christ—Jesus—are names He frequently has had. Here, after His resurrection as a conqueror, Luke calls Him "the Lord Jesus." God sometimes tries those who seek Him, when they think to find Him, in the exercises of piety. By whose hands had the body of Christ been taken away? Not surely by the priests and scribes and other enemies of our Lord! If they had had His body to show in disproof of His resurrection, they would gladly have shown it. Not by the Apostles and other disciples of our Lord. They were far too much frightened and dispirited to attempt such an action, and the more so when they had nothing to gain by it. One explanation, and only one, can meet the circumstances of the case, and that explanation is the one supplied by the angels in verse 6: "He is risen."

4. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:—John xx. 12; Acts i. 10.

They could not tell what to make of the facts before them—the stone being rolled away—the empty sepulchre—the linen clothes lying by themselves—the body gone. *Two men.* The angels are designated according to that form of manifestation which they had in the view of the women. *Stood by them.* We learn from Mark (xvi.

9), that on their first entrance the women saw but one angel, and he sitting, at which they were terrified. Luke adds, that, a moment after, two angels *stood* before them (the one being joined by a second, to confirm the truth by two witnesses), so that the words (verse 5) were uttered standing, the first angel, doubtless, having risen and being speaker for both. Thus, all these Evangelists are reconciled in regard to the number and positions of the angels. *In shining garments, i. e.*, in garments of dazzling brightness. Celestial beings are usually represented as clothed in white. (Acts i. 10; Dan. vii. 9; Rev. iii. 4, 5, iv. 4, vii. 13, 14.) It is asked sometimes, Whence did Jesus obtain His resurrection clothes? We might, with the same wisdom, ask, Whence did these angels obtain their robes of white? Who manufactures the angels' harps, or Gabriel's trumpet? The absence of Jesus Christ ought always to give us some perplexity, and to make us fear lest this has happened through our own fault. God never leaves those souls in trouble long whom He exercises by withdrawing Himself from them.

5. And as they were afraid, and bowed down *their faces to the earth*, they said unto them, *Why seek ye the living among the dead?*

The cause of their fear was, doubtless, the appearance of the angels; or the word *afraid* may be taken in a wider sense and means *agitated* or *troubled*. *Bowed down their faces to the earth*. These words express a respectful and reverential *declining their heads* and looking downward, that they may not appear to gaze, which is well known to have been forbidden to the Jews upon the sight of a celestial vision. (Ex. xix. 21; Judg. xiii. 20.) *They said*. One of these was speaker, although the act is naturally and properly referred to both. *Why seek ye the living*, or Him that liveth, *among the dead?* It appeared to them an act of folly to look for the Lord of *Life* in the abode of *Death*. They felt that His followers ought to have known that He was risen. We never seek Jesus Christ without benefit and comfort, when we seek Him sincerely and with our whole heart.

6. He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee. 7. Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise

again. 8. And they remembered his words, 9. And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

(Matt. xvi. 21 and xvii. 23; Mark viii. 31 and ix. 31; Luke ix. 22. *John ii. 22. *Matt. xxviii. 8; Mark xvi. 10.

He is not here—in the sepulchre—but is risen, and has come forth from the tomb. While the angels must be astonished at the dullness and forgetfulness of human creatures, they do not exult over them with pride, or upbraid them with harshness. They instruct in a gentle and condescending manner. Let us try to teach like them when we meet with those who are more ignorant than ourselves. *Remember how he spake unto you*. (Comp. ix. 22, xviii. 32; Matt. xvi. 21, xvii. 22, 23.) The angels referred them to Christ's own words. Had they duly observed and believed the prediction of the resurrection, they would easily have believed it when it came to pass, and therefore they would not have been so surprised and agitated as they seemed to be. The belief of mysteries is founded chiefly upon the word of Christ. *When he was yet in Galilee*. This expression shows, no less than many other similar ones, that the greater part of our Lord's discourses and sermons were delivered in Galilee.

Saying, &c. From this passage it would seem that our Lord had, even before leaving Galilee, assured these women that He was to be crucified and rise again. Perhaps they had assigned it a symbolic meaning and forgotten it; and now it is brought fresh by the angelic words to their memories and they realize its fulfillment. The dullness of memory is a common spiritual disease among believers, and is one among many proofs of our fallen and corrupt condition. Even after men have been renewed by the Holy Ghost, their readiness to forget the promises and precepts of the Gospel is continually bringing them into trouble. *Must be delivered*. The Greek words here mean, "It is necessary that He should be delivered," necessary for the fulfillment of prophecies and types, necessary for the redemption of sinners. Strange necessity of the humiliations and sufferings of Christ! How can sinners then pretend to be exempted from suffering! *Sinful men*. Unless reference is here made to the Gentiles (xviii. 32), it is probable

that the angel added this epithet *sinful* as his own expression of the character of all who had any agency in the crucifixion of Jesus. (See Acts ii. 23.) *The third day rise again.* (See notes on verse 3.)

Remembered, &c. (See notes on verse 7.) They had heard Christ's words, but made no use of them. Now after many days they call them to mind. We need recollection much more than information. A reasonable remembrance of the words of Jesus will help us to a right understanding of His providence.

Told all these things. Obediently to the express command of the angel, which Matthew and Mark state. *And to all the rest* of the disciples who were with the Apostles. These women were the first preachers of the resurrection of Christ.

10. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. 11. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

¹Luke viii. 3. ²Mark xvi. 11; verse 25.

Respecting the women here named, see notes on chap. viii. 2, 3. Some think it was from Joanna Luke derived his information of those circumstances, which he alone records. She is not mentioned except by Luke here, and in chap. viii. 3, whence we may conjecture she was *known* to him. *Other women.* These were probably the same spoken of in a former place, who ministered to our Lord. (Chap. viii. 3.)

Idle tales, i. e., words of no value. They had not forgotten, nor did they truly disbelieve their Lord's predictions. But in their dejection of mind they had lost the realizing power and could not grasp the fact. Besides, if our Lord is to rise again, He ought to come in the glory of His kingdom, appearing perhaps in the skies. (Mark ix. 10-31.) Hence they afterward ask Jesus, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i. 6.) It is quite unexpected, therefore, that His resurrection shall steal upon them, and be first announced to them by women. There must, they think, be some mistake, some hallucination of mind, some imposition practiced upon these simple, confiding women, and it will not do to suffer our hopes to be prematurely raised, and then dashed to the ground, leaving us in deeper

despondency than before. Their distrust in the report that Jesus had risen is to be attributed to its incredible nature, and not to any doubt on their part of the veracity of these women. How can we wonder at the unbelief of these disciples, when we see, after eighteen centuries of additional proof that Christ has risen from the dead, a general want of faith in that great event! Had the resurrection been a fable invented by those Apostles, would they have made themselves so little the heroes of the history?

12. Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre, and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.—John xx. 3, 6.

This was in consequence of the strange tidings of Mary of Magdala, who was the first to bring the report of the absence of the body from the sepulchre. (John xx. 2.) *And stooping down;* so as to look in the sepulchre. *Beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves.* That the clothes and napkin were carefully folded and deposited, indicated that there had been no violence or pillage, in which case everything would have been in confusion. The whole was as if a sleeper had risen from his couch, arranged the clothes, and departed. *Wondering in himself, &c.* It is the opinion of those who are best judges, that these words would be better rendered "departed to his own house wondering." The unbelief of the Apostles is one of the strongest evidences that Jesus rose from the dead. If the disciples and Apostles who were at first so backward to believe in Christ's resurrection, were at last so thoroughly persuaded of its truth that they preached it everywhere, and with every risk and loss, Christ must have risen indeed. The wonder of that great event infinitely surpasses the hopes and understandings of men.

13. ¶ And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs.—Mark xvi. 12.

The resurrection had taken place already, but the disciples had refused to credit it. The Sun of Righteousness, which seemed to have set forever, had again risen, with healing on his wings, but the disciples, not without grave fault of their own, are walking on in darkness still, in a darkness which in some sort they have made for themselves. Toward the close

of the joyful day which saw the Lord arise, two of them were walking together, oppressed with *sorrow*. Cleopas was one of them. (Verse 18.) He is not the same with Clopas (John xix. 25), but—Cleopatrus. The name of the other disciple is not given. Some have supposed he was Nathanael; others, Simon; others, Luke himself; others, Peter. Perfect certainty in the case is not only impossible, but unnecessary. That it could not have been one of the Apostles is evident from the fact that we are told that when these two disciples returned to Jerusalem, “they found the eleven gathered together.” He was one of the wider circle of disciples who were now together at Jerusalem. *Went that same day.* They had heard before they left some reports of what had taken place in the morning; that the tomb had been found open and empty, and that the women had seen “a vision of angels,” who said that Jesus was alive; but they seem to have attached no special importance to these reports. They were sorrowful for their Lord’s death and perplexed by the disappearance of His body, while they more than all deplored the frustration of their hopes that He would “have delivered Israel” from the Romans. *To a village, &c.* The village of Emmaus, north of Jerusalem, and mentioned by Josephus, to which they were journeying, ought not to be confounded, as it often has been, with another Emmaus in the plain of Judea, and not “*threescore furlongs*,” or something more than seven miles from Jerusalem, but not less than twenty from the capital city. All modern attempts to discover the site of this village have been unsuccessful.

14. And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

Their great theme of conversation was the death of Jesus and the circumstances which attended and followed that event. If the faith of these two disciples was somewhat weakened, yet they were at least filled with the remembrance of Christ’s mysteries; and for persons to love to talk of holy things is one means to raise and revive their hope.

15. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together, and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. — Matt. xviii. 20; verse 36.

Communed together is the same word in the original translated in verse 14, *talked together*. *Reasoned*—compared opposite views (as the Greek word implies) in regard to the late events. *Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.* As He appears to have been going the same way, He must have overtaken them and proceeded in company with them. The way to have Christ’s presence and company with us, is to be conversing of Christ and the things of Christ. Conference on spiritual subjects is a most important means of grace. (See Mal. iii. 16, 17; Heb. x. 24; 1 Thes. v. 11; Matt. xii. 34.)

16. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. — John xx. 14 and xxi. 4.

By the power which He had of appearing at will under various forms to human senses, our Lord at first concealed Himself from their knowledge, but finally resumed His well-known appearance to their vision. (See 2 Kings vi. 17–20.) We are dependent upon God for the use and exercise of our faculties and members. He has His secret and wise designs when He sometimes hides Himself from those whom He loves most. We may have Jesus Christ with us, and not know Him. We may walk along with Him in His ways and yet not see clearly into His conduct.

17. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?

The two disciples were evidently in earnest debate, not unduly striving nor contending, but still regarding from different points of view and, each urging upon the other his own interpretation of that stupendous event, of which they had just been the witnesses. What Jesus already knew He wished to hear from their own mouth, and began, therefore, with a question of the kind with which shortly before He had introduced His revelation of Himself to Mary. In interrupting their conversation He wished to induce them to grant Him a participation in their sadness. When we are conversing together, if the Lord were to draw near and inquire about the topics of our conversation, should we be always willing to reply? (Matt. xii. 34.) Worldly people *never* take pleasure in conversing about their souls, or Christ, or heaven. They delight in talking of the trifling vanities of time.

18. And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?—John xix. 25.

Cleopas. (See notes on verse 13.) *Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem?* The Greek words so rendered are somewhat peculiar. On the whole, it will be best to render them thus: "*Dost thou lodge alone at Jerusalem?*" "*Dwellest thou in solitude there, apart from the busy concourse of men, and thus so withdraw from acquaintance with all which is passing in the city, that no tidings have reached thee of the mighty and marvelous events which within the last few days have occurred?*" The whole verse is an important evidence of the publicity and notoriety of our Lord Jesus Christ's crucifixion. How many Christians are such strangers in the Church that Christ and His mysteries are almost unknown to them, after so many ages of predictions, miracles and instructions!

19. And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: 20. And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

¹⁹Matt. xxi. 11; ²⁰Luke vii. 16; ²¹John iii. 2, iv. 19 and vi. 14; ²²Acts ii. 22. ²³Acts vii. 22. ²⁴Luke xxiii. 1; ²⁵Acts xiii. 27, 28.

What things? He who asks a question does not affirm that He does not know the answer. Our Lord here, as well as at a later part of His history, draws out from the disciples their opinions, feelings and wishes. *Concerning Jesus of Nazareth.* The official name *CHRIST* they do not now take upon their lips, but respecting the name *Jesus of Nazareth*, they presuppose that it is sufficiently familiar to every one, in and out of Jerusalem. *Which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.* Grieved though the disciples were that they had lost their Lord, yet they had not *renounced* Him. They looked upon Him still, not as a deceiver, but a prophet mighty in deed and word. *Before God and all the people* must mean, "By the testimony both of God and the Jewish nation." (See Acts ii. 22; John xii. 17.) This was a brief confession of unbroken faith in the genuine character of the Crucified One. *And how the chief priests, &c.* The disciples were not afraid to declare that in respect to Jesus, an irreconcilable difference of opinion existed between them and the chiefs of the people.

21. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. ²²Luke i. 68 and ii. 38; ²³Acts i. 6.

Trusted that it had been he, &c. As if Cleopas, speaking also for his companion, had said, "We were full of hope, that this had been the Messiah so long expected by us, but this being the third day since He died, we fear we shall find ourselves mistaken." By the word *redeemed* is not meant merely spiritual deliverance, or redemption from all the moral evils, which mar the happiness of men, and turn away the soul from the true worship of God, but also deliverance from the Roman yoke. *And besides all this*, in addition to that cruel death inflicted on Him by our rulers, and sufficiently explaining the sadness which Thou hast noted in us, *to-day is the third day, &c.* "We might have had some glimpse of hope up to this present time, seeing that while He was alive He more than once uttered mysterious words not merely about His own death, words which we have found only too true, but also about a triumphant reversal of that doom of death, mysterious words about what should happen on the third day after His death, but this day has arrived, and is unmarked by any change." Alas! what is the spirit of man without the Spirit of God! It hopes for everything when there is the least foundation imaginable; and it despairs of everything in the time of the greatest hope. True faith waits for God's proper time, without any concern or anxiety. Christian hope is such only by patience and perseverance.

22. Yea, and certain women also of our company, made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; 23. And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. 24. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found *it* even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. ²⁵Matt. xxviii. 8; ²⁶Mark xvi. 10; ²⁷verses 8, 10; ²⁸John xx. 18. ²⁹Verse 12.

Yea, and certain women, &c., literally and better, *but moreover certain women, &c.* The hesitating, doubting disciples will not speak confidently of this that it was a mere subjective imagination of these women, as little pledge themselves to its objective reality. They speak of it therefore as a *vision of angels*, leaving this matter undecided. *And certain of them, &c.* They go on to tell of the visit of Peter and John to the sepulchre. But, having thus stated all

which gave them warrant for hope, they yet leave off with the mournful, desponding words—but *him they saw not*. (John xx. 3-10.) This incredulity of the disciples is mysterious; it makes a part of the economy of the Divine dispensations, and is instrumental in promoting the faith of all people. This they regarded as a sufficient excuse for their believing themselves obliged to bid farewell to all hope. God frequently permits faults in others for our instruction, and the falls of the most perfect are useful in supporting the most weak.

25. Then he said unto them, *Ye fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!* 26. *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?*

^aMark vii. 18 and viii. 17, 18; Heb. v. 11, 12. ^bVerse 46; Acts xvii. 3; 1 Peter i. 11.

Fools. The Greek word so rendered, means "wanting in thought, understanding and consideration," and does not imply any contempt. *And slow of heart to believe, &c.* Not hard of heart, but *slow, i. e.,* sluggishly disposed. The disciples believed *many* things which the prophets had spoken, but they did not believe *all*; they had believed as much as fell in with their preconceived notions, prejudices and opinions, which is so often the way with us all. Man's word, and woman's word, and angels' words, they had paid more or less heed to all these, but God's Word, that word which liveth and abideth forever, they had not built and established themselves on it. *Ought not Christ to have suffered, &c.* "Do you not find that the person described by the prophets in the Old Testament to be the Messiah, was to pass to His glory through blood? Why, then, is your hope so feeble in the person who suffered three days ago, when His death so well agrees with the predictions of the prophets, who foretold that the Messiah should be cut off, but not for Himself, and be smitten for the iniquities of His people?" *And to enter into his glory*—by ascension. Sometimes the great wisdom and grace of God make the diffidence of His people an occasion of further clearing up of the choicest truths to them. Let it be noted, 1. That with respect to God's purpose, and with relation to man's guilt, the death of Christ was necessary and indispensable. 2. That His resurrection and exaltation were as

necessary as His suffering. 3. That there was a meritorious connection between Christ's sufferings and His glory; His exaltation was merited by His suffering. *He was to drink of the brook in the way, and then He was to lift up His head.* Christians must expect suffering in their way to heaven. This was the way of the Head, and it must be that of the members.

27. *And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*

^aVerse 45. ^bGen. iii. 15, xxii. 18, xxvi. 4 and xlix. 10; Num. xxi. 9; Deut. xviii. 15. ^cPs. xvi. 10, xxii. and cxxii. 11; Isa. vii. 14, ix. 6, xl. 10, 11, l. 6 and liii.; Jer. xxiii. 5 and xxxiii. 14, 15; Ezek. xxxiv. 23 and xxxvii. 25; Dan. ix. 24; Mi. vii. 20; Mal. iii. 1 and iv. 2; See John i. 45.

This verse gives testimony to the Divine authority and Christian interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures. The denial of reference to Christ's death and glory in the Old Testament is a denial of Christ's own teaching. How delightful it must have been to hear the Lord explain in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself! But has He not promised His Holy Spirit to enlighten us when we search His holy Word? There are things concerning Himself in *all* the Scriptures. In the beginning of the Bible we find Him revealed as the Seed of the woman, and in the last chapter of the Old Testament we behold Him as the Sun of Righteousness, and in every intervening page we may discover Him as a suffering Lamb, or as a conquering Lion, as a tender shoot, or a strong branch, as a servant, or a king, as a child, or the Ancient of Days, now made low as a worm and now declared to be the mighty God, the great Creator, the glorious Jehovah.

28. *And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.*

^aGen. xxxii. 26 and xlii. 7; Mark vi. 48, on which see notes.

He made as though he would have gone further, literally, he was making as though, &c. There was no dissimulation here. He simply passed on as though He was intending to go farther. This He would have done if they had not detained Him with loving violence. In the nature of the thing it is proper and natural by an offer to give an occasion to another to do good actions, and in case it succeeds not, then to do what was intended not. And so the offer was conditional.

20. But ^athey constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.
^aGen. xix. 3; Acts xvi. 15.

Entreating with the utmost urgency, they invited Him in, and pointed Him to the sun hurrying to its setting, in the living feeling that their spiritual light also would set if He should leave their company. They wished to remind Him that He could not possibly continue His journey in the night (comp. Gen. xix. 2, 3; Judg. xix. 9), and desired that He should therefore turn in with them, since probably one of them possessed a dwelling at Emmaus, where a simple supper was awaiting them. The love of truth and the influence of charitable instructions, cause charity to grow and increase in the heart. We must use holy violence toward Christ in prayer, that our imperfections may not constrain Him to forsake us. (Gen. xxxii. 26.) We have great reason to redouble our importunities, when we see the Sun of Righteousness begin to decline and the light of faith to grow dim in ourselves, in our brethren, or in the Church, and more especially when the day of life is likewise far spent.

30. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.—Matt. xiv. 19.

The Lord, on the ground of a tacitly acknowledged superiority, acted as master of the house at the table of His host. *Blessed it.* The words *to bless*, mean only to give thanks, sometimes to pray for a blessing, that is, to pray for the Divine favor and friendship, to pray that what we do may meet God's approbation. In seeking a blessing on our food it means to pray that it may be made nourishing to our bodies, that we may have proper gratitude to God, the Giver, for providing for our wants, and that we may remember the Creator while we partake the bounties of His providence. Our Saviour *always* sought a blessing on His food. From *His* observing this practice, we may be sure that it is wise, and useful, and necessary. *And brake.* The loaves of bread among the Jews were made *thin* and *brittle*, and were therefore broken and not cut. As Christ was known to the disciples "in breaking of bread" (verse 35), this seems to imply that there was something in the act of

breaking bread by which they recognized at last with whom they had to do.

31. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

Their eyes were opened. These words, going before *they knew him*, and put evidently as the condition of their knowing, imply that it was not a mere natural conclusion which they drew from something which they saw Him do, but a supernatural enlightenment, a ceasing of the condition indicated at verse 16. *He vanished out of their sight.* There was a sudden vanishing of the Lord, a becoming invisible in an extraordinary way. This and other expressions concerning our Lord's risen body show plainly that it was a body in some wonderful way different from the common body of man. It was a real material body, and true flesh and blood. But it was a body capable of moving, appearing and disappearing after a manner that we cannot explain. We may fairly suppose that it was a pattern of what our own bodies will be after they are raised again. They will be true bodies, material and real, but bodies endowed with capacities of which now we know nothing. What must the mourners have felt when they discovered that the wonderful stranger was their own beloved Saviour! In the next world God can open our eyes, and enable us to know saints we have never seen, and to recognize friends we have long lost.

32. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?

They felt the power of His words. Christ not only put light into their heads, but heat also into their hearts, which burned all the while He communed with them. Oh, what an efficacious power is there in the words of Jesus, when set home upon the hearts of men by His Spirit. (See Ps. xxxix. 3; Jer. xx. 9.) We do not always perceive immediately the good effects produced in us by the word of God and by sermons, but we find them afterward. Jesus now converses with us by the way, and He opens to us the Scriptures. This He does in three ways: 1. By His dispensations. As the Word explains Providence, so Providence illustrates the Word. 2. By the labors of His servants. He replenishes His ministers, that they may dispense to

others; He gives them the tongue of the learned that they should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. 3. By the agency of His Holy Spirit. "He shall lead you into all truth." Means do not render His influence needless, revelation itself does not. The dial tells us the time, but the sun must shine upon it. The compass enables the mariner to steer, but not if it be placed in the dark.

33. And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them. 34. Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. 35. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. (John xx. 19, 26. 31 Cor. xv. 5.)

These two disciples could not remain at home after the joyful event that had happened. Convinced of the truth of Christ's resurrection, notwithstanding their fatigue, and the darkness of the night, and the roughness of the road, they started to Jerusalem, a distance of seven or eight miles, leaving all their private affairs, in order to comfort their brethren with the glad tidings of a Saviour risen, thus teaching us that all secular affairs, all private and particular business, must give place to the glory of God, and the comfort and salvation of souls. *Found the eleven gathered together.* If Thomas was there, he must have gone out immediately after the two disciples came in. Only by supposing this, can we reconcile this account with that which John gives of Christ's appearing when Thomas was not present. Probably Thomas was absent, hence only ten were present. As Paul calls the company of the Apostles *the twelve* (1 Cor. xv. 5), though Judas, the twelfth person, was dead, so Luke here calls them *the eleven*, though Thomas, the eleventh person, was absent, as appears from John xx. 24. *Saying*, to the two disciples who had just returned from Emmaus, *The Lord is risen indeed*, in very deed, really, truly. Thus the eleven, and they that were with them, were able to answer good tidings with good. The great flood-tide of joy was every moment rising higher and higher. *Told what things were done in the way*, narrated at length all that Jesus said and did after He joined Himself to their company by the way. *Was known of them in breaking of bread.* (See on verse 35.)

36. ¶ And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.—^hMark xvi. 14; John xx. 19; 1 Cor. xv. 5.

Jesus himself stood in the midst of them. This, as appears from John xx. 19, "when the doors were shut . . . for fear of the Jews." Whether our Lord passed through the doors miraculously, without opening them, or whether He opened them miraculously, as the angel did when he brought Peter out of prison, we cannot tell. (Acts xii. 10). In either case, there was a miracle. In any case, the appearance was sudden and instantaneous. *And saith unto them.* It is His voice—can they doubt their own hearing? *Peace be unto you.* Though this was the wonted salutation of peace, it had from those lips and in this moment an infinitely higher significance, which involuntarily reminded the disciples of the farewell benediction. (John xiv. 27). The fact of Christ's resurrection was to be the basis of their peace. Jesus, as the good Shepherd, seeks His sheep in all places, to comfort them, to strengthen their faith, and to show them, by His visible presence, that He knows the means to render Himself present to them in their wants, and whenever they are assembled together in His name, and according to His word.

37. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.—ⁱMark vi. 49.

Terrified and affrighted. Even the manner of Christ's entrance must have contributed to this, and however much they had begun to be prepared by all the events of the day for this meeting, yet this surprise must have come upon them the more strongly as the message of the angels had directed them to Galilee, and they, therefore, could by no means reckon on an appearance of the Master in the midst of them this very evening, at Jerusalem. In their hearts now prevails a mixture of light and darkness. *And supposed that they had seen a spirit.* Having in some degree discredited most of the previous reports, so now they distrusted the evidence of their own sight, and supposed, to their alarm, that what they saw was a *ghost* or *specter*. Terror at the appearance of any supernatural being, or any inhabitant of another world, seems an instinct of human nature, and is a strong indirect proof of

man's utter inability to meet God in peace without a Mediator.

38. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

Jesus hastened to dispel their illusion. *Why are ye troubled?* Here is the beginning of the rebuke of their unbelief. The question itself implies the groundlessness of their alarm and trepidation. *Why do thoughts, i. e., scruples of a discouraging nature, doubting and gainsaying thoughts, arise—spring up and grow in your hearts.* Here, as elsewhere, our Lord shows His knowledge of the inward man. The mind of man is strangely fruitful in such thoughts as are contrary to faith. In all extraordinary visits from God, it is good to be somewhat fearful and diffident, but not to such a degree as to be troubled, and to suffer all sorts of thoughts to rise in our hearts.

39. Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.—John xx. 20, 27.

In order to convince them not only of the reality, but also of the identity of His appearance, as well as of His triumph over death, Jesus would have them feel His hands and feet; nay, Himself, His body, and, moreover, especially the exposed places which bore the traces of the wounds of the cross. There was a direct appeal to two senses, touch and sight. How touching it must have been to see the Lord showing His own wounded hands and feet to His disciples, and inviting them to touch His sacred person! The Apostles enjoyed some privileges which we have never known. But the gracious Saviour, who condescended to eat with His disciples after He rose from the dead, has promised to admit *all* His people to intimate communion with Himself. Not one being who loved Him on earth will be refused admittance to His presence *in glory*. There they shall see Him as He is. There is a *spiritual* exhibition of Himself, in which Jesus says, "Behold my hands and my feet." They are to be seen: 1. In the Scripture of Truth, in its types, prophecies, history, doctrine. 2. In the ministry of the Gospel, which is called "the preaching of the cross." 3. In the teachings of the Holy Ghost, who takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to us, so that we see the Son, and believe on Him; and, 4. In the ordinance of the Lord's

Supper, where, by emblems and memorials the most simple and significant, before our eyes, Jesus Christ is evidently set forth crucified among us. And what should the sight remind us of? Beholding His hands and feet, we should think of the evil of sin, that required His suffering and death to put it away—and of the justice of God, that spared not His own Son when He became a surety for us—and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His kindness toward us.

A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. Our Lord here speaks of "a spirit," and the qualities of "a spirit," in such a manner that it is impossible to deny the existence of incorporeal beings. It is an interesting and by no means unprofitable question with what body our Lord came forth from the tomb, and appeared during the forty days He passed on earth after the resurrection, whether with the glorified one with which He ascended to heaven, or with the body unchanged from what it was previous to His death, the change to its glorified condition taking place at His ascension from Mount Olivet. We incline to the belief that the latter of these suppositions is the true one. But whilst we thus express a conviction that our Lord's body had not yet been changed to its full glorified condition, we will not deny that His general appearance must have been much altered from what it was before His passion. He was no longer the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. His work of toil and suffering had ended. His mien was now that of a king and conqueror. There was doubtless in His whole appearance and movements a calm dignity and majesty which awed His disciples, repressed undue familiarity, and checked vain curiosity, while, at the same time, His aspect of tenderness and love filled their hearts with peace, joy, and praise. Inasmuch, moreover, as our Lord's body, in its risen nature, possessed the power of invisibility at will, also a superiority to the control of gravitation, to the need of food, clothing, and other bodily necessities, as well as the power of resuming traces, constituent parts, or substantive properties of its former self, such as *wounds, limbs, flesh and bones*, must it not have been, that

His body, though the same in substance, was endowed with some new properties and powers?

40. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet.

Christ retains the scars of His wounds, 1. To encourage us to suffer for Him, by showing us how much he loves sufferings. 2. For the comfort and consolation of His people. 3. For the confusion of the lost. 4. To afford us a sanctuary or refuge in our temptations and troubles. 5. To show us fountains of grace continually open to us in our wants. As Jesus showed His wounds here to His disciples, to enforce His instructions to them, so He showed them to His Father to enforce His intercessions with Him. He appears in heaven *as a lamb that had been slain*. (Rev. v. 6.) His *blood speaks*. (Heb. xii. 24; Zech. xiii. 6, 7.)

41. And while they yet believed not ^{for} joy, and wondered, he said unto them, 'Have ye here any meat?' (Gen. xlv. 23. *John xxi. 5.

Believed not for joy. First they believed not from the strangeness of the matter, next they believed not because the fact in their eyes was too terrible for them to be willing to believe, and now they believe not from joy. Perhaps Jacob was in a similar frame of mind. (Gen. xlv. 26.) *Have ye any meat?* "Anything eatable, any food." Now that matters have come so far, our Lord rests not until He has completely accomplished His work on His disciples. The slowness and backwardness of the disciples show that they did not believe lightly and rashly. Everything here seems to oppose the belief of the resurrection—amazement, fear, a prepossession of imagination, joy and admiration; the evidence alone of the proofs here given bears down all before it, and establishes the belief of this truth.

42. And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. 43. And he took it, and did eat before them, — Acts x. 41.

Broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. Some think, a kind of cake, or bread, in use among them. Eating might consist with, though it were not needful to, that kind of life to which Christ was risen. It is evident from the appeal of our Lord to the *senses* of the Apostles, that no greater certainty can in this world be had of anything than the testimony of our eyes, ears, and other senses, and that it is unreason-

able in the highest degree to require men to believe in direct opposition to them. The honeycomb was a frequent food with the ancients, nearly akin to that of John the Baptist. The honey of bees is frequently found in Palestine, in clefts of the rock, and in hollow trees. The viands here named constituted, perhaps, the remains of the already ended supper of the disciples. Peter lays great stress on the fact that the disciples had eaten with Jesus. (Acts x. 41.)

44. And he said unto them, "These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

*Matt. xvi. 21, xvii. 22 and xx. 18; Mark viii. 31; Luke ix. 22 and xviii. 31; verse 6.

Our Lord holds here, before He parts from His disciples, a grand retrospective review of His now almost accomplished earthly career. He refers them to the words He had so often spoken to them, saying that the predictions about Him must be accomplished. *All things* must be fulfilled, whether concerning His sufferings, or His kingdom—the *hardest*, and the *heaviest*, even the *vinegar*—He could not die till He had that, because He could not till then say, *It is finished*. *Must be fulfilled*. God had *joined together* the things in the prediction, and they could not be *put asunder* in the event. The three chief portions of the Old Testament were named by Christ, to indicate that He pointed to the Scripture in its unity. *The law of Moses*, that is, the Pentateuch, or the *five* books written by Moses; the *prophets*, embracing not only the books which are purely prophetic, but those historical books that were written by prophetic men; the *Psalms*, embracing the other writings, which they called the *Hagiographa*. In these various ways did God, of old, reveal His will, but all proceeded from one and the self-same Spirit, who, by them, gave notice of the coming and kingdom of the Messiah, *for to Him bare all the prophets witness*. Let us be careful to seek Jesus Christ in the Old Testament, as well as in the New. He is in all parts thereof, and in all He frames the heart of a Christian. The Prophets exercise our faith, the Psalms nourish our hopes, and the Law tries and makes known our love.

43. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures,—Acts xvi. 14.

It is one thing to open the Scriptures themselves, and another to open the disciples' understandings to perceive them. Christ did the latter, imparting to them a direct, Divine illumination, by which they obtained a clear insight of the spirituality of the Messianic kingdom, as revealed in the Old Testament; probably, also, by giving them now the first-fruits of the spirit of prophecy, which fell more plentifully on them at the day of Pentecost. The understanding of the true sense of the Scriptures comes only from Jesus Christ. It is the fruit of humility, prayer, true spiritual poverty, and of fidelity in bringing the mind into subjection to the yoke of faith.

46. And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.
v. Verse 26; Ps. xxii. 1; Isa. l. 6 and liii. 2, &c.; Acts xvii. 3; Dan. ix. 21; Acts xiii. 38, 46; 1 John ii. 12; 1 Gen. xii. 3; Ps. xxii. 27; Isa. xlix. 6, 22; Jer. xxxi. 34; Hos. ii. 23; Mal. iv. 2; Mal. i. 11.

Thus refers to the death and resurrection of Christ. *It behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.* This was done to fulfill the prophecies concerning Himself. (Isa. liii. 1-3; Ps. ii. 2; lxix. 21; Isa. l. 5-7; lii. 14; Dan. ix. 26; Isa. liii. 4-6, 10; Ps. xvi. 10, 11; Isa. lii. 13, liii. 8, 10, 12; Matt. xii. 40.) It behooved Him "to suffer and rise from the dead:" 1. In the execution of His *Prophetic office*, as a Teacher come from God, that He might confirm and show the certain truth and the deep importance of His doctrine, and manifest Himself to be the "faithful and true witness." 2. In the execution of His *Sacerdotal office*, as the High Priest of our profession. He suffered, to learn to sympathize with us in our sufferings (Heb. v. 2, iv. 15, 16, ii. 17, 18); to atone for our sins by offering Himself a sacrifice. (Heb. v. 1; comp. vi. 20, ii. 17, vii. 27, ix. 11, 12, 24, 27, 28, x. 5-14; Isa. liii. 5, 6, 10; 2 Cor. v. 21; Rom. iii. 24; iv. 25.) He rose, that He might be able to succor us in our temptations; that He might give us full proof that the sacrifice He had offered for our sins was accepted, and lay a foundation for our confidence in Him, that He might ascend, and "appear in the presence of God" as our Advocate and Inter-

cessor. (John xvi. 7; Heb. i. 3; iv. 14; ix. 12; Acts ii. 32, 33.) 3. Of His *Regal office*, as the King and Governor of His people. (Rom. xiv. 9; Phil. ii. 5-9; John x. 10-18; Acts xx. 28; 1 Cor. vi. 20; 1 Peter i. 18, 19; Heb. xiii. 20; 1 Peter ii. 25; x. 12, 13; John x. 27, 28.) 4. Christ suffered and rose as our *Pattern and Fore-runner*. (Rom. viii. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12; 1 Peter ii. 21, iii. 14-18, iv. 12-16; 1 Cor. xv. 20; John xiv. 1-3; Rom. vi. 3, 4; Col. ii. 13, iii. 1; Eph. ii. 1.)

That repentance and remission of sins should be preached. Repentance which the disciples preached during Christ's life (Mark vi. 12), was preached by them in all their sermons after His death, resurrection and ascension. (Acts ii. 38; iii. 19; xvii. 30.) The original word rendered *repentance* means *after-consideration or reflection*. Repentance begins in looking back, or reflecting, with attention and care upon our past conduct, as our actions, sins of omission and commission, our words, tempers, desires, motives, ends, thoughts; comparing them with the will of God as signified in His Word in general, and His law in particular, and considering the obligation laid on us to obey Him from duty, gratitude and interest. *A change of mind*, arising from the former. This change takes place in the *understanding*, the eyes of which are opened to see ourselves as we are (Titus iii. 2); in the *conscience* (Acts ii. 37; xvi. 30; Matt. xi. 28; Heb. ix. 14); in the *affections*, including shame and sorrow for past sin, hatred to and fear of sin, and desire for and delight in holiness (2 Cor. vii. 10, 11); in the *will*, as to its choice, leading us to prefer holiness to sin, God to the world, the soul to the body; as to its intention, inducing us now to propose God's glory as our end in everything; as to its determination, being resolved and fixed for God and eternal life; in the *life*. (Luke iii. 8.) *Remission of sins* was preached continually to all the penitent by Christ. (Luke vii. 47, 48, xv., xviii. 13, 14, xix. 9), and by the Apostles (Acts ii. 38, iii. 19, v. 31, x. 43, xiii. 38.) It implies and is followed by acquittance from guilt, condemnation and wrath, acceptance with God, His favor, adoption into His family, regeneration, sanctification, a title to and fitness for

His kingdom. (See 1 John i. 9, Prov. xxviii. 13; Isa. i. 16-18.) *His name.* In Christ's name as a *prophet*. (Deut. xviii. 15; Acts iii. 22; Ezek. xviii. 21, 31, 32; Rom. i. 16; Acts x. 43, xiii. 38; Rom. iii. 24, 25.) *On His authority and in imitation of His example*—in His name as a *king* (John viii. 21)—in His name as a *suffering man* (Isa. liii. 5, 6; John xii. 32); in His name as the *incarnate God*, and as the *final judge*. (Acts xvii. 31; 2 Thes. i. 7-10.) *Among all nations*—all have sinned, need repentance (Rom. iii. 23; Acts xvii. 30), and all being guilty, need remission of sins. (See 2 Cor. v. 15.) *Beginning at Jerusalem.* The Gospel was to be *begun* to be preached at Jerusalem, 1. Because Christ was first promised to the Jews, and therefore must first be offered to them. (Rom. ix. 4, 5.) 2. The foundation of the Gospel must be laid at that place where it was first attacked. 3. Their day of grace was likely to be the shortest. 4. It was foretold that the Gospel should go forth from thence. (Isa. ii. 3, 4; Mi. iv. 2; Ps. cx. 2; Isa. xxviii. 16; xl. 5-9.) The Apostles were to begin at Jerusalem, to furnish a striking example of the riches and freeness of the grace of Christ, in the offer of it to the vilest of sinners. "Let them that struck the rock drink first of its refreshing streams, and let them that drew my blood be first welcome to its healing virtue." If the murderers of Christ were not excepted from the offers of mercy, who need despair?

48. And ye are witnesses of these things.
 50 John xv. 27; Acts i. 8, 22, ii. 32 and iii. 15.

To be "witnesses chosen before of God" of the doings and sayings of Jesus was the very essence and object of the Apostolic office. (Acts x. 41, i. 8, 22, xxvi. 16.) Peter, at a later date, said: "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, . . . but were *eye witnesses*." To the same effect is the testimony of John, near the close of the first century. (1 John i. 1.)

49. ¶ "And, behold, I send the promise of the Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."
 51 Isa. xlv. 3; Joel ii. 28; John xiv. 16; 26, xv. 26, xvi. 7; Acts i. 4 and ii. 1, &c.

And, behold. A new point is here presented parallel with Acts i. 4, 5; John xiv. 16, 26, xv. 26. *I send.* Christ represents

Himself as acting conjointly with the Father in sending the Spirit. *The promise of the Father.* The Holy Spirit is here referred to, whom Christ had repeatedly before His death promised. He calls the Spirit *the promise of the Father*, not because the Spirit was promised to Him, nor merely inasmuch as God has promised the bestowment of the gifts of the Spirit by prophetic oracles, but with retrospective reference to utterances like John xiv. 16, &c., and to the symbolical act, John xx. 22. *Upon you.* The language implies effusion. *Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem.* This must have been uttered after the return to Jerusalem from the visit to Galilee. (Matt. xxviii. 16-20; John xxi. 1-24.) This command was repeated just before His ascension. (Acts i. 4.) *Ye be endued, clothed with power* as with a garment; *from on high*, from heaven, from the abode of the Father, who had promised through His Son the gift of the Spirit. Comfortable promise this, for who could believe that a God died and rose again, who could hope for the remission of his sins, who could love repentance and the cross, without the Holy Spirit! Retirement and repose were by Christ judged necessary for the Apostles and disciples, in order to their receiving the Holy Ghost who is the strength of the weak; and can we judge otherwise of ourselves?

50. ¶ And he led them out as far as to Bethany: and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.—Acts i. 12.

Either during or after this conversation, Jesus led them out—over the very ground He had traversed with them six weeks before, when He entered the city to suffer, as far as Bethany, or rather over the brow of the Mount of Olives, where it descends to Bethany, which village was about two miles from Jerusalem. When Jesus thus went forth at their head, as leader and chief, toward the village which was so much endeared to Him, it was for the last time, and all His troubles were over. *He lifted up his hands, and blessed them.* This circumstance is full of meaning. The blessing was significant. It showed the spirit in which our Lord parted from His Church on earth, and was an earnest of what He would do for them in heaven. It typifies His full assumption of His priestly office,

and gives assurance of what He will yet do when He comes again.

51. *And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.
 *2 Tim. ii. 11; Mark xvi. 19; John xx. 17; Acts i. 9; Eph. iv. 8.

There are other accounts of the ascension of Jesus in Mark xvi. 19, 20; Acts i. 9-12, on which see notes.

He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. As He blessed them He began to ascend. And as He ascended, the cloud gathering beneath His feet at once bore Him upward, and closed Him from their sight. The Apostles beheld Him as He ascended, and continued to watch till they could see Him no more. Two angels, clothed in white apparel, remained below to comfort them. They did this with the promise: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so *come* in like manner as ye have seen Him *go* into heaven." See Zech. xiv. 4; Rev. i. 7, in which we see that the words of the Prophet and Apostle agree with those of the angels. Whither did the person of Jesus ascend? Into heaven. But where is heaven? We know not its locality in the immensity of the universe. Astronomers, indeed, tell us that there is a center of our solar system, and that is the sun. But the sun is a member of a larger system, which has its center or sun. And this is a member of a still grander system revolving around its center. At last there is a center of the whole universe. At that center resides the great MOVER of the whole. There, doubtless, is the central residence of God. To that center, perhaps, Jesus departed. At any rate, heaven is *away* from this earth, and away from this earth is up. Wherever heaven is, therefore, it is *up*. The language of Scripture, the language of humanity, the language of our childhood, herein is true, and strictly in accordance with the highest science. Let us think of Jesus where He now is, and let us inquire what is our duty with regard to Him. "Seeing, then, that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." We need not be afraid to own Him, for He is able to take care of us, however we may be exposed. We need not be ashamed to avow Him, for He has

everything to induce us to glory in Him. Let us follow Christ in our thoughts and affections. Why seek we the living among the dead? He is not *here*. He is in heaven; and where our treasure is, there should our hearts be also. Let us as Christians rejoice in the expectation of being forever with our Lord. "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." The anchor that holds the ship is cast out of it, and our hope must go out of ourselves. The anchor lays hold of something invisible, and our hope enters heaven. Yet it would find nothing as the ground of its grasp *there* if *He* was not there—but *He is* there, and there for *us*, and *His* being there insures our arrival. He is the forerunner of the whole company.

52. *And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: 53. And were continually *in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.
 *Matt. xxviii. 9, 17. *Acts ii. 46 and v. 42.

How did the Apostles feel now that they had lost their Lord? *They worshipped him.* Religious worship is here intended. It was not merely reverence to a present superior, but the adoration of an absent Supreme. (See Acts i. 24, vii. 59, 60, ix. 10-17.) They worshiped Him as God, the eternal Son of God, being so declared by the resurrection from the dead, and by His ascension into heaven before their eyes, from whence He will come to judge both the quick and the dead. *And returned to Jerusalem with great joy.* Though still in the midst of their enemies they *rejoiced*; though deprived of the personal presence of their Lord, they *rejoiced*; though they knew that in the world they would have much tribulation, they *rejoiced*. And why? Because they believed the promises. They knew that Jesus was gone to the Father to make intercession for them, and that He would return again to make *them* blessed forever. (See 1 Peter iii. 22.) The Apostle John, in the last page of the Bible, and almost the last verse, has recorded this prayer: "Even so, come Lord Jesus." Do we partake in the joy of these holy Apostles? Jesus loves all who love Him, whether they be the greatest of His Apostles, or the weakest

of His lambs. "He ever liveth to make intercession (not for *Apostles* only, but) for *all* who come unto God by Him." When He comes again He will say to all such, "Come, ye blessed of my Father." *And were continually in the temple, &c.* They repaired to the temple continually (*i. e.*, at all fit times), in preference to any other place, since there the Jews were accustomed to pray and return thanks to God, especially on momentous occasions. Christ, who obliged His disciples to prepare themselves for the coming of the Holy Ghost by the exercise of praise, thanksgiving and prayer, thus teaches us how we ought to prepare ourselves for the same. Churches are the House of God. There He loves to receive our homage, to shed forth His Spirit, and to communicate Him-

self to His creatures. "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." (Ps. lxxxvii. 2.) *Amen* is a Hebrew word which, when prefixed to an assertion, signifies *assuredly, certainly*, or, emphatically, *so it is*; but when it concludes a prayer, *so be it*, or *so let it be*, is its manifest import. In the former case it is *assertive*, or assures of a truth, or a fact, and is an asseveration, and is properly translated *indeed*. (John iii. 3.) In the latter case it is *petitionary*, and, as it were, epitomizes all the requests with which it stands connected. (Num. v. 22; Rev. xxii. 20.) The promises of God are *Amen*, because they are made sure and certain in Christ. (2 Cor. i. 20.) *Amen* is one of the titles of our blessed Saviour (Rev. iii. 14) as He is the faithful and true witness.

1. What took place on the first day of the week? 2. What did the two men in shining garments say to the women in the sepulchre? 3. To whom did the women tell what they had heard and seen? 4. What did Peter do? 5. What occurred as two of the disciples went to Emmaus? 6. What did Christ reply to Cleopas? 7. What took place as Christ and the disciples sat at meat? 8. What did the disciples then do? 9. How did Jesus appear to the disciples? 10. What did He say to them after He had opened their understanding? 11. To what place did He lead them? 12. How did He ascend to heaven? 13. What did the disciples then do?

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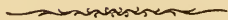
THE GOSPELS AND ACTS,

FOR

PULPIT, SUNDAY-SCHOOL, AND FAMILY.

ACTS.

ALFRED NEVIN, L.B., D.D.



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PREFACE

TO THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

The fifth historical book of the New Testament, bearing this title, obtained it at a very early period, though sometimes the epithet *holy* was prefixed to *Apostles*, and sometimes also it was reckoned among the Gospels, and called the *Gospel of the Holy Ghost*, or the *Gospel of the Resurrection*. The common designation, however, has chiefly been that which is still in use. Whether this title proceeded from the author himself is doubtful, but it is certainly very ancient, and occurs in the earliest notices of this book. The work is so called in the Muratorian Canon, and by Clemens Alexandrinus and Tertullian.

IMPORTANT PECULIARITY OF THE BOOK.

The Acts of the Apostles is distinguished from the other books of the New Testament by this important peculiarity, that it comes much in contact with many well-known facts of the ancient world, and thus admits of many illustrations from external sources of information. The Epistles treat chiefly of Christian doctrine and practice, and for the most part can only be explained and illustrated by internal criticism and mutual comparison. The scene of the Gospel narratives, on the other hand, is almost wholly confined to the narrow limits of Palestine, and profane history can therefore afford very little assistance in their study. But the Acts of the Apostles touches at every point on the history of the world. Countries and cities renowned in ancient times were visited by Paul and his companions, and persons who played an important part in the history of the world have also their places in the history of the Church. The book of Acts also contains, as already hinted, materials, more particularly in its later portion, of immense value for establishing the authenticity and genuineness of the New Testament writings. It has been by means of a minute and careful comparison of the accounts in these with the allusions in Paul's epistles, that a most convincing, and, we may say, an irrefragable argument has been formed in proof of the historical verity of both, by Paley in his *Horæ Paulinæ*, a work which will ever remain a monument of his fine discrimination, practical sagacity and solid judgment.

AUTHORSHIP.

Respecting the authorship of this book there can be no ground for doubt or hesitation. It is, unquestionably, the production of the same writer by whom the third of the four Gospels was composed, as is evident from the introductory sentences of both. (Comp. Luke i. 1-4, with Acts i. 1.) That this writer was Luke may be very satisfactorily proved in both cases. With regard to the book now under notice, tradition is firm and constant in ascribing it to Luke. From the book itself, also, it appears that the author accompanied Paul to Rome where he went to that city as a prisoner (xxviii.)

Now, we know from two epistles written by Paul at that time, that *Luke* was with him at Rome (Col. iv. 14; Phil. 24), which favors the supposition that he was the writer of the narrative of the Apostle's journey to that city. The resemblance of style in this book to that of the third Gospel, also favors the opinion that Luke was its author. (For the history of Luke, see Preface to his Gospel.)

GENUINENESS.

The genuineness of the Acts of the Apostles has ever been recognized in the Church. It is mentioned by Eusebius among the *ὁμολογούμενα*. It is first directly quoted in the epistle of the churches of Lyons and Vienne to those of Asia and Phrygia (A. D. 177); then repeatedly and expressly by Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and so onward. The only parties in primitive times by whom this book was rejected were certain heretics, such as the Ebionites, the Marcionites, the Severians, and the Manicheans, whose objections were entirely of a dogmatical, not of a historical nature; indeed, they can hardly be said to have questioned the authenticity of the book, they rather cast it aside because it did not favor their peculiar views.

TIME AND PLACE AT WHICH THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN.

These we are left to gather entirely from indirect notices. It seems probable that the place of writing was Rome, and the time about two years from the date of Paul's arrival there, as related in chap. xxviii. Had any considerable alteration in the Apostle's circumstances taken place before the publication, there can be no reason why it should not have been noticed. And on other accounts also this time was by far the most likely for the publication of the book. The arrival in Rome was an important period in the Apostle's life: the quiet which succeeded it seemed to promise no immediate determination of his cause. A large amount of historic material had been collected in Judea, and during the various missionary journeys; or, taking another and not less probable view, Nero was beginning to undergo that change for the worse which disgraced the latter portion of his reign: none could tell how soon the whole outward repose of Roman society might be shaken, and the tacit toleration which the Christians enjoyed be exchanged for bitter persecution. If such terrors were imminent, there would surely be in the Roman Church prophets and teachers who might tell them of the storm which was gathering, and warn them that the records lying ready for publication must be given to the faithful before its outbreak or event. Such *à priori* considerations would, it is true, weigh but little against presumptive evidence furnished by the book itself; but arrayed, as they are, in aid of such evidence, they carry some weight, when we find that the time naturally and fairly indicated in the book itself for its publication is that one of all others when we should conceive that publication most likely. This would give us for the publication the year 63 A. D., according to the most probable assignment of the date of the arrival of Paul at Rome.

DESIGN WITH WHICH IT WAS WRITTEN.

The book commences with an inscription to one Theophilus, who was probably a man of birth and station. (See on Luke i. 3.) But its design must not be supposed to be limited to the edification of Theophilus, whose name is prefixed only, as was customary then as now, by way of dedication. The readers were evidently intended to be members of the Christian Church, whether Jews or Gentiles, for its contents are such as are of the utmost consequence to the whole Church.

The "Acts of the Apostles," says a distinguished Biblical scholar, "is not to be so viewed, as if what we had chiefly to look for here were a historical account of the life and labors of our Lord's Apostles after He had left them. Were that all, every one must be struck with the extremely defective nature of the work, and must also feel that in its object it occupies a much lower position than the Gospel of which it purports to be the continuation." But by the sacred historian himself, the two are most closely connected together: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all

that Jesus began both to do and teach." It was but the *beginning* of His mediatorial agency that the historical account in the Gospel had embraced, though it reaches from His birth to His resurrection—*now*, in this second account, he proceeds to exhibit the continued operation of that agency, and the results it accomplished among men. Jesus still is the great subject of the Evangelist's delineations—the real spring of the movements he describes; only Jesus withdrawn within the veil, and from the sanctuary above operating by the grace of His Spirit upon the souls of men, and actually setting up the kingdom, which it was the purpose of His mission to establish in the world. Hence, Jesus, as the already exalted King of Zion, appears, on all suitable occasions, as the ruler and judge of supreme resort, the Apostles are but His representatives and instruments of working. It is He who appoints the twelfth witness, that takes the place of the fallen Apostle (i. 24); He who, having received the promise from the Father, sends down the Holy Spirit with power (ii. 33); He who comes near to turn the people from their iniquities and add them to the membership of His Church (ii. 47, iii. 26); He who works miracles from time to time by the hand of the Apostles, who sends Peter to open the door of faith to the Gentiles, who instructs Philip to go and meet the Ethiopian, who arrests Saul in his career of persecution and makes him a chosen vessel to the Gentiles; in short, who continually appears presiding over the affairs of His Church, directing His servants in their course, protecting them from the hands of their enemies, and in the midst of much that was adverse, still giving effect to their ministrations, and causing the truth of the Gospel to grow and bear fruit.

We have therefore in this book, not merely a narrative of facts, which fell out at the beginning of the Christian Church, in connection more especially with the apostolic agency of Peter and Paul, but we have, first of all and in all, the ever-present controlling administrative agency of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, shedding forth the powers of His risen life, and giving shape and form to His spiritual and everlasting kingdom. If this leading idea is kept in view, it will present the book of Acts to the mind as in scope and aim perfectly akin to the Gospels, and will also supply a connecting thread to bind together into a consistent whole the apparently isolated and somewhat occasional notices it contains. Nor, if contemplated in the light now suggested, will it appear accidental that the history should terminate with Paul's work at Rome, as it commences with the work of the Twelve in Jerusalem, for the commission of Christ to His ambassadors was, that they should preach the Gospel among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, and in Rome, the center and capital of the heathen world, the different nations might be said to have their representation. The truth of the Gospel, when once fairly planted there, might well be regarded as in the act of taking possession of the world. It is probable, however, that other and more personal reasons conspired to induce the Evangelist to conclude his narrative when it reached the period of Paul's imprisonment at Rome. That period formed a sort of terminating point, as well as a long pause in the Apostle's labors, and we can easily suppose that with the materials collected of the past, and amid the uncertainties of the future, the Evangelist might deem it proper to bring his account to a close.

STYLE.

The style of Luke in the Acts is, like his style in his Gospel, much purer than that of most other books of the New Testament. The Hebraisms which occasionally occur are almost exclusively to be found in the speeches of others which he has reported. These speeches are indeed, for the most part, to be regarded rather as summaries than as full reports of what the speaker uttered; but as these summaries are given in the speaker's own words, the appearance of Hebraisms in them is as easily accounted for as if the addresses had been reported in full. His mode of narrating events is clear, dignified and lively, and, as Michaelis observes, he "has well supported the character of each person whom he has introduced as delivering a public harangue, and has very

faithfully and happily preserved the manner of speaking which was peculiar to each of his orators."

ARRANGEMENT OF THE ACTS.

The work is divided into two distinct parts: the first part, embracing the first twelve chapters, contains an account of the progress of Christianity among the Jews, and of its extension to the Gentiles; and the second part, embracing the remaining sixteen chapters, contains an account of the missionary journeys of Paul. These two parts, again, admit of various subdivisions. Thus the first part may be divided into four subdivisions—the history of the Church before Pentecost, the progress of the Church in Jerusalem, its progress in Judea and Samaria, and its extension to the Gentiles. The second part also admits of a four-fold subdivision, namely, the three missionary journeys of Paul, each of them beginning at Antioch and terminating at Jerusalem, and the account of his imprisonment. According to this plan, the Acts of the Apostles admits of the following arrangement:

PART I. PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL IN JUDEA, AND ITS EXTENSION TO THE GENTILES.

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|---|-----------|------------|
| 1. History of the Church before Pentecost, | | i. |
| 2. Progress of the Gospel in Jerusalem, | | ii.-vii. |
| 3. Progress of the Gospel in Judea and Samaria, | | viii., ix. |
| 4. Extension of the Gospel to the Gentiles, | | x.-xii. |

PART II. THE MISSIONARY LABORS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.

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|--------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| 1. Paul's first missionary journey, | | xiii.-xv. 35. |
| 2. Paul's second missionary journey, | | xv. 36-xviii. 22. |
| 3. Paul's third missionary journey, | | xviii. 23-xxi. 16. |
| 4. Paul's imprisonment, | | xxi. 17-xxviii. |

CHRONOLOGY.

The Acts of the Apostles evidently proceeds in a chronological order, but it is extremely difficult to fix the precise dates of the different events recorded. We give, for the sake of reference, a table containing a list of the Roman emperors, and of the governors of Judea, along with the chief events mentioned in the Acts, chronicled under the years in which these events most probably occurred:

TABLE.

EMPERORS.	JEWISH GOVERNORS.	PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN THE ACTS.
33. Tiberius.	Pontius Pilate.	{ The ascension? miracle of Pentecost—Acts i. ii.
34. . . .	. . .	{ During these years, the events recorded in Acts iii.—vi. 7 probably occurred.
35. . . .	. . .	{ Martyrdom of Stephen; evangelistic labors in Samaria—Acts vi. 8—viii.
36. . . .	. . .	{ Conversion of Paul?—Acts ix. 1-19.
37. Caligula.	Marullus.	
38. . . .	. . .	
39. . . .	. . .	
40. . . .	. . .	{ Paul's first visit to Jerusalem; he retires to Tarsus—Acts ix. 23-31.
41. Claudius.	Herod Agrippa I.	{ The missionary labors of Peter; conversion of Cornelius; the church at Antioch; Paul at Antioch—Acts ix. 32—xi.
42. . . .	. . .	{ Death of Herod; Paul's second visit to Jerusalem—Acts xii.
43. . . .	Cuspius Fadus.	
44. . . .	. . .	
45. . . .	Tiberius Alexander.	{ Paul's first missionary journey—Acts xiii. xiv.
46. . . .	. . .	{ During these years, Paul appears to have been at Antioch, where he abode long time with the disciples—Acts xiv. 28.
47. . . .	Ventidius Cummanus.	{ Council of Jerusalem; Paul's third visit. Commencement of his second missionary journey—Acts xv.—xvi. 5.
48. . . .	. . .	{ Paul in Macedonia and Achaia—Acts xvi. 6—xviii. 1.
49. . . .	. . .	{ Paul at Corinth—Acts xviii. 1-17.
50. . . .	. . .	{ Paul's fourth visit to Jerusalem. Paul's third missionary journey, commencing at Pentecost 54; he resides in Ephesus for nearly three years—Acts xviii. 18—xix. 20.
51. . . .	Felix.	{ Paul leaves Ephesus at Pentecost, and winters in Corinth—Acts xix. 21—xx. 3.
52. . . .	. . .	{ Paul's journey to Jerusalem, which he reaches at Pentecost; his arrest and imprisonment—Acts xx. 4—xxiv. 26.
53. . . .	. . .	{ Paul a prisoner in Caesarea—Acts xxiv. 26, 27.
54. Nero.	. . .	{ Paul's defense before Agrippa; in the autumn he sails for Rome, and winters at Malta—Acts xxv.—xxviii. 10.
55. . . .	. . .	{ Paul's arrival at Rome in the spring—Acts xxviii. 11-29.
56. . . .	. . .	{ Paul a prisoner at Rome—Acts xxviii. 30.
57. . . .	. . .	{ Close of Paul's two years' imprisonment—Acts xxviii. 30, 31.
58. . . .	Festus.	
59. Nero.	. . .	
60. . . .	. . .	
61. . . .	Albinus.	
62. . . .	. . .	
63. . . .	. . .	

ANALYSIS OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

PART I.

From the ascension of our Lord to the admission of the Gentiles into the Church:

1. BEFORE THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

Introduction: Promise of the Spirit: Ascension, etc. (i. 1-14).

Matthias chosen in the place of Judas (15-26).

2. ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

Descent of the Spirit: Tongues: Witnesses (ii. 1-13).

First preaching of Peter, effects of his discourse (14-41).

3. AFTER THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

At Jerusalem: Union, &c., of the first converts (ii. 42-47).

A lame man restored (iii. 1-11).

Second preaching of Peter (12-26).

Peter and John in prison: Peter's address to the Sanhedrim (iv. 1-22).

Prayer of the Church: its Unanimity and Benevolence (23-27).

Ananias and Sapphira (v. 1-11).

Miracles wrought by the Apostles (12-16).

They are imprisoned and delivered (17-20).

Before the Sanhedrim, &c., Gamaliel's counsel, &c. (21-42).

Deacons: Church increases: Stephen accused (vi. 1-15).

Stephen's apology or defense: his martyrdom (vii. 1-60).

Persecution of the Church: of Saul (viii. 1-4).

At Samaria, Philip the deacon preaches there (5-8).

Of Simon the sorcerer: Peter and John go to Samaria (9-17).

Peter rebukes Simon (18-24).

At other places: Philip the Ethiopian officer: (25 to 40).

Conversion of Saul (ix. 1-19).

He preaches at Damascus: first visit to Jerusalem: sent to Tarsus: the Church has rest (20-31).

Miracle wrought by Peter at Lydda: at Joppa (32-43).

PART II.

The admission of the Gentiles into the Church:

An angel appears to Cornelius: Peter's vision (x. 1-16).

Peter visits Cornelius: his discourse: Cornelius baptized (x. 17-48).

Peter blamed: he defends his conduct (xi. 1-18).

Diffusion of the Gospel: Barnabas and Saul at Antioch: of Agabus: Paul's second visit to Jerusalem (19-30).

Herod Agrippa persecutes the Church: Peter's deliverance (xii. 1-19).

Death of Herod: Church increases: Saul and Barnabas go home from Jerusalem to Antioch (20-25).

PART III.

First apostolical journey of Paul among the Gentiles:

Designation of Saul and Barnabas: Seleucia: Cyprus: of Elymas the sorcerer: Perga in Pamphylia (xiii. 1-13).

Antioch in Pisidia: Paul's discourse: proceedings there (14-51).

Iconium: Lystra: Derbe: proceedings: A cripple healed (v. 51, 52, xiv. 1-10).

Paul and Barnabas reputed gods (11-18).

Derbe: the Churches revisited: Pisidia: Pamphylia: Perga: Attalia: Antioch (19-28).

Paul's third visit to Jerusalem: the Council (xv. 1-11).

Account of the Gentiles: speech of James: the Decree, etc (12-35).

PART IV.

The second apostolical journey of Paul among the Gentiles:

Contention of Paul and Barnabas: Paul and Silas go through Syria and Cilicia (xv. 36-41.)

Derbe: Lystra: Timothy circumcised: Phrygia: Galatia: Mysia: Troas (xvi. 1-8).

Samothrace: Neapolis: Philippi, conversion of Lydia (9-15).

A Pythoness dispossessed: Paul and Silas imprisoned, the jailor, &c. (16-40).
 Amphipolis: Apollonia: Thessalonica Berea (xvii. 1-14).
 Athens (15-34).
 Corinth; of Aquila: Crispus; Gallio (xviii. 1-17).
 Syria: Ephesus: Cæsarea: fourth visit to Jerusalem: Antioch (18-22).

PART V.

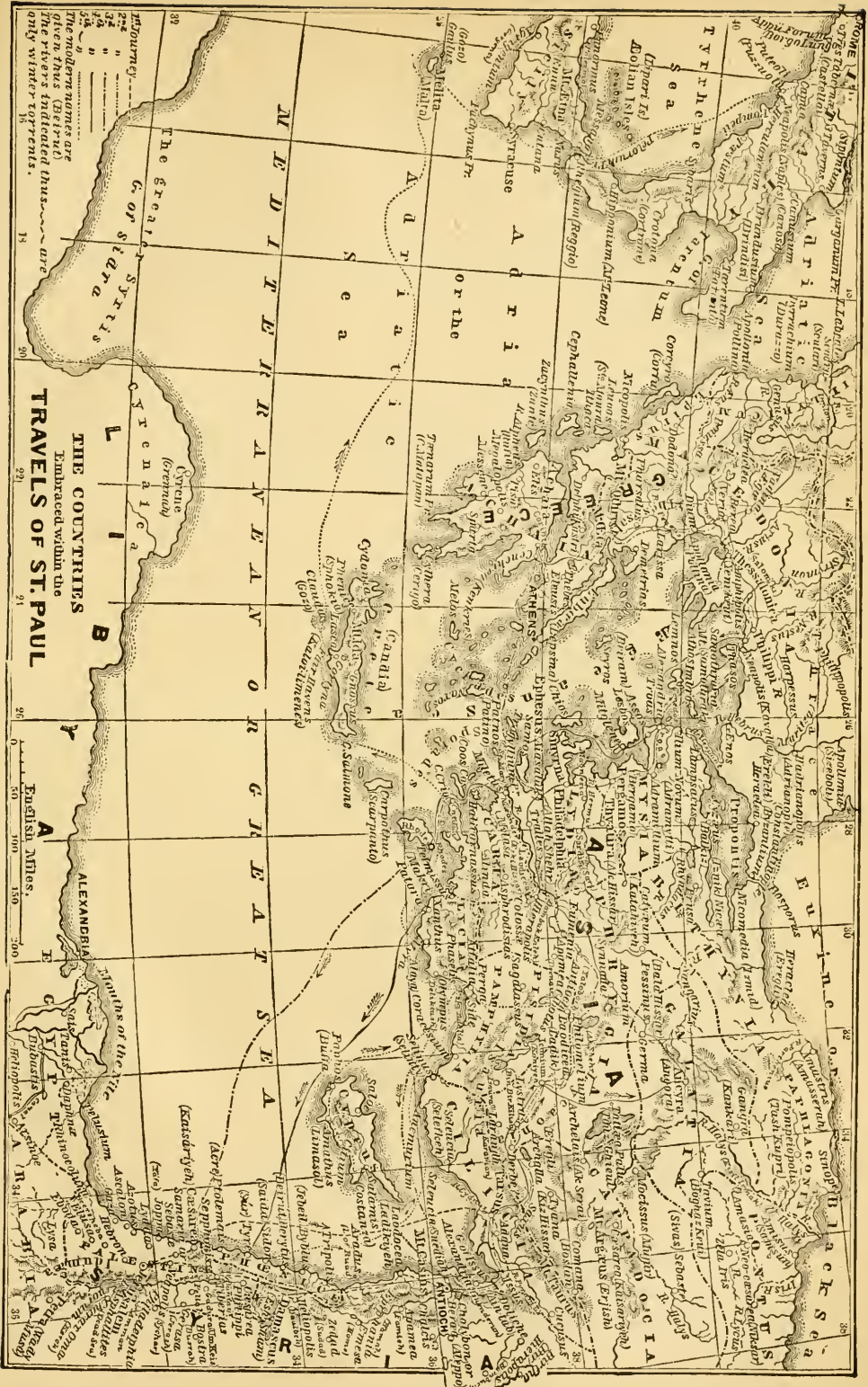
The third apostolical journey of Paul among the Gentiles:

Galatia: Phrygia; of Apollos (xviii. 23-28).
 Paul two years at Ephesus: disputes with the Jews (xix. 1-12).
 Exorcists: Paul's stay at Ephesus (23-41).
 Macedonia: Greece: Troas: of Eutichus (xx. 1-12).
 Assos: Mitylene: Chios: Samos: Trogyllium: Miletus: Paul's discourse to the elders of Ephesus (13-38).
 Coos: Rhodes: Patara: Syria: Tyre: Ptolemais: Cæsarea: of Agabus (xxi. 1-14).
 Paul's fifth visit to Jerusalem (15-26).
 Persecuted: rescued: permitted to speak (27-40).
 His defense before the populace (xxii. 1-21).
 Claims the privilege of a Roman (22-29).
 His speech before the council: dissension (v. 30, xxiii. 1-10).
 Paul encouraged: conspiracy against him (11-22).
 Lysias sends him to Cæsarea (23-35).
 Accused by Tertullus before Felix: his defense (xxiv. 1-21).
 Felix postpones the matter, trembles at Paul's discourse (22-27).
 Paul before Festus: appeals to Cæsar (xxv. 1-12).
 Meeting of Agrippa and Festus (13-27).
 Paul's defense before them, &c. (xxvi. 1-32).

PART VI.

Paul's voyage to Rome:

Voyage to Crete: Paul's counsel rejected: tempest (xxvii. 1-20).
 Paul foretells the shipwreck, &c.: Malta (21-44).
 At Malta: various miracles (xxviii. 1-10).
 Voyage to Rome: arrival there (11-16).
 Paul preaches to the Jews: upbraids them (17-29).
 Preaches during two years to all who come to hear (30, 31).



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THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

The title, "The Acts of the Apostles," would be readily suggested by the general contents of the work, viz.: the development and diffusion of the Christian Church, which were effected by the Apostles, particularly by Peter, the Apostle of the Circumcision, and by Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles. Whether this title proceeded from the author himself is doubtful, but it is certainly very ancient, and occurs in the earliest notices of this book.

CHAPTER I.

¹ Christ, preparing his apostles to the beholding of his ascension, gathereth them together into the mount Olivet, commandeth them to expect in Jerusalem the sending down of the Holy Ghost, promiseth after a few days to send him: by virtue whereof they should be witnesses unto him, even to the utmost parts of the earth. ⁸ After his ascension they are warned by two angels to depart, and to set their minds upon his second coming. ¹² They accordingly return, and, giving themselves to prayer, choose Matthias Apostle in the place of Judas.

THE former treatise ^ahave I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

^bLuke i. 1-4, &c.

Treatise, or narrative. The former treatise referred to, is the Gospel of Luke, which had been previously written, and of which the present book is the sequel or continuation. The authority of each of these books confirms the other. Let not new sermons and new books make us forget old ones. *Have I made*, or more definitely, *did make*, at a particular time, well known to the person here immediately addressed. *O Theophilus*. A person of distinction, to whom Luke inscribed also his former production. The word means "lover of God," whence some have fancied that it is to be taken as a general name for any or every lover of God. But there seems no foundation for this opinion, as the circumstance and style of address point to a particular person of honorable station, with whom Luke was acquainted. (See on Luke i. 3.)

Who Theophilus was, however, is a matter of little importance, the substance of the book that is dedicated to him is what is vital and momentous. *Of all*, &c. This statement divides the work of Christ into two great branches: the one embracing His work *on earth*, the other His subsequent work *from heaven*, the one in His own person, the other by His Spirit, the one complete when He ascended on high, the other to continue till His second appearing. The expression "of all," means comprehensively. It often signifies, indefinitely, a large portion or number. (Acts xiii. 10; 1 Tim. i. 16; James i. 2; Matt. ii. 3; Rom. xi. 26.) *Began*. Christ's ministry here was the beginning of a work which earth had never witnessed before, something absolutely new. His works were original, He did them in His own name, and by His own might as God. His teaching was original, He derived not His doctrines from others, or from any source out of Himself. *To do*—by miracles and holy deeds; *to teach*—by discourses.

² Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen.

^bLuke xxiv. 51; verse 9; 1 Tim. iii. 16. ^cMatt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15-19.

The day refers to the day of ascension.

Taken up, or, as some express it, "taken back." This expression shows the familiarity of the subject to the writer and his correspondent. The Rhemish version has it, *he was assumed*, that is, into heaven by God the Father. *Through the Holy Ghost*. This may either refer to our Lord's choosing the Apostles, or to His giving them commandments after His resurrection; but the latter seems to be intended. (See on Luke xxiv. 44-49; John xx. 19-23.) Jesus was endued abundantly with the influence of the Spirit, and acted always in conformity with His dictates. (See x. 38; Luke iv. 1; John iii. 34, &c.) This subjection was one of the laws of His dependent nature, one of the conditions of His mediatorial office. *The Apostles* are here mentioned as a well-defined and well-known body of men, whose vocation and mission had already been recorded by this writer (Luke vi. 12-16), though their names are afterward repeated for a special reason. (See below, on verse 13.) *He had chosen*. (Luke vi. 13; John vi. 70.) Judas is treated separately in verses 16, 17.

3. To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.—4 Luke xxiv. 15; John xx. 21.

Passion, or, *suffering*, which was once the meaning of the former word. *Infallible proofs*. As Christ is the great miracle, so in Him the resurrection is the central miracle apparent to man, and it was important, therefore, that this miracle should be sustained by indubitable signs. Christ seems to have made ten distinct appearances of Himself to His disciples after His resurrection from the dead. The first was to Mary Magdalene, recorded in Mark xvi. and John xx.; the second was to Cleopas and another of the disciples on the way to Emmaus (Mark xvi. 12; Luke xxiv. 13-32); the third was to Simon Peter (Luke xxiv. 33-35; 1 Cor. xv. 5); the fourth was in the evening of the same day to the eleven, in the absence of Thomas, and at Jerusalem (Luke xxiv. 36-43; John xx. 19-25); the fifth, when, "eight days afterward," He appeared to the eleven at Jerusalem, Thomas being present (Mark xvi. 14; John xx. 26-29; 1 Cor. xv. 6); the sixth, when he appeared to all, or part of, the women who had first visited the sepulchre, and sent a

command by them to the disciples to depart unto Galilee (Matt. xxviii. 1-10); the seventh, when He appeared unto the Apostles, and probably to the whole body of disciples, on a certain mountain in Galilee (1 Cor. xv. 6); the eighth He appeared to certain of the disciples while fishing on the lake of Galilee (John xxi. 1-24); the ninth when He appeared to James, "the Lord's brother," in Galilee (1 Cor. xv. 7); the tenth, on the morning of His ascension, when He appeared to the Apostles assembled in Jerusalem (Luke xxiv. 43-51. Acts i. 4-8).

Our Lord showed Himself after His resurrection to none but His disciples. They were the most fit persons to judge of the truth of this event, as they had been intimately acquainted with Him, knew exactly His stature, voice and manner; and, consequently could not but know whether He who appeared to them, and conversed frequently, and ate with them, was not the very Person whom the Jews and Romans had put to death, for asserting that He was the Son of God, and the King of Israel. Nor could the disciples have any other motive than the love of the truth to make them persevere in publishing Christ's resurrection, in the situation and circumstances in which they afterward found themselves, and of which He had fully forewarned them. Their conduct, therefore, demonstrates their full conviction of the truth of the fact which they published to the world, and for the love of which they hazarded their lives, and in defense of which, the greater part, if not all of them, shed their blood.

The things pertaining to the kingdom of God constituted the grand subject of Christ's ministry. The discoveries of science, the speculations of philosophy, the politics of nations—such subjects as these which agitated the outward world, were not touched upon in His loftiest converse with His disciples. Things of a higher type, things that underlie and regulate the universe, things, compared with which the greatest realities of earth are but as passing shadows, things that restore polluted spirits to holiness, disordered spirits to harmony, apostate spirits to God—were the things of His ministry.

4. And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded *them* that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saieth he*, ye have heard of me.

¹Luke xxiv. 49. ²John xiv. 15, 16.

Being assembled, on the day of the Ascension, and either at Mount Olivet or Jerusalem, from which we read, "Jesus led them out as far as Bethany." (Luke xxiv. 50.) *Commanded*, &c. This last commandment of our Lord to the Apostles involved great self-denial on their part, for they would naturally feel disposed to withdraw from Jerusalem, and thus retire from the presence of men whom they dreaded, as well as escape, in a certain measure, their own painful recollections of the sufferings of Jesus, and of their previous unfaithfulness and faintheartedness. But it was the will of God that on the spot in which enmity against His Anointed had assumed the most awful form, the superior power of grace might be revealed. (See Isa. ii. 1-3.) *Wait*, in holy thought, earnest prayer, and rapt devotion. Such a state of expectancy is essential to a patient continuance in well-doing. In every spiritual gift the Lord would have us to meet His faithfulness with our faith. *The promise of the Father* the fulfillment, realization of the promise concerning the Holy Spirit. (Comp. Gal. iii. 14.) This gift is said to be the promise of the Father, because it was foretold in the Old Testament that He would bestow it. (See ii. 16; Joel iii. 1; Zech. ii. 10.) It is unbelief, and not humility, to distrust the promise of the Father—to wait without expectancy for the coming of the Spirit. Without expectation there will be no truth—no reality, no fervency, no prevailing power in prayer. Prayer is not the mere instinctive utterance of desire, it is the utterance of desire for things known to be agreeable to God, and therefore expected. The indwelling presence of the Spirit is the life of the soul—the plentiful outpouring of the Spirit is the life of the Church. *Have heard of me*, as recorded in Luke xxiv. 49. (See John xv. 26, xvi. 13.)

5. For John ¹truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy ²Ghost not many days hence.

¹Matt. iii. 11. ²Chap. ii. 4, x. 45, xi. 15.

There appears to be a reference to the testimony of the Baptist himself. (Matt. iii. 11; Luke iii. 16, on which see notes.)

With water. Notice, the element is applied to the person, not the person to the element. *Shall be baptized*, by me, *with the Holy Ghost*, the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost. To the Apostles, and to the one hundred and twenty assembled at the Pentecost, the extraordinary gifts were imparted, chiefly to enable them by their inspired preaching and writings in the Gospels (John xiv. 26, xvi. 13; 1 Thes. ii. 13), with their deeds and miracles to spread the Christian faith throughout the world. This was the common baptism of the Church, for it was for the use of the Church that the gifts of the Spirit were so largely conferred on the disciples. *Not many days hence*—only ten days. Yet though the days were "not many," why so many? Why not the immediate charisma? The reasons may be several: 1. Their hearts must be yet further trained in order to be fitted to become recipients of so wonderful an outpouring of the Spirit. Errors (like their questions in verse 6) must be corrected, trials like the last departure of their Lord must be endured, hours of earnest supplication (verse 14) must be passed in order that their wills may be brought into harmony with the Divine will. 2. The final departure of the Son was a requisite condition before the advent of the Spirit. 3. As it was at the Passover that the crucifixion was to take place, so the founding of the new Church must in the Divine order be placed at the Pentecost. An epochal event must have its epochal day.

6. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

¹Matt. xxiv. 3, 4. ²Isa. i. 26; Dan. vii. 27.

When they therefore, &c. This seems to be the same meeting to which the historian refers in verse 4. The old leaven of Jewish prejudices, and carnal ideas of the Messiah's reign, still fermented in the minds of the disciples, notwithstanding His explanation of the nature of the dispensation He was about to introduce. (Verse 3.) To this must be attributed the question, *Lord, wilt thou*, &c. The question seems to have taken for granted that the kingdom would be restored in some form or other. (See Isa. i. 26, ix. 7; Jer. xxxiii. 6, xxxiii. 15, 17; Dan. vii. 13, 14; Hos. iii.

4, 5; Amos ix. 10; Zech. ix. 10.) What they wanted to know was, would the restoration take place at *this time*? "Is the time now come, when Thou wilt deliver Thy people from the oppression of a foreign yoke, and give them the empire of the world?"

7. And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power.—Matt. xxiv. 36; 1 Thes. v. 1, 2

Seasons, occasions. It is one thing to know the general period of an event, another to know the precise time of its occurrence. *Put, fixed, or arranged, in His own power, i. e.,* in the sovereign exercise of it. (Comp. Matt. xxi. 23.) The implied inference is, that He may be expected to reserve the knowledge of such decisions to Himself. As the question of the disciples relates merely to the time when Christ would establish His kingdom, His answer, as here given, He confines to the same point. Few errors within the limits of Christianity have been more dangerous or disgraceful in effect either upon the credit of the Bible, or upon the mind of the individuals, than the attempting by prophetic calculations to fix the precise date of any future event.

God conceals futurity from His people, 1. That they may not be diverted from their proper work and business, the work they have to do from day to day. 2. That they may not be disquieted. Let us labor to trust in Him, who has all the times and seasons which concern us, and His people, and the world, in His own power. (Deut. xxxii. 4; Isa. xxx. 18.) Let us submit to Him in a meek and quiet spirit. Since we cannot know *His* times and seasons, let us labor to know *our own*. (John vii. 6; Eccl. ix. 12; Luke xix. 41, 42.) And since we cannot look far into future time, let us look more into eternity, over and beyond all time. For it is only future time God has shut up from us, while He leaves eternity open to us.

8. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

—Luke xxiv. 47-49; Matt. xxviii. 19.

Power—miraculous energy to work miracles, to teach infallibly, and otherwise to enable them to do the work of the ministry for which He had ordained them. *Shall be witnesses, &c.* Here the office and

mission of the Apostles are declared. Their office is that of witness: "they were not to be prophets of the future, but witnesses of the past." Their mission was to witness for Christ in *Jerusalem, &c.* We see here the actual course which the Gospel took: first it was preached in Jerusalem, and after the dispersion, by reason of the persecution which followed the martyrdom of Stephen, in Judea and Samaria, and afterward by Peter to Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, and by Paul in Asia and Europe. *Uttermost part, or, extreme point of the earth.* This and other kindred phrases are employed in the Old Testament, to signify all nations, not excepting the remotest. (See Ps. ii. 8, xix. 4. Isa. xlvi. 20; Zech. ix. 10.) The mission here given was not, in its completeness, executed by the Apostles; it continues to be the mission of the Church, until the whole world shall be converted, and do homage to Christ as its Lord and King. A Church is only so far a *witnessing* Church, as it is baptized with the Holy Ghost. Witnesses shall testify while the world stands, of the love of God in Christ, of redemption through His blood, and of the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace.

9. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

Spoken these things, and still others (Luke xxiv. 51). *While they beheld, &c.* The description is divided into two parts: at first, the Lord is raised in a visible manner, the eyes of the Apostles could follow Him for a time as He went up; then a cloud (probably a bright cloud—Matt. xvii. 5) coming down, received and removed Him from the sight of the disciples. *He was taken up.* It was not some shadowy form of Him, some apparition, some spectral outline of Him, that they saw ascend heavenward, it was He *Himself*, their veritable Friend, Redeemer, Lord—He whom they had followed three years, with whom they had often mingled in closest fellowship, whom they had seen die upon the cross, and whose living words were now vibrating upon their ear and heart.

If Christ Jesus has thus borne with Him our nature into the inmost sanctuary of heaven, if He has not hesitated to wear

the form that Adam wore, in that Holy of Holies where angels tremble as they gaze, what ought to be our feelings, as we reflect upon this astonishing transit? How ought we to be animated, as we remember that a body, spiritual, indeed, but yet tangible and visible—a nature immaculate, indeed, but yet human and *ours*—has been uplifted by the energy of indwelling Godhead, and set in the center of the Paradise of God? If this fact be believed, it is impossible it cannot leave us as it found us. To know it, and believe it, is to awake to emotions that annihilate earth, and open heaven *already* to the exulting soul! (Comp. Luke ix. 52-56.)

As to *Himself*, Jesus, in ascending, returned to the place whence He came, and assumed the glory which He had laid aside, or rather obscured. As He ascended with a body, heaven is proved to be a place as well as a state. As to His *enemies*, He showed that He had “triumphed over them,” and “received gifts for men: yea for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.” As to His *people*, He ascended as the High Priest of their profession, to finish by intercession for them what He had done by sacrifice—as their Head and Representative—that because He lives, they may live also—as their Protector and Governor—as “Head over all things unto His body the Church,” make all things work together for their good.

10. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel. 11. Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

John xx. 12. rChap. ii. 7, xiii. 31. cJohn xiv. 3; 1 Thes. iv. 16.

Looked steadfastly, continued to gaze long after the cloud had concealed Him. It was a look of astonishment and grief for the sudden loss of all that was dear to them, it was a look of eager desire to be again gratified with a sight of their Master. So too, the servants of Jesus, in an especial manner, should fix their eyes and hearts on Him, in all their purposes and acts, in their struggles and their sorrows, then will the glance of Jesus meet their own, for while He dwelleth on high, He humbleth Himself to behold the things

that are below. (Ps. cxiii. 5, 6.) *Two men*. That these were angels, appears, 1. From the suddenness of their appearance, for no one had seen them approach. 2. Their white, shining apparel, which was a visible representation of celestial purity and holiness. 3. The tidings which they brought to the disciples, being a message sent from heaven to the earth. *Why stand ye, &c.* “As if your now glorified Head were gone from you never to return: He is coming again, not another, but *this same Jesus*, and as ye have seen him go, in like manner shall he come—as personally, as visibly, as gloriously: and let the joyful expectation of this coming swallow up the sorrow of that departure.”

Among other reasons why Jesus should thus return, are the following: “The great transactions of redemption have been *public*, open, often grand. The apostasy was public, in the face of angels and the universe. Sin has been open, public, high-handed. Misery has been public, and has rolled its deep and turbid waves in the face of the universe. Death has been public, all worlds have *seen* the race cut down and moulder. The death of Jesus was public, the angels saw it, the heavens were clothed with mourning, the earth shook, and the dead arose. The angels have desired to look into these things (1 Peter i. 12), and have felt an intense solicitude about men. Jesus was publicly whipped, cursed, crucified, and it is proper that He should publicly triumph, that all heaven rejoicing, and all hell at length humbled, should *see* His public victory. Hence, He will come in the clouds (emblem of sublimity), with angels, with fire, and will raise the dead, and exhibit to all the universe the amazing close of the scene of redemption. . . . These verses present the most grand and wonderful events this world has ever known consolation for the Christian ceaseless alarm to the sinner.” (Matt. xvi. 27; 2 Cor. v. 10; Phil. iii. 20; Col. iii. 3, 4; Titus ii. 3; Matt. xxiii. 40, xxvi. 4; Mark xiii. 26; Rev. i. 7; Dan. vii. 13.) The attention and the hope of Christians are now directed to the second appearance of their Saviour. The ancient Church looked for His coming in the flesh, we, according

to His promise, look for His coming in glory. "Lift up your heads with joy, believers, for the day of your redemption draweth nigh." "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him." Happy are they, and only they, who can say, with holy and earnest desire, "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

12. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.—^aLuke xxiv. 52.

The mount called Olivet; the same as is elsewhere called "the mount of Olives." (Matt. xxi. 1, xxiv. 3.) It was a high ridge east of Jerusalem and parallel to the city. It was formerly planted with olive trees. From this mount Jesus ascended to heaven. *Which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.* A Sabbath day's journey among the Jews, was about a mile. The expression here used is not, however, to be so strictly understood as to mean a definite number of paces, neither more nor less; but, a short distance, such as, according to Jewish custom, it was not considered wrong to go on the Sabbath to attend worship at a synagogue. Different parts of mount Olivet were, of course, more or less distant from Jerusalem. On one side, the foot of the mountain was but five furlongs distant; while Bethany, which lay on the opposite side, was fifteen furlongs. (See John xi. 18.)

13. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.

^aLuke vi. 13-16.

Come in, that is, into the city. *An upper room*, &c. Probably the idea is, not that Peter and the other Apostles made this house their home, but that they habitually resorted to it, and were generally there. They would naturally wish to be frequently together, and to be often occupied in social prayer. The circumstances of the primitive believers were such, that, not being able to have an edifice specially dedicated to the purposes of the new religion, they were obliged to assemble in a private house. All advantages, with respect to time and place, and other circumstances, for the better performance of holy duties, ought to be made use of and improved by us. This "upper room" was most raised toward heaven most remote from noise

and company, and worldly distractions. The Spirit of God descends upon, and rests with such as have raised affections above the world, and are nearest to heaven, not upon such as are buried alive in worldly business. (For sketch of Peter and the other Apostles, see Appendix A.)

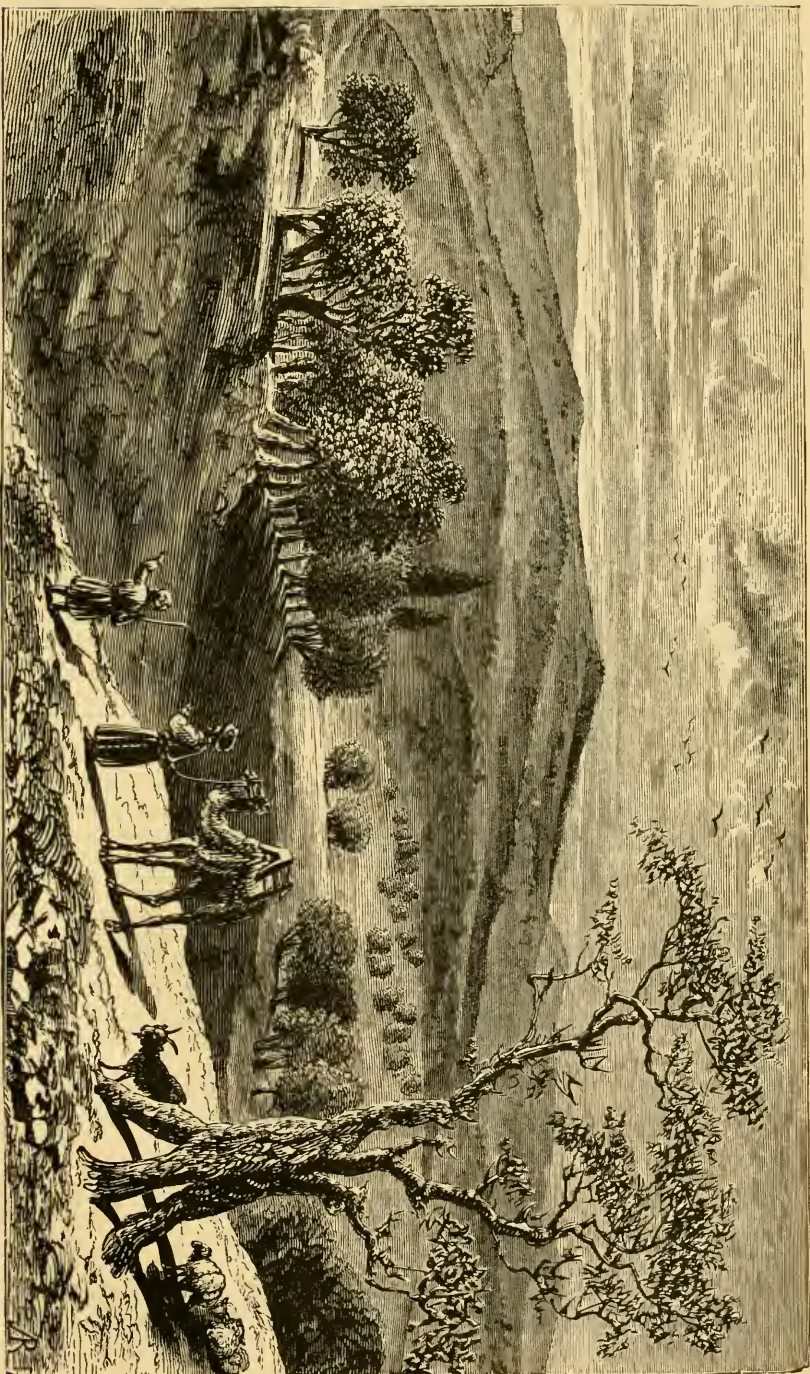
14. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

^aLuke xxiii. 49, 55, xxiv. 10.

These, whose names have just been enumerated. *Continued*—during the ten days to the feast of Pentecost. This word signifies, to go on, in performing or enduring anything, courageously, and with a certain invincible fixedness and resolution of mind. *With one accord*, or, *with one mind*. The term characterizes the entire harmony of their views and feelings. (Comp. Rom. xv. 6.) *Prayer and supplication* for the promised baptism of the Spirit. "Prayer" is the more general term, including all sorts of uttered or mental worship, whether of simply thanks or petition. "Supplication" is simply the ardent expression of our wants. *With the women*, Their names are not given. Among them may have been those who followed Christ from Galilee. (See Luke xxiii. 55, xxiv. 10.) Perhaps some of the wives of the Apostles were here, for some of them were married. (Matt. viii. 14; 1 Cor. ix. 5.) Christianity has raised woman to her present position in the civilized world, and woman has ever proved the most ardent and loyal in her love to the system that has made her what she is.

Mary the mother of Jesus. This is the last time her name is mentioned in the holy book, and she is not mentioned with any idolatrous homage, but spoken of simply as one of the disciples of Christ. What became of her afterward is not known. One old tradition says she died early in Jerusalem, and another says she accompanied John to Ephesus, and lived to an advanced age. *With his brethren*. Or his brothers. Who were they? They were probably those who had accompanied the mother of Jesus on different occasions, as recorded in the Gospels. (See John ii. 12; Matt. xii. 46-50; Mark iii. 31-35; Luke viii. 19-21.)

If we would have a plentiful outpouring



OLIVET, FROM THE BETHANY ROAD.

of the Spirit, we must, like the disciples, be found in earnest and united prayer. Prayer is the spontaneous offspring of expectation and desire. It is hope's utterance before God. Prayer for the presence of the Holy Spirit is the first and most prominent characteristic of the regenerated soul, of the awakened or awakening Church. Secret prayer is the life of the individual, social prayer of the community, congregational prayer of the Church. In order to receive an outpouring of the Spirit, we must, also, often meet together with one accord in one place. The Lord loves to see His family dwelling together in unity, near and dear to Himself, and to one another. He is doubtless to be found wherever there is an humble and believing heart, but nowhere surely is such manifested love as in the bosom of His loving family, met together to wait for the promise of their Father.

15. * And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

Those days. The ten days between the Ascension and the Pentecost. *Peter stood up.* He was the senior in age, had manifested true repentance after his fall, and chiefly was designed to the Apostleship of the circumcision. (Gal. ii. 8.) He therefore takes the lead, when the preaching was to the Jews. (See chap. ii. 3.) He was, in one sense, "the mouth of the Apostles," but he had no authority over them. He does not here take upon himself the right to fill up the vacancy in the Apostolic office, but brings the matter before the brethren. And it is not the Apostles only, but the whole assembly, who agree to the proposal of Peter, and set apart two as fit candidates for the Apostolic office. *Names,* is a Scriptural and classical Greek and Roman word for persons. (Rev. iii. 4.) *An hundred and twenty.* These were the eleven Apostles, and the seventy-two disciples. The other thirty-seven were probably (verse 21) those "who had been with Jesus from the beginning."

16. Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which *the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

*Psa. xli. 9; John xiii. 18. *Matt. xxvi. 47; John xviii. 3.

Must needs have been, or it was necessary that it should be fulfilled, as it has been in

the death of Judas. Punishment must needs follow crime. *Which the Holy Ghost, &c.* While David prophesied of the calamities which should befall his persecutors, it was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that the *enemies and murderers* of the Messiah should inherit *those curses* in all their terror, and yet be *more miserable* than the persons on whom they were more immediately to fall. (See on John xiii. 18.) This fact is asserted in these words, as what was revealed by the same Spirit to Peter. *Which was guide, &c.* Referring undoubtedly to the course which the betrayer took in the garden of Gethsemane. (John xviii. 2-23.) Peter speaks of the grievous sin and horrible death of Judas with the greatest earnestness and candor, but also with devout sorrow and gentleness.

17. For he *was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.—*Luke vi. 16.

As if he had said, "He helped with us to make that significant and sacred number, twelve, which is now broken and must be restored. *"Obtained part," &c.* The clause might be more exactly rendered, *shared the allotment of this ministry, i. e., the Apostleship,* to which the same word is applied by Paul (Rom. xi. 13), "O Lord! how possible, and yet how sad is it to preach to others, and to become castaways ourselves! to prophesy in Thy name, and yet to perish in Thy wrath! to cast devils out of others, and yet to be cast-out devils ourselves! to have our ministry blessed to others' comfort and salvation, and at the same time to minister to our own condemnation."

18. Now *this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity, and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. 19. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem, inasmuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, *Aceldama*, that is to say, the field of blood.

*Matt. xxvii. 5-10. *2 Peter ii. 15.

Purchased a field, &c. Matthew says (xxvii. 6, 7) that the chief priests bought with the silver pieces for which Jesus was betrayed, the potters' field, to bury strangers in. The apparent discrepancy in the accounts can soon be reconciled. It was natural that in process of time Judas should be virtually identified with the chief priests, to whom he had sold himself to do iniquity, and that he might be regarded as in effect doing what they did with the money that accrued to him for

his share in the foul transactions between them. In other parts of Scripture we find similar identifications (see Matt. viii. 5 comp. with Luke vii. 3; Mark x. 35 comp. with Matt. xx. 20; also Acts vii. 16), and it was the more natural here, as in the Psalms; applied by Peter to Judas there was by anticipation the same sort of identification of the traitor and his unbelieving countrymen. *Falling headlong*, &c. The revolting details recorded are perfectly consistent with facts. In our own day, where executions are effected with comparative skill, criminals of large stature and bulk have, on the removal of the drop, suffered precisely what is here recorded of Judas; the internal viscera being suddenly shattered and ejected with great violence . . . without any external trace of injury but in the immediate region of the passage.

Known unto all—a bold appeal to public notoriety, indicating the full confidence of the writer in the public truth of the narrative. *Proper tongue*—the Syro-Chaldaic. *Aceldama* . . . *field of blood*, so called as bought with the price of Jesus' blood. The field now shown as Aceldama, or, properly, Hakal-Dema, lies on the slope of the hills beyond the valley of Hinnom, south of Mount Zion. *Richardson* affirms that bodies were thrown into the charnel-house which occupies a portion of it, as late as 1818, but *Dr. Robinson* alleges that it has the appearance of having been for a much longer time abandoned.

20. For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let this habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and this bishoprick let another take.
*Ps. lxi. 25. *Ps. cix. 8.

It is written in the book of Psalms, &c. "Let none be surprised, or stumble at it, that this should be the exit of one of the Twelve for David had foretold not only his *sin* (which Christ had noticed, John xiii. 18, from Psa. xli. 9), but also his *punishment*. (Psa. lxi. 25.) *Habitation*, properly, a shepherd's hut, with the enclosed cattle-yard, and also generally a habitation of any kind. From the rustic hut, says *Valckenker*, the word was transferred to other habitations. *Desolate*. This is the lot of all things which the ungodly possess in the world. *Henry* says, "Perhaps Judas had some habitation of his own at Jerusalem, which, upon this,

everybody was afraid to live in, and so it became desolate (people detesting the very place where the suicide lived and died)."

And his bishoprick, &c. This passage is from Ps. cix. 8, in the words of the Seventy. That Psalm sets forth the wickedness and desert of those who persecute the people of God, and hence, as Judas had exemplified so fully this idea, he too must be divested of his office, and its honors be transferred to another. "Bishopric," though in itself correct, because a mere corruption of the Greek word, suggests foreign ideas by its modern usage and associations. The marginal translation in our Bible (*charge or office*) is not only free from this objection, but much nearer to the meaning of the Greek and Hebrew words, which both denote official visitation and inspection.

21. Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22. Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.—Luke x. 1, 2; John xv. 27.

Wherefore. As it is essential that the vacancy occasioned by the apostasy of Judas should be supplied, and the number *Twelve* be restored. *Companied with*, belonged to our company. *All the time*, &c. During the time that the Lord Jesus was occupied among us in the duties of His office. *From the baptism of John*, by whom our Lord was not only Himself baptized, but first officially announced and introduced to His own disciples. *That same day*, the day of the Ascension. (See on verses 2, 9.) *Must one be ordained*. The Greek word means simply to *become*, or more emphatically, to *be made*. Only such an one as had "companied with them all the time," &c., could be an authentic witness of Christ's *resurrection*, by which we are to understand the doctrine, and miracles of Jesus, as well as His rising from the tomb, because the article of the resurrection includes many other articles of faith in it, for if He rose from the grave He was buried, if He was buried He died, if He died He was born. "He who believes the resurrection of Christ," says *Bengel*, "believes all which preceded and followed." Christ's resurrection is called by *Augustine*, "the peculiar faith of Christians," by *Tertullian*, "the model of our hope, the key to our tombs," by *Calvin*, "the chief head in the Gospel."

23. And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.
4Chap. xv. 22.

Appointed two, or placed two, i. e., before them, in their midst. (See v. 27, vi. 6.) *Joseph called Barsabas*, most probably son of Sabas. Though the lot to supply the vacant office fell not upon him, it is more than probable that he continued still to be much with the Apostles, and to lend his aid toward the establishment of Christianity in his native land. His name, however, is not again mentioned, and the traditions given by Eusebius, that he was one of the seventy disciples, and also that having drunk some deadly poison he sustained no harm, however probable, cannot be deemed certain. *Matthias*. The name signifies, "gift of Jehovah." No other particulars of his history are certainly known, than those here given. Various traditions describe him as preaching in Ethiopia, or in Colchis, and being there martyred, or, according to yet another account, as preaching in Judea and being stoned by the Jews.

24. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, 25. That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.
4Jer. xvii. 10; Rev. ii. 23.

Thou, Lord. As Jesus had personally appointed the other Apostles, many expositors have argued, that this prayer was immediately addressed to Him, and the language favors the supposition. (See on verse 2.) This prayer implies, 1. A recognition of Divine omniscience: *Thou which knowest*, &c. A deep impression of the Lord's acquaintance with all hearts is essential to sincere and earnest devotion. (See John ii. 24, xxv. 21, 17; Rev. ii. 23.) 2. A desire to have their choice regulated by the Divine—*Shew whether*, &c., as if they had said, "Thy choice shall be ours, we desire only to vote for him whom Thou hast ordained for the office. Thy will be done." This is the spirit of all true prayer. Their prayer to Him attests their faith in His Godhead. (2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.) *That he may take part, or lot, some read place.* "*Ministry and apostleship*," as an eminent commentator observes, "is not a mere hendiadys meaning *apostolical ministry*, but a generic and specific term combined, the one denoting service in general, the other

a particular office. *Fell*, literally, *went aside*. *His own place*. A euphemistic or softened expression of the awful future of the traitor, implying not only destined habitation but congenial element. Judas had fallen from what was *not his place* to go to the *place* which belongs to final apostates, hell. Every person in this world of probation has *his own place* in the world of retribution, a *place* made *his own*, by his *own* conduct and character.

26. And they gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Gave forth their lots, perhaps gave them to those whose business it was to collect them. We know not the particular method. The account of *Grotius* seems probable, that they put their lots into two urns, one of which contained the names of Joseph and Matthias, and the other a blank and the word *Apostle*. In drawing these out, the blank came up with the name of Joseph, and the lot on which was written the word *Apostle* came up with the name of Matthias. The Apostles and the assembly of believers did not proceed to cast lots until they had themselves decided conscientiously in accordance with their personal knowledge, as far as any human decision could avail. *Matthias*. (See on verse 23.) *Was numbered*, was recognized as one of their order, and had the character of an Apostle thenceforth accorded to him. The honor God had conferred on inquiries by lots, might influence the disciples to adopt this method on this singular occasion. (Comp. Josh. vii. 14, 15; 1 Sam. x. 20, 21; 1 Chron. xxiv. 5, 7; Luke i. 9.)

"While the Lord remained with the Apostles," says *Bengel*, "they employed no lots, neither did they subsequently employ them after the coming of the Holy Ghost (chap. x. 19, xvi. 6, &c.), but in this single intermediate period and in this peculiar affair, they very fitly adopted the lot." In this age of the world, we are so differently situated from those who, in the old dispensation cast lots in order to acquire a knowledge of God's will on important and doubtful matters, that a resort to lots for deciding an important question can scarcely ever, if indeed ever, be judicious. A careful study of the Holy Scriptures, an examination of all the circum-

stances connected with any particular case, with prayer to God and consultation with judicious and pious friends, will thoroughly furnish the man of God for every good work, and will almost invariably lead to a

right result. Beyond question, to cast lots upon trivial occasions, and solemnly to appeal to God's determination in ludicrous matters, is profanely to take the name of God in vain.

1. What is the "former treatise" referred to? 2. How did Jesus show Himself after His resurrection? 3. What did He command His Apostles? 4. What baptism were they to receive? 5. What did they ask Christ? 6. What was His reply? 7. What great event then occurred? 8. State the particulars of the ascension. 9. Where did the witnesses of the ascension then go? 10. What did they do in Jerusalem? 11. What is said of Peter? 12. Why was Matthias chosen to the Apostleship? 13. How was he chosen?

CHAPTER II.

1 *The apostles, filled with the Holy Ghost, and speaking divers languages, are admired by some, and derided by others. 14 Whom Peter disproving, and shewing that the apostles spoke by the power of the Holy Ghost, that Jesus was risen from the dead, ascended into heaven, had poured down the same Holy Ghost, and was the Messiah, a man known to them to be approved of God by his miracles, wonders, and signs, and not crucified without his determinate counsel and foreknowledge: 37 he baptizeth a great number that were converted. 41 Who afterward devoutly and charitably converse together: the apostles working many miracles, and God daily increasing his church.*

AND when the day of Pentecost ^awas fully come they ^bwere all with one accord in one place.
^aLev. xxiii. 15. ^bChap. i. 14.

Day of Pentecost. Ten days after the Ascension, the time arrived which had been appointed for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The fiftieth day after the second day of the passover (the 16th), came the feast of Pentecost, called also the feast of weeks (*i. e.*, seven clear weeks from the 16th *Abib*). This was properly the feast of the completed harvest of the ground. Loaves made of the new meal and grain were offered as first-fruits. (Lev. xxiii. 17.) Many burnt offerings were now presented. (Lev. xxiii. 18-20.) This feast brought to Jerusalem a greater concourse of Jews and proselytes from all parts of the world than any other of the three great festivals. Hence the season was as well chosen for the first proclamation of our Lord's resurrection and ascension, as its occasion and its rites were symbolical of the first-fruits of the spiritual harvest, which were offered to God as the result of Peter's preaching. *Was fully come, i. e.*, when the appointed and therefore

necessary interval had quite elapsed. *All with one accord.* The same *one accord* as in i. 14, of the same body enumerated in i. 15, namely, the about *one hundred and twenty names* representative of the New Testament Church. They were of one mind. They were one in faith, in hope, and in spiritual sentiment, waiting in patience and perseverance the accomplishment of the promise which the Saviour of their love had bestowed. A spirit of unity among the disciples of Christ is greatly to be desired—unity founded upon attachment to the exalted power of the Redeemer, and guided by the hopes which the word of His promise has taught them to entertain. When such a spirit prevails, the Divine blessing may be expected to be received in the most plentiful abundance. (See on verse 4; also chap. i. 13, 14.) *In one place*, probably the upper room mentioned chap. i. 13.

2. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.—Chap. iv. 31.

Suddenly. The atmosphere does not pass at once from the serene to the tempestuous, but it was thus now, for the moment before a profound quiet reigned around them. The suddenness indicates the supernatural. *A sound from heaven, &c.* This was intended to solemnize the disciples of Christ, to awaken them to the greatest spiritual earnestness, and to make the descent of the Holy Ghost, in His miraculous presence, an event ever to be remem-

bered as of the most impressive and salutary nature. It did not sweep horizontally through the room, but came directly down, with a startling roar. It indicated that the Spirit of the Lord proceeded from heaven, whither Jesus had so lately ascended. It was an emblem of the Spirit's influence, and of his irresistible power. In the Scriptures the Spirit's influences are frequently represented by the wind. (Ezek. xxxvii. 9; John iii. 8.) We hear the sound of the wind as it sighs along the valley, or howls through the forest, or roars round the summit of the hill. We trace its effect as it waves the grass blade, or lays prostrate the giant oak, as it ruffles the smooth lake, or lashes the ocean to a storm, but it is itself unseen, and we are ignorant alike of its origin and of its destiny, and of the laws and limits of its course. So the Spirit is *real though invisible*, and produces as equally effective and manifest a change upon the souls of men, as the wind does upon the face of nature. *Filled all the house*—the whole house was filled by the Divine reverberation. The presence of the Spirit will be equal to the requirements of the whole Church, His aids will be dispensed to meet and supply the spiritual wants of every member of Christ's body. Wherever there is faith in His Divine Person, and prayerful dependence upon His influences, these influences for the glory of the Redeemer's intercession, will be bestowed for promoting all the purposes of vital godliness.

8. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

Unto them, i. e., the believing recipients of the power from on high. *Cloven tongues*, that is, undivided at the root, but flaring into several points at the extremity. By this terminal division was beautifully symbolized the variety of dialect spoken by each *tongue*. *Like as of fire*, the tongues were not fire, but like fire. This was to intimate, that in the languages which the Apostles were now enabled to speak, they should communicate to the world that heavenly doctrine, which, like fire, both illuminates and purifies, or rather to signify, that their tongues, touched as with a live coal from the altar, should utter strains of glowing eloquence, not fashioned, it

might be, according to the rules observed by the orators of Greece and Rome, but capable of producing far nobler effects, eloquence, which would terrify the boldest, and alarm the most careless sinner, which would humble the proud, comfort the dejected, inspire the timid with invincible courage, and, with an energy unknown to philosophy, kindle the living fire of devotion in the coldest and most unfeeling heart.

Each of them, i. e., of those assembled upon this occasion. There is nothing to restrict or qualify the wide expression used in verse 1, or to limit what is here said to the twelve Apostles. The whole assembly was collectively a representation of the body of believers, now about to be reorganized upon a Christian basis, and perpetuated as the Christian Church. *Sat upon*. Blessed be God for the promise of the same Holy Spirit to abide with all believers, though not in His miraculous gifts, yet in His sanctifying operations, and saving graces to the end of the world. (1 Peter iv. 14.) We are not to suppose that this was the first time that the Divine Spirit visited this world. He never came in such a demonstration of power and plenitude of influence as now.

4. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

^aChap. i. 5. ^cMark xvi. 17, x. 46.

All the disciples were filled with the presence of the Spirit. Such gifts, and in such measure, were bestowed on them severally, as were conducive to the glory of the Redeemer, and for the immediate advancement of the best interests of Divine truth. *With other tongues, i. e.*, than their native tongue. The miraculous variety was not in the ears of the hearers, but on the lips of the speakers. (Chap. x. 46, xix. 6; Mark xvi. 17; 1 Cor. xii. 10.) The miracle consisted especially in giving—without study, or any of the ordinary means of acquiring the knowledge of speech—the first disciples the power of preaching the Gospel in a great variety of languages. (1 Cor. xiv. 22.) The acquisition of a foreign language requires close application and frequent practice. It is difficult to become acquainted with the signification of the great variety of sounds

which are used in any country, so as to be able to understand them as soon as they are pronounced. Still more difficult is it to attain the power of speaking a foreign language fluently and accurately, or to become so familiar with its words, as instantly to call them up, to express the ideas, which arise in the mind. Besides, the sounds of a foreign language are, in some instances, so different from those to which we have been accustomed, that we feel ourselves at a loss to pronounce them, and that, unless we begin to learn in an early period of life, when our organs are flexible, we can hardly ever speak in such a manner as to please the ear of a native. These remarks serve to show the astonishing nature of the polyglottal miracle which was performed on the day of Pentecost. *As the Spirit gave, &c.* The Holy Spirit presided in that assembly. He who conferred the miraculous gift, also gave it direction, and as the Spirit gave the power of utterance to the disciples, so did they proclaim the truths of everlasting life. No man should dare to speak for Christ, without the Spirit of Christ. Better be dumb than speak the thoughts of a soul unrenewed by the Spirit. A divinely filled soul must break forth in divine language.

5. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

Besides the Jews settled at Jerusalem, there were, by the peculiar providence of God, no small number of foreigners dwelling there at the time, out of every nation under heaven. They had come up for the feast of Pentecost, or for the Passover, a little time before, since which many perhaps had remained. They were, however, almost entirely men who had sought Jehovah's sanctuary as proselytes, or from motives of piety. For the sound *must* go forth into all lands under heaven, that heaven was opened to all men, and that a new Sun of grace had risen on the earth. A devout spirit is precious in the eyes of God. It prompts to willing and continued obedience when God leads, and is rewarded with still more precious gifts of grace. (Matt. xiii. 12.)

6. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

Was noised abroad, or, occurred, *i. e.*, the

sound of the descending Spirit. The participial clause here may involve the idea of cause as well as time, and we may understand, therefore, that the sound in question was audible beyond the house where the disciples were assembled, that it arrested the attention of those abroad, and led them to seek out the scene of wonder. *Confounded*, confused or perplexed. *Language*, or dialect. Dialect, a kindred form to dialogue, originally means discourse or conversation, then mode of speech, style, or diction, then diversity of language, whether national or provincial. *Own* is emphatic, not merely in language which he understood, but in his own particular, peculiar tongue. (See on verses 4, 11.)

7. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak ^{Galileans?} Chap. i. 11.

Galileans. Persons who know no other dialect, save that of their own country. Persons wholly uneducated, and consequently naturally ignorant of those languages which they now speak so fluently. Had the different speakers belonged to so many different countries, the wonder would have been diminished or removed. This was the name thus early given to the "sect."

8. And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? 9. Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia. 10. Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes. 11. Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 10, 28.

In our own tongue. (See on verses 4, 6.) This list of fifteen countries from which people were present, is, upon the whole, systematically arranged, proceeding from the north-east to the west, then turning to the south, and concluding with the west. *Parthia* was on the north-east of Media and Hyrcania, and north of Asia, surrounded entirely by mountains. *Media* bordered north, on the Caspian Sea, west on Armenia, east on Hyrcania, and south on Persia. *Elamites*, *i. e.*, the inhabitants of *Elymais* or *Elam*, which was east of the Tigris, north of Susiana (annexed to it in Dan. viii. 2), and south of Media, of which Ptolemy makes it a part. *Dwellers*, inhabitants. *Judea*—which differed in dialect from Galilee. (Verse 7.) Thus also a miracle was

given to the native Jews. *Cappadocia*, *Pontus*, provinces of Asia Minor. Pontus bordered on the south of the Euxine, or Black Sea; Cappadocia was south of Pontus. *Asia*. Asia strictly so called. (See on vi. 9.) *Phrygia*, and *Pamphylia*, provinces of Asia Minor, the latter lying south of the former, and on the Mediterranean coast. *Egypt*. The writer now glances to Africa, of which Egypt was a distinguished part. *Libya* was an extensive region on the west of Egypt. One of its principal cities was Cyrene (now Grenna), of the population of which at that time the Jews constituted a fourth part. *Strangers of* (or from) *Rome*. Jews, those born such, natural descendants of Abraham and Israel. *Proselytes*, converts from the heathen. *Cretes* and *Arabians*. The names, here added, do not violate the order previously followed, but complete the circle, as it were, by passing from the extreme west (Italy) to the extreme south (Arabia), between which two extremes the important island Crete (now Candia) lies in a direct line.

How hear we, &c. This extraordinary fact could be nothing else than a real miracle. In reference to the full substantiation of the truth of this miracle, observe, 1. It was predicted. "In my name they shall speak with new tongues." (Mark xvi. 17.) 2. The character and the pursuits of the men were well known; it was well known they were poor fishermen of Galilee. 3. Their judges. If they had spoken in one language only, the others might not have detected it, but every man, whether Crete or Arabian, heard them speak in the dialect of their own country. 4. The place. They did not go to a distance to tell their tale: they began when the Jews were around them, who were their bitter enemies. 5. The season—when large multitudes were present. 6. The boldness of Peter in accusing and denouncing the Jews. (Verse 23.) Would he, who had denied his Lord and Master through fear, now have *dared* to have charged them with having "killed the Prince of Life," unless God had fulfilled His promise, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you?" And unless this had been true, would the *result* have been what it

was? (Verses 37, 41.) The absence of this miracle in the Church, in the work of evangelizing the world, must now be supplied by human learning. And we ought to be very thankful to God that His word has been translated into so many tongues. But the time is coming when all the inhabitants of the earth shall read "in their own tongues the wonderful works of God."

12. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? 13. Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine. 1 Chap. xvii. 20.

The effect upon the multitude was twofold. Some were impressed, and became inquirers. *They were amazed*, &c. *Others mocking said*, &c. Some suppose that these scoffers belonged to the hierarchical party of the Jews—the enemies of Christ. Others think that they were natives of Judea, who, not understanding that the disciples spoke in foreign languages, imagined that they only uttered incoherent words. It is probable that there was something in the excited manner in which the disciples acted, and in their ejaculations of praise in foreign languages, which would appear to those who were unsusceptible of receiving the supernatural impression, as fanaticism. (Comp. 1 Cor. xiv. 23.) *New wine* might be more exactly rendered *sweet wine*, as the Greek word properly denotes sweetness, and although sometimes applied in classic Greek to the fresh grape-juice, before fermentation, is also used of those fermented wines, in which the sweetness was retained by a peculiar process, and some of which were unusually strong. The opposition of infidels to the Gospel proceeds, not from want of evidence, but from want of candor, a temper of mind upon which arguments and demonstrations are thrown away. A mind full of prejudice, a heart attached to the world and its pleasures, will always find something to object to a religion which teaches the purest morality, and requires, from those who embrace it, the sacrifice of their corrupt propensities, and unhallowed gratifications. Even scoffing, however, though it is one of the most mournful evidences of a Satanic opposition to the kingdom of Christ should not be allowed to arouse the indignation of the religious teacher so that

he casts the scoffer altogether from his path. Rather should he pity him.

14. ¹ But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: 15. For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. 16. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17. And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18. And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy: 19. And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke. 20. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: 21. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

¹ Thes. v. 7. Joel ii. 28-32. ² Isa. xlv. 3; Ezek. xxxvi. 27. ³ Chap. xxi. 4, 9, 10; 1 Cor. xii. 10. ⁴ Mark xiii. 21; 2 Peter iii. 7, 10. ⁵ Plxxxv. 6; Rom. x. 13; 1 Cor. i. 2; Heb. iv. 16.

Standing up, perhaps in the place before the house. *With the eleven*. They probably spoke by turns, but Peter began the discourse. *Men of Judea*, &c. He begins by simply naming the people he is addressing, just as any other speaker, Jew or Gentile, might have done in every-day life. *Be this known*, &c. He bespeaks attention with a skill and grace not unlike that with which Brutus, in Shakespeare, attempts to justify the death of Caesar. "Hear me for my cause, and be silent that you may hear."

These are not drunken, &c. Their radiant looks, their stately bearing, show that they are more like seraphs than drunkards. Mark the holy courage of Peter, in defending the innocence of the Apostles, and confuting the base and baseless calumny which was now cast upon himself and them. The *third hour of the day*, according to the Jewish computation of time, was our nine o'clock in the morning, and the improbability of so many persons, of plain character and industrious habits, plunging into so early a debauch, and staggering into public view in a state of disorderly excitement at such an hour, was so great, that the force of the Apostle's appeal is felt and admitted by all classes of readers.

This is that, &c. The Apostle, having in verse 15 presented the *negative* part of the defense, now follows with the *positive*, furnishing the explanation of the phenomenon. The passage is quoted with substantial faithfulness, from Joel ii. 28-32. It is plain that Peter did not intend that the completion of that prophecy was confined to that point of time, for in verse 39 he

tells them that were now awakened, and cried, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" that they must "repent and be baptized, and they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." For, say she, "the promise" (that promise most apparently that he had reference to before,) "*is unto you, and to your children*," &c. So that all that was intended in that prophecy is not fulfilled, till God has done calling.

The last days—the times of the Gospel, or the days of the Messiah, called "the last days," because the dispensation of God's kingdom among men, which the Gospel sets up, is the last dispensation. *I will pour out*, &c., *i. e.*, there shall be a most plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit, *upon all flesh*, upon Jews and Gentiles, and upon all sorts of persons without distinction of age, sex or state, old and young, sons and daughters, bond and free. *To prophesy*, has here its usual sense, to speak by inspiration, or under a special Divine influence. "If any distinction," says Dr. J. A. Alexander, "was intended to be made between the parallel expressions *dreams* and *visions*, the latter may denote day-dreams, waking visions, and the former visions seen in sleep, or dreams properly so called. As we do not read of any such effects at Pentecost, the terms of the prediction must have been understood by the Apostles as figures or types of extraordinary spiritual influence, and not as the precise forms in which the promise was to be fulfilled." *Servants . . . handmaidens*—without distinction of rank; no condition, however ignoble, would exclude any one from the promise. *And I will shew wonders in heaven above*, &c. Here is presented the other side of the subject. The primary reference is to the calamities which God inflicted on the Jews in connection with the overthrow of Jerusalem, and of the destruction of the Jewish state and nation. (See on Matt. xxiv. 29, with which the language here coincides almost verbally.)

Blood . . . fire . . . smoke denote calamitous times in general, political, civil, social and domestic. Yet here, too, we are to recognize the wider scope of the prophecy. The destruction of the Jews is held forth by the Apostle, as a type of

the destruction which is to come upon every rejecter of the Gospel. *The sun*, &c. Its light shall be withdrawn, the heavens shall become black. A day is at hand which will be one of thick gloom, of sadness and woe. (Ezek. xxxii. 7; Isa. xlii. 10; Amos v. 18, 20.) The *moon* shall give forth signs of distress. It shall exhibit an appearance like blood. Men shall see there an image of the carnage and misery which are to be witnessed on earth.

That great and notable day, &c. The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, was, indeed a notable day—a day of judgment to the Jewish people, but there is another and more notable day of the Lord, which lies at the end of “these last days”—the day of universal judgment. *Whosoever shall call*, &c. In wrath God remembers mercy. (Hab. iii. 2; Mal. iii. 7.) How great is His goodness! He has made the way of salvation easy; it consists in calling on the name of the Lord. (Comp. Acts xvi. 31; Rom. x. 13–15.) Although contrition of heart and godly sorrow on account of our sins are indispensable, nevertheless, strictly speaking, it is faith, or the calling on the name of the Lord, by and through which we are justified and saved. (Rom. v. 1; Eph. ii. 8.) Faith is, pre-eminently, the condition which is prescribed, as well when we are converted, as when we finish our course.

22. Ye men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: 23. Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: 24. Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

John xiv. 10, 11; Heb. ii. 4. John xv. 24. Luke xxii. 22, xxiv. 44, chap. iii. 18. Matt. v. 30. Matt. xxvii. 1. Luke xxiv. 1, chap. xlii. 30, 34; 1 Cor. vi. 14; Eph. i. 20. Col. ii. 12; 1 Thes. i. 10; Heb. xiii. 20; 1 Peter i. 24.

Ye men of Israel—the orator at this point seems to collect his strength and begin anew. He addresses them by their noblest title of *Israel*, as if to show that it is from no want of love or respect that he lays upon them firmly the charge of being the slayers of Jesus. *Jesus of Nazareth*, originally used in the way of reproach, but afterward came to be used simply as a distinctive term. *Approved of God*, rather, “authenticated,” “proved,” or, “demonstrated to be from God.” By

miracles, &c. This is not a low view of our Lord's miracles, as has been alleged, nor inconsistent with John ii. 11, but is in strict accordance with His progress from humiliation to glory, and with His own words in John v. 19. This view of Christ is here dwelt on to exhibit to the Jews the whole course of Jesus of Nazareth as the ordinance and doing of the God of Israel.

Him, being delivered, &c. Mark the boldness of Peter! However timid before, the disciples no sooner received the Spirit, than they began to speak the Word without fear. He who, but a little while before, had trembled in the presence of a servant maid, could not but tell thousands to their face, that Jesus whom they crucified with wicked hands, is now Lord and Christ. *Determinate counsel and foreknowledge*—God's fixed plan and perfect foresight of all the steps involved in it. *Ye have taken*, &c. The volitions of free agents, the evil as well as the good, are constantly represented as falling under the counsels and conduct of Heaven. Never did men act more freely nor more wickedly than the Jews, in the crucifixion of Christ, yet in that whole business they did no other than what “God's hand and counsel determined before to be done.” (Chap. iv. 28.) The delivery of Christ into their hands to be crucified, as performed by Judas, was a wicked act, yet was He “delivered by” (or according to) “the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” That this subject is deep and difficult, in the present state, is admitted, and wicked men may abuse it to their own destruction, but the thing itself is no less true and useful, if considered in the fear of God. There is a link, as some have expressed it, that unites the purposes of God and the free actions of men, which is above our comprehension, but to deny the fact is to disown an all-pervading providence; which is little less than to disown a God. Peter, it should be observed, here unites “the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” together, and seems to have had no idea of admitting the one without the other. It is also worthy of notice, that, in his manner of introducing the subject, it appears to have no tendency whatever to excuse

them from guilt, by throwing the blame on the Almighty: on the contrary, it is brought in for the purpose of conviction, and actually answered this end, in those to whom it was addressed. (See verse 37.) The decrees of God seem to be distinguishable into *efficient* and *permissive*. With respect to moral good, God is the proper and efficient cause of it. With respect to moral evil, God permits it, and His decree to permit sin does not in the least excuse the sinner, or warrant him to ascribe it to God, instead of himself. (See on chap. iv. 28.) *Raised up*, not into existence, as in chap. iii. 22, but from the dead. With their treatment of the Saviour is contrasted that of God Himself. When God gave Him up, they took Him, but when they crucified Him, God raised Him.

Having loosed the pains of death. "Loosing pains" is an unusual combination, "perhaps arising from the use of the second Greek word in the Septuagint, to represent a Hebrew one, which has the double sense of *cord* and *sorrow*. (Comp. Isa. xiii. 8 with Ps. xviii. 5.) Thus the two Greek nouns may have become associated, and their corresponding verbs convertible. The very combination here used appears also in the Septuagint version of Ps. xxxix. 2. It is the less unnatural because the verb to *loose* has a figurative sense (relax) no less appropriate to pains than its proper sense (untie) to cords. The Greek noun strictly means the pains of parturition, which are often used as figures of intense, but temporary suffering. (See Isa. xxvi. 17; John xvi. 21, &c.) *Because it was not possible*, &c. 1. It was *naturally* impossible, on account of that Divine power which was inherent in His person as God. 2. It was legally impossible, because Divine justice being fully satisfied by His sufferings, required that He should be raised to life, as when a debt is paid, the prisoner is discharged, and the prison door opened.

25. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: 26. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: 27. Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. 28. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.—Ps. xvi. 8-11.

David speaketh. (See Ps. xvi. 1-8.) He

does not tell them anything as to the Divine authority of David's utterances: this would have been unnecessary. He assumes that the document refers to the resurrection of Jesus whom they had crucified. He is described as "having the Lord always before his face," "always on his right hand," as the "Holy One of God," who speaks with an exultant assurance of His own resurrection. *Therefore*, on account of this assurance of Divine protection, *did my heart rejoice*, &c. *My flesh shall rest*, &c. "My body shall go down to the grave in a joyful hope of resurrection." *Because*, here is the ground of the confidence expressed.

Hell, in its old and wide sense of the unseen world (*hades*), the world of spirits, the state of the soul separated from the body, without any reference to happiness or misery. The essential meaning is, thou wilt not leave my soul and body separate. *To see corruption*. God would bring back his soul from the invisible state, and reunite it to His body, before it was corrupted. *The ways of life*. God would restore Him to life, after having been put to death and laid in the grave. *Full of joy*, &c. The Redeemer was assured that He would not only escape the power of death, but ascend to dwell in the immediate presence of God on high. It was for the "joy set before Him, that He endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. xii. 2.)

29. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. 30. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne: 31. He saw this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. 32. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. 33. ^aSam. xxiii. 2. ^b2 Sam. vii. 12, 13; Ps. cxxii. 11. ^cHeb. vi. 17. ^d1 Peter i. 11, 12. ^eVerse 24; Luke xxiv. 48.

These verses contain the proof that David, in the words quoted (verses 25-28), was announcing prophetically the resurrection of Christ. *Let me*, allow me. *Freely speak*. The Jews esteemed David highly, and he had something not altogether favorable to say of him that the glory of Christ might be enhanced. *Patriarch*. This name is higher in dignity than that of a king. *His sepulchre*. And that with the

very body of David, in corruption. He speaksgently. *With us.* The monuments, places, institutions, manners, families and adages of the Israelites, marvelously accorded with the Old Testament Scripture. So too the New Testament books accord with the subsequent state of events.

A prophet. Hence the 16th Psalm is prophetic. *Sworn with an oath.* God had promised in the most solemn manner, using the form of an oath in order to express absolute certainty, and to prevent any doubt in the mind of David and of other pious men. (Ps. cxxxii. 11; comp. verse 2; see also Heb. vi. 16.) *Fruit of his loins.* Scripture speaks of propagation with wonderful correctness and delicacy. A periphrasis for, *his seed.* *His.* David's. *Sit on his throne.* David, as king, occupied the throne of the nation of Israel, the national people of God. The Messiah, who was to descend from him, was in like manner to be King of the Lord's people, namely, His spiritual people, of whom the nation of the Hebrews was only an emblem. *He seeing,* &c. Seeing by prophetic vision. Peter thus reasons: David did not speak of himself as the fact shows. Therefore he spake of Christ—the Messiah, who should rise from the dead. *That his soul,* &c. Not content with saying simply that he spake of the Messiah's resurrection, Peter repeats the very words of the prophecy in question, applying them to Christ, of whom alone it was predicted, and of which alone it is historically true. (See on verse 27.) *This Jesus,* &c. Not only had the Lord's body remained untouched by corruption, but Jesus had gone to the place of the dead, without having remained there. *Witnesses,* not merely of this resurrection, but of far more. (See 1 Cor. xv. 15; also on Luke xxiv. 48.) *We all.* I with the eleven—those who have stood forth, but without excluding all the other disciples.

33. "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. 34. For David is not ascended into the heavens, but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand. 35. Until I make thy foes thy footstool. 36. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

1 Chap. v. 31; Phil. ii. 9. 2 John xvi. 7, 13, chap. i. 4. 3 Chap. x. 45; Eph. iv. 8. 4 Ps. cx. 1; Matt. xxii. 24. 5 Zech. xiii. 1. 6 Chap. v. 31. 7 John iii. 35. 8 1 Ps. ii. 2, 6-8.

The last point of the Apostle's argument in proof of the Messiahship of Jesus, were the extraordinary spiritual phenomena which they now beheld in the disciples of Jesus—their miraculous utterances, and their wonderful deportment. This was the only explanation of the phenomena which astonished all. *Therefore being,* &c. Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, had not only risen from the dead, but had ascended into heaven, and was at the right hand of God, the Lord of David, and the Lord of all, and according to His promise, had now sent down the Holy Spirit, filling the souls of His disciples with wondrous sentiments, and endowing them with miraculous speech. What they now saw and heard was a proof that He had ascended to heaven, and His ascension to heaven was a proof of His Messiahship. *For David,* &c. The Apostle appeals to the prophecy as a confirmation of his testimony. "David, confessedly, did not ascend to heaven, like Elijah, nevertheless, he says: 'The Lord said,' &c. (Ps. cx. 1.) Peter, to whom, doubtless, the question proposed by Jesus, in Matt. xxii. 42, had occurred, assumes that the word of God, in which a seat at His right hand is promised to the Messiah, refers to Jesus. *Sit thou on my right hand.* This shows the felicity of Christ in heaven (Ps. xvi. 11, xxi. 6)—His glorious majesty (Heb. i. 3, viii. 1)—the fullness of His power (Matt. xxvi. 64, xxviii. 18; Ps. xx 6, lxxxix. 13)—His authority in judgment (Rom. xiv. 9.)

Until I make, &c. An expression derived from the ancient custom toward the vanquished. (Josh. x. 24; Ps. lx. 1.) The dominion here, which Christ received, belonged to Him as Mediator, and it is to cease, therefore, when the objects of His kingdom as Mediator are accomplished. (Comp. 1 Cor. xv. 23-28.) This was the doctrinal part of Peter's sermon—it treated of the person, life, miracles, death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus, in a very close and convincing manner. His warm application of the whole now follows. *Therefore let all the house of Israel,* &c. That is, God the Father has ordained and appointed this Jesus whom ye have crucified, to be the Head and Sa-

viour of His Church, He being the true and promised Messiah.

That same Jesus both Lord and Christ. What a fact is this! Wonderful in itself, and especially wonderful in its bearing on the men to whom it was now proclaimed, and wonderful also for Peter to declare to such an audience. What sublime intrepidity and invincible courage does he, as a poor fisherman, display in doing so, before assembled thousands of his nation! How very pungent also was he in applying what he said to his hearers! He did not rest in generals, but said plainly, This is the same Jesus whom by wicked hands ye have slain. (Verse 23.) An old writer observes, "Had not the application been so close, it is probable the success of the sermon had not been so considerable. Thence learn, That the success and efficacy of the Word preached depends upon a particular and warm application of it to every man's conscience, generals will not affect. See an instance of it in what follows."

37. ¶ Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?
*Ezek. vii. 16; Zech. xii. 10. *Chap. ix. 6, xvi. 30.

Mark the effect produced by Peter's discourse. It awakened compunctions, and an eager inquiry. Their hearts were pierced as with a sharp instrument. In how different a light did the conduct of the Jews appear to them, when the evidence of the Messiahship of Jesus flashed conviction on their minds! What a crime they had committed! The annals of human guilt could not furnish another of equal atrocity. How dreadful was the punishment which they had reason to expect! Now they remember their own imprecation, "His blood be on us, and on our children;" and they trembled lest its weight should press them down to the lowest hell. Alarmed and perplexed, tortured with a consciousness of guilt, and dreading the just vengeance of heaven, from which they knew not how to escape, they say to Peter and the rest of the Apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They were anxious to hear of these ambassadors of Jesus, whether there was any hope of pardon for so great a crime, any means of protection from the

wrath which was ready to overwhelm them.

38. Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.—*Luke xxiv. 47; chap. iii. 19.

Peter said, in the name of his brethren. Repent. The word denotes *change of mind*, and here includes the reception of the Gospel, as the proper issue of that revolution of mind which they were then undergoing. The change of mind required was to be attested by an outward act—*repent and be baptized. In the name of Jesus Christ* is not the formula by which they were to be baptized, and therefore different from the one prescribed by Christ Himself (Matt. xxviii. 19), but a description of the rite as Christian, and not merely Jewish, much less heathen baptism, or an unmeaning form, connected with no religious creed whatever. *In the name of Jesus Christ, i. e.,* by His authority, acknowledging His claims, subscribing to His doctrines, engaging in His service, and relying on His merits. *For the remission of sins*—the pardon of sins, as the visible seal of that remission. *And ye shall receive, &c.* They needed not only Divine pardon, but Divine influence; not only the remission of sins, but the *gift of the Holy Ghost*. They would require this Spirit after the remission to remove gradually the sad effects of sin from their nature, to guide them rightly in their future course, strengthening them evermore to resist the wrong and pursue the right. In order to be saved we must be *sanctified*, as well as *justified*. The Divine pardon and the Divine Spirit, are essential to the salvation of our fallen world.

39. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.
*Joel ii. 28. *Eph. ii. 13, 17.

For the promise, the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit, mentioned in the preceding verse, and announced with so much particularity by the Prophet Joel (verse 17, &c.). Unto you, Israelites, bad as you are, in having persecuted, derided and crucified Jesus—the promise is to you. And to your children. It is not easy to conceive in what other light the audience could understand these words, than that the promise of salvation through Christ was made, not to those alone who believ-

ed, but to their seed; that their families were to be admitted to the privileges of the new dispensation as well as themselves, and that baptism was to both a sign and seal of their interest in the covenant. They would naturally judge this to be the meaning of the declaration, especially as it was expressed in the same terms which had been used at the institution of circumcision. (See Gen. xvii. 7, 10.) *And to all that are afar off*, not only Jews who were scattered in different countries, but to Gentiles also, to men on every zone of the globe. However distant the heart may be from God, it can nevertheless hear His voice. God is still willing to call men unto Himself, and He has still room for all who come to Him. (Luke xiv. 21.) *Even as many as the Lord our God shall call*, which calling, when effectual, includes regeneration.

40. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

Many other. One must be urgent until the result is effected. *Testify.* This refers to what goes before. *Exhort.* This, to what follows. *Save yourselves*, or, rather, *be saved.* Salvation begins in conversion. (Eph. ii. 6.) *This untoward generation.* This character is descriptive of the perverseness with which the unbelieving Jews opposed all the methods of Divine grace. (See Matt. xi. 16, &c; Luke vii. 31, &c. and notes.) No result is produced by the operations of the Holy Ghost as long as the soul resigns itself to the corrupting influences of society; Christians are required to shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, and to sever every tie that attaches them to a sinful world.

41. ¶ Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

Peter having spoken to his hearers of "the remission of sins" (verse 38), it is here added, they *gladly received his word*. (See Ps. xxxii. 1.) Our Saviour joins these two together, "Be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee." (See also Isa. lxi. 1.) Think with what joy the long-imprisoned debtor, drowned in debt, receives a full discharge, and his liberty, or a condemned malefactor the news of his pardon, and this will somewhat resemble, but yet fall far short of the joy which

faith brings by bringing Christ to the soul, and so forgiveness of sins in Him. *Were baptized.* As it is highly improbable that there should have been none of John's disciples in this large company, we may fairly infer that Christ's baptism was not precisely the same institution with John's, and that from this time, at least, John's disciples were baptized, when they were admitted into the Christian Church, according to the form appointed by our Lord after His resurrection. (Matt. xxviii. 19.)

The same day evidently qualifies *baptized* as well as *added*, because it was by baptism that the additions were effected. The conversion of these three thousand with these words, was a greater work than the feeding of four thousand or five thousand with a few loaves. They who are joined to Christ, are *added* to the disciples of Christ. When we take God for our God, we must take His people to be ours. "This was the true model of a *revival of religion*, and a perpetual demonstration, that such scenes as have characterized our own age and nation especially, are strictly in accordance with the spirit of the New Testament."

42. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.—1 Cor. xi. 2; 1leb. x. 25.

They continued. The conversion of this great multitude was *sudden*, yet their profession was not transient or wavering. Observe, 1. Primitive Christians looked upon *soundness in the faith* as of great importance. They were strangers to that spirit of indifference to truth which loves to represent its doctrines as mere matters of speculation, and insinuates that "it matters not what a man believes, if his practice be but good." 2. The fellowship which they maintained with one another arose out of a union of sentiments in Apostolical doctrines. They were full of charity, but their charity was not of that kind which led them to have fellowship with men of all principles. 3. They not only listened to Christ's instructions as their Prophet, and relied upon His atonement as their Priest, but cheerfully complied with His institutions as their King. It is true, indeed, that the phrase "breaking of bread" does not necessarily mean

the Lord's Supper, but being here introduced among the religious duties of the primitive Church, it must be regarded as signifying that institution, the whole being denominated from a part. 4. They were men that dwelt much with God in *prayer*. Having obtained mercy themselves, they joined in supplicating the Divine throne for the salvation of others.

43. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.
Mark xvi. 17.

Fear came upon every soul. Religious awe settled upon those who heard of the events just related, viz.: the descent of the Spirit, the miracle of tongues, the conversion of such a multitude. They felt that God was present, manifesting His great power, and they may also temporarily have had a presentiment of that "wrath to come," which was to overtake the obstinate enemies of God. This feeling of dread was deepened by many miracles which were wrought by the Apostles as instruments, while the power was God's. We are not, however, to understand their "wonders and signs" as having been restricted to that particular day.

44. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45. And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.
Chap. iv. 32, 34. Isa. lviii. 7; 2 Cor. ix. 1, 9; 1 John iii. 17.

All that believed, those believing, the believers. This is one of the names given in the history to those who followed Christ and were professors of the new religion. The phrase is elliptical for those who believed in Jesus as the true Messiah. *Were together*. Not locally, probably, for no house could contain the multitude, but spiritually. They were one in spirit, they were together in soul. What one felt, all felt. They wept with those that wept, they rejoiced with those that rejoiced. *Leighton* says: "The public ministry will profit little anywhere, where a people, or some part of them, are not thus one, and do not live together as of one mind, and use diligently all due means of edifying one another in their holy faith." How much of the primitive Christians' praise and profit is involved in the word, *They were together with one accord, with one mind*: and so they grew: *the Lord added to the Church*. (Acts ii. 1, 44, 47.)

And had all things common. It appears, from the story of Ananias and Sapphira, that the disciples were under no obligation, or were bound by no positive law, to dispose of their property for the benefit of the Church, and that after it was sold, they could retain the whole, or any part of the price, provided that they did not, like those unhappy persons, practice dissimulation and deceit: and it is further evident from the passage before us, that although in many instances they laid down the price at the feet of the Apostles, entrusting them with the distribution, yet they sometimes reserved it in their own hands, and gave it to the indigent, according to their own ideas of their need. These considerations seem to prove that there was not, as some have supposed, an actual community of goods in the primitive Church, but that, in consequence of the fervent charity which united the hearts and interests of the disciples, "no man," as Luke informs us in the fourth chapter, "said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own," or appropriated them solely to his own use, but readily parted with them for the supply of others.

They parted them to all men, as every man had need. All things were common, because they were at the service of every man who wanted them. There is no evidence that the conduct of the Church of Jerusalem was followed by any other Church, even in the Apostolic age, but so far as it is an example of generous love, triumphing over the selfish affections, and exciting men to seek the welfare of others as well as their own, it is worthy to be imitated to the end of the world. (See on chap. iv. 32.)

46. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.

Daily with one accord, &c.—observing the hours of Jewish worship. "However unlike itself," says the *Rev. John Howe*, "the Church of God is grown in a long tract of time, the Spirit of God is not grown unlike itself, and therefore when it comes to be poured forth as it hath been, it will still act as it hath done, uniformly and agreeably to itself, and make them, that now are many parties, divided and shat-

tered, broken this way and that, all one entire piece." (Col. ii. 1, 2.)

And breaking bread from house to house. The best authorities are in favor of explaining the words "from house to house" to mean, "in the house," or "at home," as distinguished from the foregoing phrase, "in the temple." Allusion may here be had to the charitable meals which the circumstances of many of these early Christians may have made necessary, they were received, perhaps, in companies at various houses. Such meals would partake, too, very much of a religious character, and, as to the feelings which would prevail, and the acts of thanksgiving and praise which would be connected with them, would doubtless well correspond to the language in the latter part of this verse and the beginning of the next—they would be received with gladness and singleness of heart, and with praise to God. (See on next verse.) The phrase *singleness of heart* denotes that they were characterized by simplicity of spirit. There was no pride, no ostentation, no self-seeking, no hypocrisy amongst them, but all were exquisitely child-like in spirit.

47. Praising God, and having *favours* with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

*Luke ii. 52; Rom. xiv. 18. rChap. v. 14, xi. 24.

Praising God. God permits none to exceed Him in liberality; the more heartily we praise and thank Him, the more abundantly does He bestow grace and comfort upon us. No one can more fully enjoy the temporal gifts of God than a true Christian, for he rejoices at the same time in God, and tastes and sees that the Lord is good. *And having*, &c. Though looking only to God, they had *favor with all the people*, just as their Lord had while still a child (Luke ii. 52.) A lovely picture of the infant community! Their faith the people might not approve, but their vir-

tues they could not refuse to commend. When Christianity, in the conduct of its genuine friends, puts on the lovely aspect of meekness, gentleness, and goodness, the hearts of its enemies bear an unequivocal testimony in its favor, and sometimes their lips unwittingly pronounce its eulogium.

And the Lord, now called upon by the believing as their Saviour, *added*, "kept adding," i. e., to the visible community of believers, or to the *assembly* of the followers of Christ. "The word Church (in the Greek) properly means those who are *called out*, and is applied to Christians as being *called out*, or separated from the world." *Such as should be saved.* The Church was a growing society. It received daily accessions. The original should rather be rendered, *the saved*. This is an additional description of those called *believers* in verse 44. Men are said to be saved in reference not only to the final consummation, but to the inception of the saving work. Of every penitent believing sinner, we may say, with equal truth, that he will certainly be saved, and that he has been saved already. We here learn, 1. That the work of a thorough and saving conversion, is God's work. Hence it is said, "*the Lord added*," &c. 2. That though the Spirit of God be the author and efficient cause, yet the preaching of the Gospel, and an exemplary walk and conversation, are subordinate helps and instrumental means conducting thereto.

Let it not be supposed, that as this occasion was peculiar, the power exerted was unusual, and ought not to be looked for again. "The Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save." "The residue of the Spirit is with Him," and the same effects are still produced in the conversion of every sinner. The Gospel is "mighty through God" to subdue all opposition.

1. Explain the word "Pentecost." 2. What is said about a rushing mighty wind? 3. What about "cloven tongues?" 4. What is said of those who were assembled together? 5. Why were the multitude confounded? 6. What did they say? 7. What was Peter's reply? 8. Explain verse 23. 9. What was the effect of Peter's sermon on the multitude? 10. What did he tell them to do? 11. What is said of those "that gladly received his word?" 12. What did "all that believed" do with their possessions? 13. What is said of additions to the Church?

CHAPTER III.

1 *Peter preaching to the people that came to see a lame man restored to his feet.* 12 *professeth the cure not to have been wrought by his or John's own power, or holiness, but by God, and his Son Jesus, and through faith in his name.* 13 *withal reprehending them for crucifying Jesus.* 17 *Which because they did it through ignorance, and that thereby were fulfilled God's & terminate counsels, and the Scriptures.* 19 *he exhorteth them by repentance and faith to seek remission of their sins, and salvation in the same Jesus.*

NOW Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

*Ps. lv. 17; Dan. vi. 10.

We find Peter and John very frequently together in the Scripture. They seem to have been more dissimilar than any other two of the Apostles, yet their very unlikeness, perhaps, was one of the causes of their friendship. *Went up, &c.* Their friendship was religious, it took them to the house of God in company. Those connections are the most valuable, in which the Bible is a witness between us, in which another world is not forgotten. *The temple.* Public devotion has claims upon us. It is a commanded duty, and a profitable one. The worship of the sanctuary enlivens our feeling, endears us to each other, and keeps the distinctions of life from becoming excessive. *The ninth hour.* The Jews had three stated hours of prayer; the morning sacrifice at the third hour, or nine in the morning, the sixth hour, at noon (chap. x. 9), and the evening sacrifice at the ninth hour, or three in the afternoon. (Ex. xxix. 39; Num. xxviii. 3, 4.) Christians did not alter the times of prayer.

2. And a certain man, lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple: 3. Who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked an alms.

*John ix. 8.

Lame from his mother's womb. For upward of forty years he had lived a cripple. (See chap. iv. 22.) His lameness was not the result of accident or disease, or some infirmity that had come upon him after a period of physical perfection, but was a constitutional defect, he was born a cripple. Consequently the cure was the harder, and the person cured the more credible a witness. What a vale of tears in this earth! To what a variety of evils are the human race exposed! And what are they all, but a commentary on sin as the text! For sin

"Brought death into the world, and all our woe,"

We cannot be too thankful for our exemption and preservation from physical suffering or deformity. Such an instance of misery as this, is presented to try our disposition. *Was carried*, literally, *used to have himself carried.* *Called Beautiful.* This gate was the great eastern gate of the temple enclosure. It was erected by Herod the Great. It was above fifteen yards high, and about eight yards wide, being formed of Corinthian brass, with the most exquisite workmanship. According to Josephus, it was superior in size and decoration to all the other gates. *To ask alms, &c.* This poor wretch was not only deformed, but poor, and helpless, so that his only expedient was begging. Where could he expect aid, if not from those going into the temple. Piety without benevolence is hypocrisy. (Job xxix. 11-13.)

4. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. 5. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

Look on us. Their object appears to have been to gain his attention more fully to their words, so that, as they said, "In the name of Jesus Christ," &c. (verse 6), he might understand to whom he was indebted for the benefit conferred upon him. *He gave heed unto them, expecting, &c.* It was a constant custom for all who entered the temple, to carry money with them for the treasury, or poor, or both. The cripple, wondering at the unusual character of this address, of course looked on them intently and expectantly, although only under the idea that, as he desired, something in the way of alms should be given him by them. (1 John iv. 20.) With what diligence and attention we listen, when we have reason to expect temporal aid! It is already a great blessing, when a pastor, by the power of the Spirit, has awakened an expectation in his hearers that they will "receive something," they are then no longer dead, for their hearts begin to feel and to hunger. But let them not wait in vain. Alas! how often it may occur, that poor, awakened and hungry souls, look on their teacher, hoping to *receive something*, and are sent empty away! Here note, 1. The great mercy of God that was mingled with this

poor man's affliction, though he was lame, he was not blind. 2. That what the cripple could do, he must and did do, toward his own healing. He could not move a foot, but he could fix his eye. We are spiritual cripples, laboring under a moral impotency, being *without strength*. (Rom. v. 6.) But God expects the exercise of our faculties, and the use of our endeavors in order to our recovery, help healing (Phil. ii. 12.)

6. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee; In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.
*Chap. iv. 10.

Silver and gold, &c. So poor were the Apostles, that they had nothing to give, either to the sacred *treasury*, or to the *distressed*. This, it should be observed, was after the possessions were sold (ii. 45), and shows plainly how far the Apostles were from enriching themselves by the riches "laid at their feet." (Chap. iv. 35.) Certainly it was from conviction that such men preached the resurrection of Jesus. *But such as I have, &c.* As if he had said, "Money I have none, I am poor in this world; but such as I have—the power that God has given me to help others—I will employ on your behalf." A man like Peter may be without money, and yet have God with him, and in him, to work His will. *In the name, &c., i. e.,* by His authority. Thus spake the servant and Apostle of Him who, in a similar case, had said, "I will, be thou opened." (Mark vii. 34; see also Luke v. 24.) *Of Jesus Christ.* Since the first enunciation of the great proposition (chap. ii. 36, 38), "Jesus is Christ," this is now become the comprehensive holy name of their Lord and God, whom they confess, and in whose name they do all that they do, and freely give to every one all that they have. *Of Nazareth, in Greek, the Nazarene.* (See on ii. 22.) *Rise up and walk.* It is difficult to decide, whether the Apostle meant to say, As an Apostle of Jesus Christ, and relying on His power, I say unto thee, Arise and walk, or, I say unto thee, Arise and walk, placing thy confidence for ability to do so in Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Perhaps both views should be combined.

7. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up; and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

And he took, &c. Precisely what his Lord had done to his own mother-in-law. (Mark i. 31.) The seeking soul must be sustained not only by our words, but also by our acts, even as if we took it by the hand, and assisted it to walk. *And lifted him up, &c.* How much more wonderful than the change produced in this lame man's condition, is that change which God effects in the heart! But who gives heed to it? *His feet* (or soles) *and ankle bones, &c.*—the technical language of a physician. (Col. iv. 14.) The suddenness of the cure was the *proof* of the miracle: his walking and leaping were the *evidences* of it. Observe the simple and yet authoritative manner in which the miracle is performed. No solemn preparations are made, no mystic ceremonies are used, which might work upon the imagination of the patient, and excite his reverence and admiration of the persons of the Apostles. By a few words, pronounced in a serious unaffected manner, the effect is produced.

8. And he, leaping up, stood and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.—Isa. xxxv. 6.

The poor cripple who had never used his limbs for forty years (iv. 22), and who did not seek their restoration *leaped up, stood, &c.* This effect upon the man *himself*, shows the indubitableness of the miracle. Though the cure was well nigh instantaneous, yet there is a great gradation observed. First, the strengthening of the feet and ankle bones, at which moment the spark of faith was kindled, then the leaping up, then the standing, then the walking, then the entering the temple. The man's frame bounded with new energy, his soul was flooded with divine joy and praise, and his limbs were agile and blithe, expressing these emotions. *Entered with them, &c.* How natural now to accompany the Apostles into the temple! *Praising God, heartily, earnestly,* for giving this soundness in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. By the wonderful goodness of God toward this poor cripple, his miseries and calamities, his lameness and poverty, are overruled for his best good, namely for bringing him to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and salvation by Him. Mercies are then perfected when they are sanctified.

9. And all the people saw him walking, and praising God: 10. And they knew that it was he which sat for years at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

And they knew, &c. This effect upon the people also shows the indubitableness of the miracle. Here was the broad seal of Heaven on the divine mission of the Apostles. This patient resided in the very midst of this people. He was well known, for his forty years' affliction, and his poverty. Multitudes had seen him: many had relieved him, and many had handled him. (Verse 2). And his cure had been effected not in an obscure corner, but at the entrance into the temple, and in daylight, when there was a concourse of people. Could anything have been more open to detection, had there been any imposture? Clearly, then, the rejection of the Gospel by unbelievers cannot arise from an intellectual, but a moral cause. They do not want evidence, but disposition.

11. And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.—John x. 23; chap. v. 12.

Held Peter and John. Did he imagine their influence was confined to their bodily presence? and that if he let them go his lameness would return? Or did he wish thus to point out his benefactors to the multitude? Doubtless it was still more the expression of his attachment. So it is in our spiritual cures. It is natural and right to feel a regard for those who have been the means of our recovery, and to keep hold of them. But let us remember we may hold them too closely. And we do so, if we suffer them to draw us away from the God of all grace. (1 Cor. iii. 4-7.) *All the people ran, &c.* Some, only to gratify their curiosity with the sight of men that had such power; others, with a desire to hear them preach, concluding that their doctrine must needs be of Divine origin, which thus had a Divine ratification. *In the porch Solomon's*, the long portico or colonnade on the east side of the temple. This noble structure, was supported by a wall four hundred cubits high, consisting of stones of an almost incredible size. (See on John x. 23.)

12. ¶ And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?—2 Cor. iii. 5.

Saw it—the concourse of the people, and their immense amazement. *Why marvel ye, &c.* He does not intend to express censure because of their astonishment, for that was natural, but because of their ascribing the deed to them, as the primal authors. Here we see, and must admire, the true humility which the Gospel imparts to men. May not the Apostles take a little credit to themselves for this miracle? It will not materially damage their Master, while it may dignify them, and fix their authority as His ministers. But, however anxious they once had been to be advanced in Christ's kingdom, they had learned by this time not to seek their own things, but the things which are Jesus Christ's. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory!" (Ps. cxv. 1.) Such is the confession of all true servants of God.

13. The God of Abraham and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. 14. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;—Matt. xxii. 32. 15. Chap. v. 30, 31. 16. John xvii. 1; Eph. i. 20, 22; Phil. ii. 9, 11; Heb. ii. 9; Rev. i. 5, 18. 17. John xix. 15. 18. Matt. xxvii. 17-25; Luke xxiii. 16-23. 19. Ps. xvi. 10; Luke i. 35. 20. Chap. vii. 52, xxii. 14.

When the circumstances are considered, with what wonderful boldness does Peter proclaim the truth! (See on ii. 23.) The charge he prefers is of a very aggravated nature. They stood in a close covenant relationship to God, who had set them apart, and, amid many national vicissitudes, had kept them apart, for a very special purpose, viz.: that they might cherish and preserve in the world such lights and manifestations of the Messiah: as God was pleased to dispense before His advent, and then, when He came, that they might be prepared to bid Him welcome to the world—to erect His standard, guard His interests, and share His triumphs. *He has come*, was Peter's startling announcement, and gone away again. He has come—your long looked for Prince—to His covenanted people, and you have betrayed Him, and denied and killed Him. Yet He is not dead, for God hath raised Him up—nor is He dishonored, for God hath glorified Him, and given Him a name that is above every name, by the power of which has this man been made whole, whom ye both see and know. *In the presence of Pilate, &c.* Pilate, admonished by

his wife's warning dream, and convinced of Christ's innocence, wrought with you to save His life. All in vain, you insisted that He should die.

15. And killed the "Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses." John i. 4; 1 John v. 11. *Matt. xxviii. 2-5; Eph. i. 20. †Chap. ii. 32.

Killed the Prince or author of life. The word is classically applied to military leaders, or one who is first in anything (comp. Heb. ii. 10, xii. 2). "You have quenched the light of Israel, you crowned your King with thorns, and for a throne you set Him upon a cross." The contrast between their killing such a person, while they interceded for the pardon of a murderer, a destroyer of life, has peculiar energy. *Whom God hath raised, &c.* They are made aware that in the whole of this matter they have been fighting against God. They pretended to be actuated in what they did by jealousy for God's honor, and appealed to Him as judge. And He did appear upon the stage, but not upon their side. *They killed the Prince of Life—God quickened Him; they laid Him in the grave—God lifted Him to the skies. Whereof we are witnesses.* (See on chap. ii. 32.)

16. And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

His name, by means (or on account) of faith in that name hath made, &c. **Whom ye see* entirely restored now to bodily vigor, and *know* as a person who was formerly infirm, helpless. *Yea, &c.* This second clause of the verse repeats essentially the idea of the first, in order to affirm more emphatically that it was not their own power, but the power of Christ which had performed the miracle. *The faith which is by (or through) him.* Christ is thus represented as the author or procuring cause, as well as the end or object of the faith in question. *In the presence of you all,* and hence they must acknowledge that no other means had been used to effect the miracle.

17. And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers, 18. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

*Luke xxiii. 34; John xvi. 3; 1 Cor. ii. 8. †Luke xxiv. 44; chap. xxvi. 22, 23.

I wot—old English for "I know," from

the Anglo-Saxon *witan*, to see, to know, from which comes our word "*wit*." *That through ignorance, &c.* Does Peter here state the ignorance of the Jews as an *excuse* for their crime, or merely as accounting for it? Undoubtedly it does account for it. (1 Cor. ii. 8.) Are the Jews then guiltless because they moved in the dark? Does their ignorance annihilate their crime? Not at all. It only alters the name of it. It shifts the burden of guilt from one part of the transaction to another, but it leaves the burden there. That they did not know the Lord of Glory was their sin—a greater sin than crucifying Him. He did not come from heaven without sufficient credentials, nor did He put forth His claims without giving ample proof that they were just. From Moses and the Prophets, from John the Baptist, from His own mighty works, from His Father's testimony, given from the "excellent glory"—from every quarter a decisive testimony was borne to the Messiahship of Christ, and they who resisted His claims were without excuse. Hence we are not to regard Peter's statement as a plea in justification of their conduct, but as an explanation of God's. Because they had proceeded in ignorance when they crucified Christ, God was pleased to open the door of mercy to them, and gave them an opportunity of making a quick escape from hell. Thus the 17th verse is to be sustained on to the 19th verse; along with the 18th verse it forms a ground on which Peter calls them to repentance. We learn here that ignorance does not exempt us from the punishment of sins committed through it, nor does it entitle us to pardon. At the same time it forms a ground upon which God is frequently pleased to show mercy. (John xv. 22, 24; 1 Tim. i. 13.) *He hath so fulfilled.* This verse, as connected with the preceding one, may be taken in this sense, "You fulfilled the Scriptures, and did not know it. God was fulfilling the Scripture, when you were gratifying your own passions." (See on chap. iv. 28.)

19. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

*Chap. ii. 38. †Isa. i. 16-20, Joel ii. 13. ‡Isa. xliiii. 25. §Jer. xxxi. 23-25; Zeph. iii. 14-20; Rev. xxi. 4.

Repent be converted. These two forms of expression may have substantially the same meaning, namely, that of forsaking the wrong course which the Apostle's hearers had pursued in reference to the Lord Jesus, and of turning to a right mode of viewing Him and conducting toward Him, that is, acknowledging Him as the Messiah, and becoming His obedient followers. The first denotes the inner change of mind, the second the outward change of life. What is required here includes faith as a constituent part of the act to be performed. *Blotted out.* Instead of *remission*, we have here the stronger figure of abstersion or obliteration. The Greek verb is applied by Xenophon to the erasure of a name from a catalogue or roll. It may here denote the cancelling of charges against any one, and thus amounts to the same thing with the *remission* of sins. (Chap. ii. 38.) The metaphor of blotting out occurs several times elsewhere (*e. g.* Ps. li. 9; cix. 14; Isa. xliii. 25; Jer. xviii. 23; Col. ii. 14.) *When, more properly, in order that the times of refreshing may come, i. e., to you personally, that you may have part in the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, for which men can be prepared only by repentance and the pardon of their sins. From the presence of the Lord.* Since the blessings in question (a Hebrew idiom) are laid up where He is (see ii. 28), and must be received thence. The word rendered "*Lord*," which may refer to Christ or God (see on i. 24), applies to the latter here, since it prepares the way for the subject of the next verb.

20. And he ^{shall} send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:—Chap. i. 11; Heb. ix. 23.

And he shall send, rather, and that he may send forth, viz.: from heaven (see verse 21.) *Which before was preached unto you, before appointed or prepared for you, i. e., from eternity.* (See 1 Peter i. 20.) Nearly all critics, says an eminent commentator, understand this passage as referring to the return of Christ at the end of the world. The similarity of the language to that of other passages which announce that event demands this interpretation. The Apostle enforces his exhortation to repent by an appeal to the final coming of Christ, not

because he would represent it as near in point of time, but because that event was always *near to the feelings and consciousness* of the first believers. (2 Peter iii. 12.)

21. Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.—Matt. xvii. 11. Luke i. 70.

Whom the heaven must receive. It was a common opinion among the Jews, that the Messiah would continue on earth. (See John xii. 24.) Peter here anticipates such an objection. The word *receive* has here the additional idea of *retaining* or *holding*. The Messiah is represented by him as having been, according to Divine appointment, taken up into heaven, where He is by the same appointment to *remain* until a certain period fixed by the Divine counsels. *Until the times of the restitution, &c.* Christ, in heaven, as the monarch of the creation, the representative of humanity, the object of universal wonder and worship, will reign there, but for a certain time only, *Until the times of the restitution, or restoration of all things, i. e., to a state of primeval, order, purity and happiness, such as will exist for those who have part in the kingdom of Christ, at His second coming.* *By the mouth of all his holy prophets.* All the prophets were holy, all entered heaven (Luke xiii. 28). They who are rejected as workers of iniquity, were not prophets, even though they prophesied. (Matt. vii. 22; comp. John xi. 51.) Balaam was a prophet, indeed, not in Israel, however, but only in relation to Balak. *Since the world began, or, from the beginning of time.* (See on Luke i. 70; Jude 14, 15; Job xix. 23, 26; Ps. i. 3, 4, xvi. 13, xviii. 9; Joel iii. 13.

22. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me, him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. 23. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Deut. xviii. 15-19.

Moses truly said. See Deut. xviii. 15-22, which contains one of the clearest prophecies ever delivered of Messiah, who is set forth as a supreme legislator, law-giver, and judge. *A prophet . . . like unto me.* Moses was a prophet, a peculiar prophet, a pre-eminent prophet. He introduced and established the whole of the Jewish dispensation with miracles, wonders and signs. He was a mediator between God

and the people. Other prophets received Divine communications through various mediums, but he received everything from God immediately. But "if the Law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." "The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Yea, in all things He has the pre-eminence. (See Heb. iii. 2-6; Deut. xxxiv. 10.) Moses was faithful as a servant, but Christ as a Son over His own house. The commission of Moses was confined to one nation, Christ is not only the glory of His people Israel, but a light to lighten the Gentiles—the light of the world. *Him shall ye hear*—not merely with our outward ear, but also believing His instructions, and cordially submitting to them. *In all things*. Some dislike the mysterious parts of Christianity, some the humiliating, some the practical, but the only inquiry of a true disciple is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" It is here supposed that some *will not hear this prophet*. This is a sad intimation; and we might wonder at the fact. But the depravity of human nature will account for it, and all history confirms it. Mark the impartiality of the sentence, *every soul*. The refusers may be many, and they may differ from each other, each turning to his own way, but none shall escape the penalty. *Shall be destroyed*, &c. Not annihilated! this would be a privilege. They shall seek death, but they shall not find it. The penalty is not the loss of their being, but of their happiness, and of their hope, the destruction of body and soul in hell forever!

24. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

Moses and all the succeeding prophets, beginning with Samuel, have all uttered predictions respecting these times. It is clear why Peter particularly mentions Samuel after Moses, for between Moses and Samuel there was but little prophesying (1 Sam. iii. 1), and he was the first after Moses who wrote his prophecy.

25. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. 26. Unto you first, God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

^aRom. ix. 4. ^bGen. xxii. 18. ^cMatt. x. 5; Luke xxiv. 47. ^dIsa. lix. 20; Matt. i. 21; Titus ii. 11-14.

The Apostle applies the whole to his own age and to the people before him, and presents two aspects of the case: first, the promise of the blessing (made to Abraham, Gen. xii. 3, xviii. 18, xxii. 18), to Isaac (Gen. xxvi. 4), to Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 14), belongs, as he declares, to his hearers, but, secondly, on the condition that they be turned away from their iniquities. *Unto you first*. According to the glorious scheme of divine and sovereign mercy, the Gospel was everywhere first addressed to the Jews. *To bless you*, literally, *blessing you*, in the very act of executing this commission. *In turning away*, &c. Learn, 1, That it is Christ's proper work to turn sinners from their iniquities. O that we would all subserve Christ in that great work! He is the principal agent, let us be subordinate instruments, by practicing holiness ourselves, and promoting holiness in others. Learn, 2, That to be turned by Christ from our iniquities, is the greatest blessing that we can realize from Him, because it is a spiritual blessing, a fundamental blessing, a comprehensive blessing, an endearing blessing, an everlasting blessing.

1. For what purpose did Peter and John go up to the temple? 2. What is said about a certain man at the gate of the temple? 3. What was the effect of the miracle wrought? 4. What did Peter say? 5. Explain verse 17. 6. What is repentance? 7. What is meant by the "times of refreshing," &c.? 8. What did Moses say unto the fathers? 9. Why were those Peter addressed called "children of the covenant?" 10. To whom was Jesus sent first? 11. For what purpose was He sent?

CHAPTER IV.

1 *The rulers of the Jews offended with Peter's sermon, 4 (though thousands of the people were converted that heard the word,) imprison him and John. 5 After, upon examination Peter boldly avouching the lame man to be healed by the name of Jesus, and that by the same Jesus only we must be eternally saved, 13 they command him and John to preach no more in that name, adding also threatening, 23 whereupon the church flecth to prayer, 31. And God, by moving the place where they were assembled, testified that he heard their prayer: confirming the church with the gift of the Holy Ghost, and with mutual love and charity.*

AND as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, 2. Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now even-tide. 4. Howbeit, many of them which heard the word believed, and the number of the men was about five thousand.

^aLuke xxii. 4. ^bMatt. xxii. 23. ^cxxiii. 8, xxviii. 24.

Peter and John went on in their work. What they said concerned all, and they spake it openly and publicly. *The priests*, i. e., *the officiating priests*, as soon as they were released from their duties. *Captain of the temple*. The prefect of those priests and Levites who kept guard in the temple. *The Sadducees*, whose whole system was now in danger, by the preaching of the resurrection from the dead, for they believed not in the immortality of the soul, nor in any future world. *Came upon them*. The Cross always attends the true Gospel. *Grieved*—vexed or tired out. *Through Jesus, &c.*, that is, declared and proved that the dead must rise again, since it was an incontrovertible truth that Jesus had risen from the dead. *In hold*—detention or imprisonment. *Even-tide*—late in the evening, and therefore not a proper time to have them examined. *Howbeit*—notwithstanding the persecutions, the Divine cause advanced. Though the clouds gather and thicken into blackness, the sun rises. The tides flow, though the force of the mightiest tempest bears against them, and God's truth moves on to universal empire, though earth and hell combine against it. *The number of the men was*, literally, *became*, i. e., in consequence of the present addition. (See i. 15, ii. 41.) *About five thousand*, without enumerating females and children.

5. ¶ And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, 6. And Annas, the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

^aJohn xviii. 13.

Their rulers—the great council of the Sanhedrim. *Elders, and scribes*, express particular classes represented in that body Annas Caiaphas. (See on Luke iii. 2.) *John, and Alexander*. No particular account has reached us of these men. They had, probably, held some official stations, and were still men of note, and members of the Sanhedrim. *Kindred of the high priest*—sustained a family relation to Annas and Caiaphas. *Gathered Jerusalem*. This seems to imply, that all the members of the Sanhedrim were not residing, or at least not actually present in Jerusalem.

7. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?—Matt. xxi. 23.

Our Apostles were put, probably, in the very same place in which Jesus had stood not long before. *By what power, &c.* They do not ask first, whether this manifest sign had actually taken place, for it was obvious to all who dwelt at Jerusalem. *By what name*, spoken as a word of power. *Have ye done this?* Thus they made as little as possible of the miracle, thinking that they should be able to mystify, and perhaps blacken, the evident fact of their high magisterial inquiry, and to put down the poor Galileans with their contemptuous *ye*!

8. Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them: Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel: 9. If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; 10. Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. ^avii. 55. ^biii. 6, 18.

Peter and John were not to be intimidated, though placed at the bar for trial. (See on ii. 23.) *Filled with the Holy Ghost*, i. e., specially, for the occasion. (See on Mark xiii. 11.) *Rulers of the people and elders of Israel* may be taken as equivalent descriptions of the whole body, since the rulers of the chosen people, under the patriarchal system were not elective but hereditary magistrates. *Be it known, &c.* There was no evasion in this answer, no reluctance to bring out the truth, no attempt to palliate it, although Peter knew that it was in the highest degree offensive to his audience. *Whom ye crucified, whom*

God raised . . . the copula (and, or but) is omitted, to make the contrast more striking. "By that same man, with whose innocent blood your hands are yet stained, has this inconvertible miracle been performed." This man—like at once a monumental proof and a firm confessor, the lame-born stands with his benefactors in the semi-circle of the court. Stand—and so his legs speak though his tongue be silent.

11. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. 12. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

^bPs. cxviii. 22; Isa. xxviii. 16; Matt. xxi. 42. ix. 43; 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. ^cPs. xiv. 17.

This is the stone, &c. This application of Ps. cxviii. 22, already made by our Lord Himself (Matt. xxi. 42, on which see notes), is here repeated with peculiar propriety after the deed of rejection had been consummated, and the rejected One had by His exaltation to the right hand of the Majesty on high, become *the head of the corner*. It is to the head of the corner the whole building owes its strength, its union, and its beauty. *Neither is there, &c.* Here is, 1. A positive assertion that there is no salvation but by Christ, or, that besides, or without Him, there is no possibility of salvation, either for Jew or Gentile, both those under the Old Testament had, and we under the New Testament have, one and the same common Saviour. 2. The ground and reason of this confident assertion, that there is no salvation but by Christ, namely, because *there is no other name, &c.*, that is no other person designed or appointed by God, to be the author of redemption to, and procurer of salvation for, a lost and miserable world, but only Christ. Let us take good heed, then, that we do not reject or set Him at naught, for in rejecting Christ, we reject the wisdom, authority, love, yea, the salvation of God.

13. ¶ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled, and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. 14. And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. 15. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16. Saying, ^aWhat shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem: and we cannot deny it. 17. But that it spread no farther among the people, let us strictly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. 18. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

^aMatt. xi. 25; 1 Cor. i. 27. ^bix. 36. ^cJohn xi. 47. ^dvv. 40.

The boldness of Peter and John. Whence did this noble, self-denying, and heroic spirit originate? They had seen the moral glory of their Saviour's character, and felt the constraining influence of His grace and love. Rather, therefore, would they now willingly undergo disgrace, and torture, and death, than deny the Lord that bought them with His blood, or bring dishonor on the worthy name by which they were called. *Unlearned and ignorant.* This, for three centuries, was the objection against the professors of Christianity, yet it is a great confirmation of the Christian faith, and shows, as *Justin Martyr* well observes, that it was not of human, but Divine origin, and that being with Jesus was sufficient to make the ignorant and unlearned wise. *They took knowledge, &c.* Observe, 1. Some have been with Jesus, in His Word, in His house, at His table, in the closet, in the field. 2. It is expected that they who are with Jesus should resemble Him. 3. Conformity to Christ will not be overlooked. God, angels, Ministers, fellow-Christians, the world will take knowledge of it.

They could say nothing, &c. So great was the momentary efficacy of the truth, and, such was the effect of the yet remaining consciousness and susceptibility of conscience of the council, that they were speechless, and were compelled to collect their thoughts ere they could venture to use threats against the truth. *Commanded . . . out.* The Apostles were directed to withdraw while their judges should hold consultation. *What shall we do to these men?* Instead of saying to these men, What must we do to be saved? they say of them, How shall we stop their mouths? *For that indeed a notable miracle, &c.* Why, then, should the rulers wish to deny it, but that they hated the light, and would not come to the light lest their deeds should be re-proved? *That it spread no farther.* It refers not to the miracle, nor to its notoriety, but to the Christian doctrine, the unexpressed consequence of the miracle. *Let us strictly threaten them, &c.* What a humiliating position for the great council of the nation to be placed in! What a sight! Seventy

at least of a nation's magnates and magistrates confounded by two poor men whom they considered illiterate and ignorant. The restriction imposed only to the act of preaching the name of Jesus. The world can endure preaching and good works, but will not tolerate the name of Jesus, the preaching of the crucified One, or the doctrine that He alone can save the soul.

19. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. 20. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. 21. So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done. 22. For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

ev. 23. Jer. xx. 9. xxxii. 15; 1 John. 1. 3. Matt. xxi. 26; chap. v. 26.

And John. Now John also enters more prominently on the scene, for their open confession has this effect, that *we two* will not keep silence about Jesus. *Whether it be right to hearken to you more than God, judge ye, &c.* There is here a wonderful union of sober, respectful appeal to the better reason of their judges, and calm, deep, determination to abide the consequences of a constrained testimony, which betokens a power above their own resting upon them, according to promise. We here perceive the limits of the obedience which we owe to our superiors in Church and State. In those cases which are agreeable to the laws of heaven, made known by the light of nature, and by revelation, or which, at least, are not inconsistent with those laws, we are bound; but in every other case we are free. God has a prior claim to our obedience, which no human interference, no relation which may be formed between us and others, no promise or contract, can invalidate.

For we cannot but speak, &c. We cannot in accordance with truth and duty. These "things" we have "seen and heard," and, therefore, are fully assured of ourselves, and things which we only have seen and heard: and, therefore, if *we* do not publish them, who will? who can? *Further threatened, i. e.,* with threats superadded to the inhibition of verse 18. *Because of the people,* who looked upon the miracle with admiration, and glorified God for working it by the Apostles' hands. *Above forty years old.* The length of time during which he had been crippled is not mentioned to en-

hance the miracle itself, as if a case of shorter standing might have been more easily restored, but to show the notoriety, both of his previous condition and of the sudden change which had been wrought, precluding all possibility of error or deception, and accounting for the popular effect described in the preceding verse. It is as easy with God to convert a sinner of *forty or fourscore*, as one of *ten* years old. But he who *now* refuses to obey the call of God, has neither reason nor revelation to support himself in the hope that he shall yet in a future time, accept the salvation which he rejects in the present.

23. ¶ And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.—ii. 44-46.

Their own company—the community of believers, the Church in general. Among believers the Apostles felt themselves at home, as contrasted with being among the rulers in the Sanhedrim. To them they related all that the chief priests and rulers had said to them. "Not for their own glory," says *Chrysostom*, "did they tell the tale, but what they displayed were the proofs therein exhibited of the grace of Christ. All that their adversaries had said, this they told: their own part, it is likely, they omitted." This was a most important crisis for the infant Church. The highest civil and religious authority in the nation had decided against it. But, weak and defenseless in itself, it does not despond; on the contrary it betakes itself to God in prayer, and filled with a holy boldness, it defies all the powers of the world combined to overthrow the cause of Christ.

24. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is. 25. Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? 26. The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. 27. For of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together: 28. For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. 29. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word. 30. By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

¶ Kings xix. 15. Ps. ii. 1, 2. Luke xxiii. 1-8, &c. ii. 18. Prov. xxi. 30; Isa. xlii. 10, liii. 10. Verse 13, 31, xiv. 8, xxviii. 31; Eph. vi. 19. ii. 43, v. 12.

They lifted up their voice to God with one accord. Prayer is enjoined on us in our distresses. "Call upon me in the day of

trouble." "Is any afflicted, let him pray." Observe the *substance* of their prayer. It was very seasonable, very suitable, and very short, as all Bible prayers are. It was also very *exemplary*, though they had been so evil entreated, yet they felt no disposition for revenge. (See on verse 30.) Then we see the *success* of the prayer, and God hath never said to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain! The sign of the acceptance of the place seems strange—"The place was shaken." (Verse 31.) This seemed much more likely to produce dread than engender hope. But God would so teach us, that He is "greatly to be feared in the assembly of His saints," that He will be sanctified of all them that come nigh to Him, and that there was something awful in the dispensation of His mercy and grace.

Thou art God, &c. Thy rule is universal, and Thy power unlimited, for Thou hast made the heaven and its glories, the earth and the sea, and their endlessly varied and numerous inhabitants, and hast them under Thy direction and control. *Who by the mouth, &c.* Here the Apostles declare that God Himself spake by David, and it is confessed by the Jews, that the ancient rabbins interpret this Psalm of the Messiah. *Why, &c.* The sense is, this, Why do they, the peoples, kings and princes of the earth, rebel against the Messiah, why endeavor to shake off His rule? The *for* (verse 27) implies an acknowledgment of the truth of God in the fulfillment of the prophecy: *Thou art the God which hast, &c.* For these events have happened accordingly. *Herod Pilate Gentiles Israel.* All these four forces are pictured as *gathered together* at the crucifixion as the image of the persecuting powers still in operation.

For to do, or rather, in order to do, though not with that conscious intention on their part. *Thy hand, or Thy power, Thy counsel, Thy purpose.* The phrase denotes the providential ordering of God. *Determined, &c.* The sentiment is the same as is conveyed in ii. 23 and iii. 18, on which see notes. All the hostility which was shown against Jesus, and the successful efforts to compass His death, were the means by which this arrangement was fulfilled. The

actors in this dreadful tragedy had no design to fulfill prophecy; they only acted out the will of their own hearts, and were unspeakably guilty, as being wholly voluntary in their determinations and their conduct. God permitted them thus to proceed, interposing no insuperable obstacles. Here is a chain thrown across a river; we can see the two opposite ends, but not the union in the midst; but were the chain raised, or the water lowered, we could see the connection as well as the extremities. All our knowledge of the affair begins and ends here—God's foreknowledge and man's free agency harmonize really, but inexplicably.

Now, Lord, behold their threatenings, &c. Recognizing in the threatenings of the Sanhedrim a declaration of war by the combined powers of the world against their infant cause, they seek not enthusiastically to hide from themselves its critical position, but calmly ask the Lord of heaven and earth to "look upon their threatenings." *That with all boldness they may speak thy word.* Rising above self, they ask only fearless courage to testify for their Master, and Divine attestation to their testimony by miracles of healing, &c., in His Name.

31. ¶ And when they had prayed, ^athe place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and ^bthey spake the word of God with boldness.

^aii. 2, 4. xvi. 26. ^bVerse 29.

The place was shaken—probably "the house where they were sitting," (see on ii. 2), of which scene this was a partial repetition, on a smaller scale and in a narrower circle, but with precisely the same spiritual and an analogous sensible effect. The sign here given of God's presence was familiar to the saints of the Old Testament. (Ex. xix. 18; Ps. lxxviii. 8, see on verse 24.) *And they were all filled*—with a fresh and renewed outpouring. *Word of God with boldness* (see on ii. 22, 23.) Prayer-strengthened and Spirit-inspired, these men now speak words of faith and firmness which no human power can disturb. They are soon to feel the full trial of their dauntless spirit.

32. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but ^athey had all things common.

^aRom. xv. 6, 6; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Phil. ii. 2; 1 Peter iii. 8. ^bii. 14.

The expression of *one heart and of one soul* denotes the most intimate and endearing friendship. There was among them no difference of sentiment, a remarkable fact, considering their number. (Comp. notes on ii. 44-46.) "Where faith reigns, it conciliates men's minds so that all will the same thing. For hence comes discord, because we are not ruled by this Divine spirit of Christ."—*Calvin*. *Neither said any of them, &c.* (See on ii. 44-46.) The language used concerning the liberal communication of all the property of the more affluent, with their poor brethren, who were thus exempted from all want, and of their confidence in the disinterested faithfulness of the Apostles, is suited, as by a specimen, to show what Christianity would effect, in meliorating the condition of mankind, if universally and cordially embraced. (See 1 Cor. xvi. 2, 3.)

33. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35. And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

1. 8. (Luke i. 48, 49; chap. i. 22. John i. 16. Verse 37, v. 2. iii. 45, vi. 1.

Gave the apostles witness. Their testifying to Christ's resurrection, may be understood as comprehending the whole work of preaching Christ and making known the new religion. This they did *with great power*, not merely force of argument or eloquence, but in the exercise of that extraordinary spiritual power, with which they were invested for this very purpose, and by which they were enabled, both to testify of Christ, and to confirm their testimony by the evidence of signs or miracles. *And great grace, &c.* The special favor of God manifested to them, and the powerful effects of His sanctifying grace, in forming them to be such holy, lovely, and happy characters, seem to be specially intended. *Neither . . . any . . . lacked.* No one among them was allowed by his brethren to be in want. *For as many, &c.*

Those who owned property parted with their possessions, to obtain ready money for giving immediate relief to the destitute. *Apostles' feet.* The Apostles probably sat upon a raised seat, on the step of which, at their feet, the money was laid. The whole work of relieving the necessitous, although sustained by private contribution, was considered not a personal affair, but a public or ecclesiastical proceeding, and was therefore, as here appears, implicitly subjected to the Apostolical control and management. This is also evident from the fact that the statement of the placing of the prices at the Apostles' feet, is immediately followed by the act of distribution, as well as from the narrative contained in the sixth chapter, where the whole proceeding presupposes such authority in the Apostles.

36. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, 37. Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

And Joses, &c. This is specified merely as an eminent example of that spirit of generous sacrifice which pervaded all. *Surnamed Barnabas*, after his conversion to Christianity. *Son of consolation*—perhaps more properly *son of prophecy or preaching*. Chap. xiii. 1, he is called a prophet. The epithet was probably a testimony from the Apostles to his sacred eloquence. *A Levite*, and therefore one of those whose temporal interest Christianity seemed now particularly to oppose, as it threatened the destruction of the Jewish economy. *Cyprus*, one of the largest islands of the Mediterranean, distant from the Syrian coast one hundred miles, from Cilicia about sixty. Historians inform us that it was the residence of many Jews. The future notices by Luke of Barnabas remarkably coincide with his character briefly given here. He appears an able minister, full of kindness, and seemingly strongly disposed to labor in Cyprus. (Chap. xiii. 2, xv. 39.)

1. What was the effect of Peter's sermon? 2. What did Peter say to the rulers, elders, scribes, &c., who were gathered at Jerusalem? 3. Explain the phrase—"filled with the Holy Ghost?" 4. What is meant by "they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus?" 5. What command was given to Peter and John? 6. What was their answer? 7. When they were released, where did they go? 8. What was the effect of their report upon "their own company?" 9. What occurred when the Church betook itself to prayer? 10. Explain "great grace was upon them all." 11. What is said of the love and charity of the disciples? 12. What did Barnabas do?

CHAPTER V.

1 After that Ananias and Sapphira his wife for their hypocrisy at Peter's rebuke had fallen down dead, 12 and that the rest of the apostles had wrought many miracles, 14 to the increase of the faith: 17 the apostles are again imprisoned, 19 but delivered by an angel bidding them to preach openly to all; 21 when, after their teaching accordingly in the temple, 29 and before the council, 33 they are in danger to be killed, through the advice of Gamaliel, a prudent counsellor among the Jews, they be kept alive, 40 and are but beaten: for which they glorify God, and cease no day from preaching.

BUT a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

Ananias — "God's cloud," or, "God's grace." (1 Chron. iii. 21). *Sapphira* (see Job xxviii. 6, 16), "the beautiful." *A certain man*, &c. Ananias is introduced as a contrast to Barnabas. (iv. 36, 37.) It is probable that he was one of the richer members of the Church, as he had landed property to dispose of. (Verse 3.) It affords a humiliating view of humanity, that in a comparatively small and select society of persons of such pure, benevolent and high-minded principles, there were found two individuals, apparently exhibiting the same traits of character, while they were secretly slaves of the most sordid passions and the most detestable hypocrisy. Where there is light, there will also be a shadow. If Ananias and his wife had not complied with the common practice, and sold their possessions, their character might have been suspected. "No wickedness is more capital," says *Cicero*, "than that of those who, when most deceiving, thus pass themselves off for good."

2. And kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.—iv. 34 37.

The apostles' feet. (See on iv. 37.) By the sale of their land, and the bringing in of the money, they in fact professed to give the *whole price* as a gift of brotherly love to the common stock; but their aim was to get for themselves the credit of holy love and zeal by *one portion* of the price, whereas they had selfishly kept back the other portion for themselves. They wished to serve *two* masters, but to appear to serve only *One*. (See 1 Tim. vi. 10.) What a crime was theirs! 1. It was an insult to the Holy Ghost. 2. It was committed deliberately (verse 4). 3. It was preconcerted by a wedded pair. It was a deception practiced on the Church.

Achan, Judas, Demas, are, with this Ananias and Sapphira, among the many examples which history furnishes of the wickedness of avarice.

3. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land?

¹ Luke xxii. 3. ² Verse 3. ³ Num. xxx. 2; Deut. xxiii. 21; Eccl. v. 4.

The human heart is itself sufficiently wicked to contrive and perpetrate very aggravated crimes, but some sins are so heinous in their nature, and are marked with such characters of audacity and profligacy, that they seem to have been suggested by a spirit more completely depraved even than man—the "spirit who works in the children of disobedience." *Why hath Satan*, &c., that is, *Why hast thou permitted Satan?* or why hast thou not resisted his temptations? All that Satan can do is to tempt, not to constrain men to sin. (James iv. 7; 1 Peter v. 9.) *Filled thine heart.* The Hebrews thus express a person's being emboldened (impelled, invited) to a thing. (Esth. vii. 5; Eccl. viii. 11.) *To lie to the Holy Ghost.* It is mentioned as an aggravating circumstance, that they lied to the Holy Ghost, whose eye could see clearly through every disguise.

4. Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.—Ps. cxxxix. 4.

Whiles, an antiquated form of *while* or *whilst*. *It remained*, &c. From this it appears that there was no law in the Church, no Apostolic injunction, which bound believers to sell their lands, and to place their money in a common fund. It was not a matter of law, but of love. (See on ii. 44, 45, 46.) *Why hast thou conceived*, &c. Though Satan is said to have filled his heart to do it (verse 3), yet he is said to have conceived it in his own heart, which shows that we cannot extenuate our sins, by laying the fault of them on the devil, the evil thing, whatever it is, that is said or done, the sinner has conceived in his own heart. *But unto God*. This verse is of weighty doctrinal import, as proving the Deity and personality of the Holy Spirit. The "Holy Ghost" (verse 3), is here called "God." It is impossible to lie

to a mere quality. *Bengel* says, "This is the meaning: Ananias lied to God and His Spirit, not to men and Peter. Dare if thou canst, O Socinian, to say, he lied not to the Holy Ghost and to Peter, but to God."

5. And Ananias hearing these words ^{fell} down, and gave up the ghost: and great ^{hear} came on all them that heard these things.
^sVerses 10, 11. ¹Ps. lxi. 9.

The suddenness of his death is not to be attributed to the violent agitation of his mind, as instant dissolution has been known to be the effect of paroxysms of joy and peace. The stroke was inflicted by the hand of God, who was pleased to give this example of His holiness and severity. *Them that heard*—not merely upon those who saw. So in verse 11.

6. And the young men arose, wound ^{him} up, and carried ^{him} out, and buried ^{him}.—John xix. 40.

The young men. They were probably the younger men in the assembly, in distinction from the older. *Buried him.* This was done three hours after he died. (See verse 7.) To us, who live in a country where humanity has established the custom of waiting several days, in order both to ascertain the reality of dissolution, and prepare the minds of surviving relatives for the painful task of committing their friend to kindred dust, this transaction in the primitive Church seems to have been despatched with unnatural and almost indecent rapidity. But in warmer climates, in consequence of decomposition beginning much sooner than here, the practice of early interments is quite common. Seldom more than a day elapses, till a dead person is deposited in the grave; and in the hottest season of the year, or during the prevalence of an epidemic disorder, it is by no means an unusual sight to see the funeral procession of people who were in life and walking abroad a few hours before. The simple preparations for a funeral in the East render this easy; for there no coffins are required, no suit of mourning, no elaborate dressing of the corpse; the usual way is to inter it in the dress which the person wore at death, and to carry it on a bier or plain wooden board, to the place of burial. So that mean and humble as was the manner in which Ananias and Sapphira were taken to the grave,

it scarcely, if at all, differs from the common style of funeral processions in the East at the present day.

7. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.
 8. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.
 9. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband ^{are} at the door, and shall carry thee out.
 10. Then ^{she} fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying ^{her} forth, buried her by her husband.
 11. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.
¹Ps. l. 13; verse 3. ²Verse 5. ³Chap. ii. 43.

Sapphira was privy to the fraud, but was ignorant of her husband's doom. Still she was steady to her purpose. How she could have remained ignorant of such a striking event for three hours after its occurrence, appears indeed strange, but circumstances we know not might have been the occasion of it. Perhaps no one had the courage to inform her of the dreadful fate of her husband. *Tell me whether, &c.* Happy would it have been for this woman if this question had staggered her ill-founded courage, and had led her, with unfeigned repentance, to acknowledge her wickedness. *Yea, for so much.* Here is an acknowledgment of her husband's criminal act, and of her own guilty participation in the deed.

How is it, &c. It is plain that this preconcert or conspiracy was viewed by the Apostle as a serious aggravation of the sin committed, not only because each was bound to hinder or dissuade, instead of helping and encouraging the other, but because this previous agreement showed the sin to be deliberate and presumptuous. *Tempt.* So to act, as to seem to doubt of the omnipotence, omniscience, veracity, or any other of the attributes of God. It has well been said, that there is an iniquitous perversion of the marriage ties: 1. When the marriage is simply a community of goods, a business transaction designed to consolidate wealth, instead of being a union of hearts in the Lord. 2. When the union is effected for the purpose of serving the flesh, the world and the devil, instead of being influenced by the holy principle: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Josh. xxiv. 15.) 3. When married life is thus converted into a downward path, conduct-

ing both parties to hell, whether it be a hell on earth (domestic strife) or eternal perdition, whereas they should have been partners in every holy joy, and should have aided each other in their common efforts to obtain everlasting blessedness in heaven."

Behold, the feet of them which have buried, &c. Melancholy union in death, as there was guilty partnership in life! Others of the early Church fell martyrs to the cause of truth, and their names were honored, but Ananias and Sapphira died victims to their own base passions and hypocrisy, and are enrolled forever with the company of Judas, the traitor. *Shall carry thee out.* This, spoken before her death, decisively proves that death to have been not a *result* merely of her detection, but a judicial infliction. *Great fear,* &c. This effect on the Christian community itself was the chief design of so startling a judgment, which had its counterpart, as the sin itself had, in Achan (Josh. vii.), while the *time*—at the commencement of a new career—was similar.

12. And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch: 13. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. 14. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) 15. Inasmuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. 16. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one. iv. 30; Rom. xv. 19; Heb. ii. 4. John xii. 42. iv. 21. fil. 47. 90r, in every street. Mark. xvi. 17, 18; John xiv. 12. James v. 16.

And by the hands of the apostles, &c. This verse should be read with the 15th, to which it properly belongs. *Many signs,* &c. Miracles of mercy, many in number, of different kinds, and often repeated, succeeded the judgment which had fallen upon Ananias and Sapphira. *And they were all,* &c.—the whole body of disciples. *Solomon's porch.* (See on iii. 11; John x. 23.) *And of the rest, i. e.,* those, perhaps, who were not converts, but thought and spoke well of them. *Durst no man,* &c. Such an awe had the miracles of the Apostles, and, perhaps, particularly, the fate of Ananias and Sapphira produced in them, that they did not care to mingle with the Christian company, at least in public. *The people magnified them.* The rulers, doubtless, affected to hold the

Apostles and other Christians in contempt, but the people in general regarded them with veneration, and spoke highly of them. *And believers,* &c. Whilst those (verse 13) who merely admired the disciples, ventured not to unite with them, many who were truly converted, were added to their number. The salutary fear of hypocrisy did not cause any temporary pause in the diffusion of the Gospel; on the contrary, multitudes impressed with its truth, were converted. It was a season of sifting: the Gospel repelled some and attracted others.

Inasmuch that. What is now stated, the bringing vast numbers to be healed, was the consequence of all that is narrated in the last three verses, namely, the miraculous deeds, the awe and love of the people, and the increased number of believers. The words *beds* and *couches* denote the softer couches of the rich, and the meaner cribs of the poor. *That at least the shadow of Peter,* &c. The crowd was so great and so incessant, that many could do nothing more than place themselves, or their afflicted friends, under the shadow of the Apostles, and especially of Peter, as the most conspicuous and active, as he came by or along. We need find no stumbling-block in the fact of the shadow of the Apostles having been the medium of working miracles. Cannot the Almighty work with any instruments, or with none, as pleases Him? And what is a hand or a voice, more than a shadow, except that the analogy of the ordinary instrument is a greater help to faith in the recipient? Where faith, as apparently here, did not need this help, the less likely medium was adopted. But what a fertile harvest of superstition and imposture has been made to spring out of this example! *There came also a multitude,* &c. The cause advances continually farther and wider. *Unclean spirits.* (Comp. xix. 12; see also Appendix.)

17. ¶ Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation. 18. And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. 19. But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, 20. Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. 21. And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. 22. But when the officers came,

and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told, 23. Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors; but when we had opened, we found no man within. 24. Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow. 25. Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people. 26. Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned. 27. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, 28. Saying, Did not we strictly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

iv. 1, 2. *or. *envy*. xvii. 5-7, xvi. 23-27. *Ex. xxiv. 3. *John vi. 63, 68, xvii. 8. *iv*. 5, 6. *iv*. 1. *Matt. xxi. 28. *iv*. 18. *Matt. xxvii. 25; chap. ii. 23, 36, iii. 15, vii. 52.

The high priest—Caiaphas, the chief agent in the crucifixion of their blessed Master. The Sadducees zealously joined him in this persecution. *Filled with indignation*. This new attack upon the Church, the language teaches, was not only preceded, but occasioned, by the things described in verses 12-16. Our success always makes the fire of envy burn hotter in the breast of our enemies. *The common* (or public) *prison*. It being too late in the evening to bring them to a hearing. The bonds and chains by which men are confined for Christ's sake, are truly honorable badges. *The angel*—an angel, rather. *By night*—the same night. *Opened the prison doors*. Did they think to imprison celestial light? to bury immortal life? Heaven derides their attempts. The deliverance of the Apostles at this time was similar to the deliverance of Peter on a subsequent occasion. (xii. 7.) It evidently filled their enemies with perplexity, and themselves with boldness and confidence in Christ. Since the establishment of the Gospel, God will have us live more by faith, and walk less by sense, and therefore we must not now (ordinarily) see these ministering and beneficent spirits, but although their visible appearances be ceased, yet their invisible operations for the heirs of salvation shall never cease. (Ileb. i. 14.)

Go, stand and speak, &c. The order of the angel was that they should stand free and undismayed, and preach openly to the people. *The words of this life*—"this same life," that was so highly predicated and extolled at that time, that no one could be in doubt what kind of life it was. The phrase must necessarily mean the Gospel of Christ. 1. This is a supernatu-

ral and spiritual life, God must give it. 2. A most elevated life—it brings us into an alliance with the Father and the Spirit by Jesus Christ. 3. A holy life—it is given for the very purpose of recovering man from sin to holiness. 4. A progressive life. Grace is represented as at first a blade, then an ear, then the full corn; as a little leaven leavening the lump. 5. An eternal life. Through all the periods of an endless duration, they that have this life shall never die. The words of the Gospel are called the words of life, 1. Because this word is the means of begetting this life. (James i. 18; John xvii. 17.) 2. Because it improves this life. (1 Peter ii. 2.) 3. Because it carries in it the promise of this life. (1 John ii. 25; chap. v. 11, 12.) 4. Because it is the rule of that judgment by which all that partake therein are finally adjudged to eternal life. (Matt. xxv. 46.) Ministers of the Gospel, as they can have opportunity, should preach the words of this life. It ought to be their end, to help souls into this state of life. (2 Cor. iii. 6; 1 Cor. iv. 15; Phil. 10; Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13; Matt. xxviii. 19; 1 Tim. iv. 13; Ezek. xxxiii. 11; Dan. xii. 3; Isa. xlix. 5; 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.)

They entered into the temple, &c. How self-possessed! the indwelling Spirit raising them above fear. *Called . . . all the senate*, &c.—an unusually general convention, though hastily summoned. It was called together, not solely because a most solemn question under the old Mosaic law was to be tried, namely, whether the workers of certain miracles were prophets of God, or agents of Beelzebub, but also because the contest was now with the people, who were largely on the side of the Apostles, endangering the predominance, as was feared, of the ruling Sadducean powers. *And found them not in the prison*. How terribly must these officers have been surprised! All things indicated that the prisoners were safe within, but when they entered the dreary precincts there was not a man to be found. The angel had done no injury to the building, no violence to the jailers. The whole appeared just as it had on the previous night.

The captain of the temple. (See on iv. 1.)

They doubted, &c. They were filled with apprehension—thrown into the utmost perplexity. The words do not so much express their wonder at what had happened, as their fear at what would be the issue of the whole—the terrible bearing upon themselves. *Brought them without violence.* The officers on reaching the temple, found the multitude gladly receiving the doctrine of the Apostles, and they were afraid to show any hostility to the Apostles, lest the people should stone them; we may therefore conclude that the officers entreated them to accompany them to the council, and that they yielded to the solicitation, and so cheerfully went with them, trusting in the Lord their God. *Did not we straitly command you, &c.* (See iv. 17–21.) They ought to have inquired first, How did ye escape? But as if nothing had happened, they asked them, “saying,” &c. The same shyness of open allusion to the names of facts connected with Jesus and the spread of His doctrine may be traced in the words “*this name*,” and “*this man’s blood*,” and is a strong mark of truth and circumstantiality. The high priest will not name Jesus; Peter names and celebrates Him. *Behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine.* A stronger testimony than this to the zeal of the Apostles and to the growth of their cause could scarcely have been given. It was given by the most intelligent men in Jerusalem—men who knew the prevailing feeling and the general character of the population well—men, too, who would have ignored and denied the fact if they could. Circumstances wrested it from their reluctant lips. *And intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.* To “bring blood upon the head” is a peculiar Hebrew idiom, meaning to make one answer for the murder or the death of another. There was conscience in this. They felt that they were implicated in the horrid crime of the crucifixion of Christ, and that which they once dared in the fury of their rage, when they cried (Matt. xxvii. 25), “Let His blood be upon us,” they now deprecate as the direst of judgments.

23. † Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. *iv. 19.*

We ought should rather be *we must*, ex-

*16

pressing not mere obligation but necessity. The same principle, only in a more positive and pointed form, as in iv. 19, 20, on which see notes. Besides the essential idea of obedience, which the word here translated *obey* involves, it suggests that God is superior to man, not only in power, but in rightful authority. On the Athenians condemning Socrates, he exclaimed, “I embrace and love you, but I will obey God rather than you, and if you would spare my life on condition of giving up teaching you, I would rather die a thousand times than acquiesce.” The Apostles and early Christians acted on the principle that human governments forfeit their claims to obedience when they require what God has plainly forbidden, or forbid what He has required. They claimed the right of judging for themselves what was right and what was wrong, in reference to their religious and their political duties, and they regulated their conduct by that decision. In applying this principle, it will be found that the Apostles in every instance abstained from all forcible resistance to the public authorities. They refused utterly to obey the mandates which required them to violate their consciences, but they endured quietly the penalties which the executors of the law enforced against them. They evaded the pursuit of their oppressors if they could (2 Cor. xi. 32, 33), secreted themselves from arrest (xii. 19), left their prisons at the command of God, yet when violent hands were laid upon them, and they were dragged before magistrates, to the dungeon, or to death, they resisted not the wrong, but “followed His steps, who, when He suffered, threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. (1 Peter ii. 22, 23.)

30. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 31. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. 32. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

† Gal. iii. 13; 1 Peter ii. 24. † Phil. ii. 9. † Isa. ix. 6. ^aMatt. i. 21. ^bLuke xxiv. 47–8. ^cJil. 4.

God of our fathers. By this solemn expression the Apostles assume that Jesus and themselves are in true line of descent from the *fathers* and under sanction of their *God*. *Raised up*—exalted as the *Sent*

of God. The idea of the resurrection is also involved in that of the exaltation. *Hanged on a tree.* The cross is here designedly so called, because, according to the Jewish law, being hanged on a tree was esteemed an accursed death. (Gal. iii. 13.) What superiority to the fear of man, what inflexible fidelity to truth, what more than human heroism, are exhibited by the Apostles as they stand before the most august assembly of the land, and charge them with the greatest crime ever perpetrated under heaven!

Him hath God exalted—raised up to heaven. *With his right hand*, by the exertion of His power, and *to His right hand*, *i. e.*, to a share in that power, and in the dignity connected with it. *A Prince and a Saviour*, not “to be a Prince and a Saviour,” but the words are the predicate of Him as a Prince and a Saviour. The one word expresses that *Royalty* which all Israel looked for in Messiah, the other His *Saving* character which they had utterly lost sight of. Each of these features in our Lord’s work enters into the other, and both make one glorious whole. (iii. 15; Heb. ii. 10.) That it was spiritual salvation that was here spoken of, is evident from the remainder of the verse. *To give repentance*—the grace of repentance, *i. e.*, power and disposition to repent. *Forgiveness*—removal of all obligation to punishment. There is not a meritorious connection between repentance and forgiveness, but there is, 1, a connection of propriety, for it would not accord with the wisdom of God to forgive one incapable of enjoying or serving Him, and, 2, a connection of certainty—they are indissolubly united—no one ever really enjoyed forgiveness without repentance, and no one ever truly exercised repentance without forgiveness. *To Israel.* The express mention of Israel, as the object of this favor, is not intended to restrict it to the Jews, but either to intimate the priority of the offer made to them, or, which is more probable, to assure the contemporary Jews, who had been implicated in the murder of their own Messiah, that even this most aggravated sin was not beyond the reach of the Divine forgiveness, if repented of, to bestow both which gifts, *i. e.*, repentance as the means, and

forgiveness as the end, was the very purpose for which Christ had been exalted as a Prince and Saviour.

Witnesses of these things—the death and exaltation of Christ. *Also the Holy Ghost*—the Apostles as competent human witnesses to facts, and the Holy Ghost as attesting them by undeniable miracles. (See on ii. 4.) *Whom God hath given to them that obey him.* There is no true obedience without faith, or true faith without obedience. “How rich in doctrine,” says the *Rev. Dr. Chalmers*, “are the two contiguous verses, 31 and 32, both as respects the Second and Third Persons of the Trinity! Let me not divide Christ, nor put asunder the things which God hath joined. It is the office of the Prince and the Saviour exalted at His right hand to give both repentance and the remission of sins. Let me equally desire both, let me pray for both, and O may I work mightily by strength conferred upon me from on high, so as to perfect my repentance and perfect my holiness. And how relevant to this process is this weighty sentence—that the Holy Ghost is given to those who obey Him. By the blessed alternation of performance and prayer, give me, O Lord, to experience that in serving faithfully, I am supplied plentifully and fruitfully with grace from Thine upper sanctuary. Let our righteousness spring up from earth, and Thy grace look down upon us from heaven.”

33. ¶ When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.—*vii. 54.*

They were sufficiently enraged to conceive the thought of putting these men to death. When the truth is not voluntarily received, let it cut to the heart; that, too, is a victory. It is an evidence of the powerlessness of the enemies of truth, that they silence those who confess it, not by adducing arguments, but by applying a gag, and by attempts to slay them.

34. Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space.—*xxii. 3.*

As they were about to vote the death of the Apostles, they were checked by Gamaliel, who counseled that the Apostles retire a short time, so that he might with the more propriety give his advice to the

rulers. Gamaliel was renowned as one of the great doctors of the law, and still more as the preceptor of Paul. (xxii. 3.) He is identified with the celebrated Jewish doctor Gamaliel, who is known by the title of "the glory of the law," and was the first to whom the title "Rabban," "our master," was given. This Gamaliel was son of Rabbi Simeon, and grandson of the celebrated Hillel. He was president of the Sanhedrim under Tiberius, Caligula and Claudius, and is reported to have died eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem. He was succeeded in the presidency of the Sanhedrim by his son Simeon, who perished in the siege.

35. And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. 36. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody, to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain, and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. 37. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him; he also perished, and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. 38. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: 39. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

^aOr, believed. ^bLuke xiii. 1, 2. ^cProv. xxi. 30; Isa. viii. 10; Matt. xv. 13. ^dJob xxxiv. 29; 1 Cor. i. 25. ^eix. 5, xxiii. 9.

Observe the sage counsel given, in the several parts of it. 1. *Take heed to yourselves what ye intend, &c.*—implying that men had need to take heed, how they engage themselves in suppressing or destroying any sort of men, whatsoever, until they have a clear and expressive warrant from heaven for their execution. 2. He assured them that it was an age of pretenders, specifying *Theudas* and *Judas of Galilee*, who had risen up not long before—in the memory of some of them, and who had ended by breaking out into open revolt and being destroyed by the power of Rome. He wished the Sanhedrim to understand, that if the cause of the Apostles was undivine and merely human, it would perish just like this Theudas and Judas. 3. He suggested that the thing might be indeed from God, and if so, to overthrow it would be impossible, to resist it would incur the guilt of fighting against God. The argument is designed to show that his hearers on their own principles, were bound to take the course he recommended. They professed to regard the new religion as an undivine thing. They need not, therefore, go to the trouble of

opposing it, on their own view of it, it would soon die. *But if it be of God, &c.* Here is another part of the argument—if the movement was of God, opposition would be futile and impious. The *if* imports a suspicion, some doubt and apprehension of the thing as not improbable. *Ye cannot, &c.* Here is a recognition of the solemnity and fixedness of the Divine purpose. Attempts to crush the cause of God are as futile as attempts to roll back the tides of ocean, or reverse the course of planets—worse than futile, it is fighting against God—a mad and impious battling against the Infinite.

40. And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41. ¶ And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. 42. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. ^aMatt. x. 17. ^biv. 18. ^cMatt. v. 12; 2 Cor. xii. 10; Phil. i. 29; James i. 2; 1 Peter iv. 13-15.

The advice of Gamaliel was so wise and reasonable, that it prevailed with the rulers to desist from their former intention of putting the Apostles to death. They came not off without blows, however, though without bloodshed. They were scourged, as their Master was before them, which was both a painful and reproachful punishment. (See on next verse.) *Not speak in the name of Jesus.* (See on iv. 18.) *Worthy to suffer shame.* By a beautiful paradox they feel the glory of the disgrace. The scourge or whip usually had two lashes knotted with bone or brazen circles or terminated with hooks, and was significantly called the *scorpion*. It was inflicted upon the bare back, apparently of the entire twelve. Paul suffered this five times, Jesus once. *For his name, rather, the name, i. e.,* for the glorification of the name whose confession and announcement was always their highest and holiest solicitude. *Daily in the temple, &c.*—every day, both in the temple and in private. *Ceased not to teach, &c.*—in defiance of the prohibition which blows as well as words had just now enforced on them. *And preach Jesus Christ.* When they addressed the people, they did not complain of their enemies, did not boast of their own firmness, did not defend their character, which had been sullied by the scourge, but simply preached the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ. They preached

in promiscuous assemblies, to which all resorted, and in the select assemblies of Christians for special ordinances. They visited the families, and gave particular instructions to them, according as their case required, even to the children and servants. And the subject matter of their preaching was *Jesus Christ, not themselves*, making it their business to advance His interest. It ought to be the constant business of Gospel ministers *to preach Christ, Christ, and Him crucified, Christ, and Him glorified*, nothing beside this, but what is reducible to it.

1. What is said of Ananias and Sapphira? 2. Explain "laid it at the Apostles' feet." 3. What did Peter say to Ananias? 4. What occurred to himself and his wife? 5. What was the effect of these startling judgments? 6. What is said of the Apostles? 7. What did the high priest and Sadducees do to the Apostles? 8. How were they released from prison? 9. What did Peter and the other Apostle answer before the council? 10. What effect was produced by their reply? 11. What did Gamaliel say? 12. Who was Gamaliel? 13. What was the nature of his argument on this occasion? 14. In what spirit did the Apostles depart from the council? 15. What are they said to have done daily?

CHAPTER VI.

1 *The apostles, desirous to have the poor regarded for their bodily sustenance, as also careful themselves to dispense the word of God, the food of the soul, 3 appoint the office of deaconship to seven chosen men, 5 Of whom Stephen, a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost, is one. 12 Who is taken of those, whom he conjured in disputing, 13 and after falsely accused of blasphemy against the law and the temple.*

AND in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

ix. 29, xi. 20. iv. 35.

The expression *those days* probably refers to the preceding verse, while the Apostles were daily engaged in the temple and in private houses teaching and preaching the Gospel, and when the disciples, as stated in this verse, were as a consequence multiplied. A murmuring. In a multitude a cause of murmuring easily arises. *Grecians*—foreign Jews, such as spoke the language of Greece. *The Hebrews*—those Jews born in Palestine, who used their native tongue, and were wont to look down on the "Grecians" as an inferior class. The ground of the murmuring was the neglect of widows in the daily ministration. It was said, perhaps, by some, that there was something like favoritism in the distribution of the charities of the Church, and that the widows of the Hellenist Christians were overlooked. There were many poor in that new and large community, many who were dependent, perhaps, almost entirely, for their support on the

public funds. Widows are especially mentioned here, and they, as a rule, in all communities are the most abject, and the most deserving of aid. The Bible especially commends them to the compassion of the benevolent. (James i. 27.)

2. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

Ex. xviii. 17-26.

The expression *serve tables* is of the same import with ministering to the necessities of the poor. Their tables were to be supplied with food convenient for them, such things as they wanted, were to be provided, and it would be neither right nor becoming, that the Apostles, whose spiritual work was now becoming too absorbing, should be so much engaged in this service, as to omit the more important duties of their office. Jesus Christ had sent them to preach the Gospel, and no inferior design, however useful and urgent, should longer interfere with the great object of their commission.

3. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

Deut. i. 13. exvi. 2; 1 Tim. iii. 7, 8, 10.

Brethren, not brethren in the ministry but in the faith. *Look ye out*, &c. The selection, therefore, was made by the body of the Church. It was the more necessary that they should be consulted in the election, because there had been

dissatisfaction in consequence of the former management of the poor. The Apostles, however, invested the persons with the office, and gave them authority to discharge its duties, as we see from the words, *whom we may appoint over this business.* *Seven.* Various reasons have been assigned why seven should be the number selected. Some suppose that this number was arbitrarily selected, others because seven nations are supposed to have been represented, others because this was the sacred number among the Jews, others that there were now seven thousand believers, and that one almoner was chosen for each thousand, others that the Church of Jerusalem was divided into seven congregations, &c., &c. But all these are arbitrary suppositions. The qualifications of these men as here stated, are, 1. *Men of honest report, testified to*, of good repute. 2. *Full of the Holy Ghost*—thorough religious men. 3. *Full of wisdom*, that is, of prudence. It is no unimportant matter to dispense the property of the Church. Even in a public steward, and in a deacon as such, there should be administrative and sanctifying gifts.

4. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.
 ¶ 1 Tim. iv. 15.

But, we, on our part, as distinguished from the persons thus selected. *Prayer*, not personal devotion merely, but the business of conducting public worship, as *the ministry* (or *dispensation*) of the word, evidently means the work of preaching or public and official teaching. *Continually*—we will have no leisure but for these. Note, 1. That such as are called by God to the work of the ministry, ought to give themselves wholly to it. 2. That a minister's giving himself to prayer, is as great a duty, as giving himself to the preaching of the word. He should give himself to the one as the end, to the other as the mean: it is God that sets the Word on work, but it is prayer that sets God on work.

5. ¶ And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:

¶ xxi. 24. b viii. 5, 26, xxi. 8. ¶ Rev. ii. 6, 15.

The whole multitude, apparently without exception, or dissent, which seems to show the absence of malignant jealousy

and party-spirit. *Stephen.* As this and the following names are all Greek, it is likely they were all of the "Grecian" class, which would effectually restore mutual confidence. *Full of faith*, which is the root of all Christian virtues. (See on verse 8.) *And of the Holy Ghost.* All that is recorded of Stephen shows that he was a man of distinguished excellence, and a chosen organ of Divine thought and power. Of *Philip* (not the Apostle, but another person of the same name,) we read again in viii. 5, 40, xxi. 8. Of the other five here mentioned, none are elsewhere alluded to in Scripture, one, Nicolas, is mentioned in ecclesiastical tradition, the other four are totally unknown. *A proselyte*, &c., that is, a Gentile by birth who had embraced the Jewish religion, and submitted to the rite of circumcision before he became a Christian.

6. Whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.
 ¶ i. 24. ¶ ix. 17, xiii. 3; 1 Tim. iv. 14, v. 22; 2 Tim. i. 6.

Set, placed, caused to stand, the verb translated *appointed* in i. 23. In both cases it denotes the presentation of the persons found to possess the prescribed qualifications. Election, in the proper sense, is not suggested by this word, but explicitly recorded in the context. (verse 5.) *Prayed* *laid their hands*—the one proclaiming that all official gifts flowed from the Church's glorified Head, the other symbolizing the communication of these to the chosen office-bearers through the recognized channels.

7. ¶ And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.
 ¶ Isa. lv. 11; chap. xii. 24, xix. 20. ¶ Ps. cxxxii. 9, 16.

"A happy event of a time of trial." Indeed, the triumph of the Gospel, without this, would in some respects have been incomplete. Four thousand two hundred and eighty priests returned from captivity (Ezra ii. 36-39), and probably their number was now greatly increased. The number of priests was very great at Jerusalem. The conversion of so many strikingly displayed the power of the Gospel, when we recollect their prejudices against it, and the disgrace, losses, and dangers attending their confession of the name of Jesus as the Messiah.

8. ⁵ And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

Full of faith and power, cherishing an unwavering confidence in the Lord Jesus, and signally aided by Divine power. This is the first instance of any, *not an Apostle*, working signs and wonders. He who is faithful in that which is least (the office of a guardian of the poor) is intrusted by the Lord with much faith, power, miracles.

9. Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the *synagogue of the Libertines*, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. 10. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

¹ Luke xxi. 15.

The synagogue of the Libertines, i. e., *libertini*, *freed-men*, viz.: Jews, or the sons of Jews, who having been slaves at Rome, had acquired their freedom, and, living now at Jerusalem, maintained a separate synagogue of their own. The *Cyrenians* take their name from the place they lived in, mentioned in ii. 10. The *Alexandrians* were the inhabitants of Alexandria, a city of Egypt, situated on the Nile, built by Alexander the Great in the fourth century B. C., and originally peopled by colonies of Greeks and Jews. *Cilicia*, a province of Asia Minor, bounded on the south by the Mediterranean Sea, east of Syria, north and west by Cappadocia, Lycaonia, Itauria, and Pamphylia. The opponents of Stephen seem to have belonged to the congregations of five different synagogues. *Disputing* may imply that the discussion which they sought, and which at first was private, became generally known and public. "The most zealous controversialists and most skillful disputants, who select religious truth as their topic, usually," says one, "have the least religion and faith of all." *They were not able to resist*, &c. He was *wise*, well exercised and experienced in Divine things, and, as appears by his defense, in the following chapter, well versed in the Jewish history. *And the Spirit*, &c., that is, not merely ardor of mind, but the Holy Spirit, with whom Stephen was filled. (Verse 5.) They were obliged either to yield to the teachings, or were confounded by the truth. Here was a striking fulfillment of Christ's promise—"I will give you a mouth and wisdom," &c. (Luke xxi. 15, on which see notes.)

11. Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. 12. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, 13. And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: 14. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us. 15. And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

¹² Kings xxi. 10, 13; Matt. xxvi. 59, 60. ¹³ xxv. 8. ¹⁴ Dan. ix. 25. ¹⁵ For, rites. ¹⁶ Ex. xxxiv. 30, 35.

Suborned—instigated, *put forward by collusion*, to do so. They got men to swear falsehood—to perjure themselves. *Blasphemous words*—impious, abusive, and contumelious words. *Against Moses*—"our great legislator," and *against God*, whose representative he was, and from whom all his legislative power was derived. *Neander* well remarks that this false charge, coupled with the character of Stephen's apologetic speech, shows the *real character of his arguments with his opponents*—that he seems to have been the first who plainly set forth the transitory nature of the law and temple, as compared with the permanence of the latter and better covenant, thus being in a remarkable manner the forerunner of Paul. *The people, and the elders, and the scribes*, were alarmed, and hastening, with common consent, they apprehended and arraigned him before the Sanhedrim, which had authority to take cognizance of cases of blasphemy. *False witnesses, which said*, &c. The *falsehood* of their witness consisted, as in the similar case of our Lord, in taking Stephen's words out of their context, and *misrepresenting* what perhaps in so many words he had actually said.

All looking steadfastly, wishing and hoping, perhaps, to gaze him into confusion and tremor. *Face . . . angel*. Was the aspect of Stephen's face at this time, natural or supernatural? He might have had a corporeal loveliness. We know he was at this time full of wisdom and faith. His countenance was not pallid with guilt, nor distracted by care, nor troubled with fear, but full of confidence, serenity, mildness and joy. Yet there was something supernatural here, nor is it strange that there should have been, for the occasion was worthy a Divine interposition, and that was an age of miracles. He who was accused of blaspheming Moses bears the

radiance that authenticated Moses in his own face. (Ex. xxxv. 29-35.) It was a faint beam from that *glory* of which he spoke in vii. 2, and which his own eyes beheld in vii. 55.

Jesus honors those who are not ashamed, or afraid to own, serve, and suffer for Him. He frequently brings their enemies to their feet, in awe and reverence. Often,

in their last hours, has He thrown a radiance around them that has rendered the dying chamber the house of God and the gate of heaven, and induced the exclamation from all beholders: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

"Sure the last end
Of the good man is peace. How calm his exit!
Night dews fall not more calmly on the ground,
Nor weary, worn-out winds expire so soft."

1. What are we to understand by "those days?" 2. What "murmuring" is referred to? 3. What did the Twelve then do? 4. Why did they call the disciples? 5. What did they say to them? 6. Describe the character of men that were to be selected? 7. What did the Apostles say they would do? 8. Who were chosen? 9. State who they were. 10. What did the Apostles do to them? 11. What is said to have occurred in Jerusalem? 12. What is said of Stephen? 13. Who disputed with Stephen? 14. When not able to resist his address, what did he do? 15. What is said of the face of Stephen?

CHAPTER VII.

1 *Stephen, permitted to answer to the accusation of blasphemy, 2 sheweth that Abraham worshipped God rightly, and how God chose the fathers 20 before Moses was born, and before the tabernacle and temple were built: 37 that Moses himself witnessed of Christ: 41 and that all outward ceremonies were ordained according to the heavenly pattern, to last but for a time: 51 reprehending their rebellion, and murdering of Christ, the Just One, whom the prophets foretold should come into the world. 54 Whereupon they stone him to death, who commendeth his soul to Jesus, and humbly prayeth for them.*

THEN said the high priest, Are these things so?

The glorified countenance of Stephen caused a pause of surprise and admiration which the high priest, Theophilus, interrupts by calling on the accused for his defense.

[As to the nature of the speech (which extends to verse 53)—its relation to the charges brought against Stephen, and the objects which the protomartyr had in view—see the paraphrase and remarks at the close of the defense.]

2. And he said, *Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran. 3. And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. 4. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. 5. And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child. 6. And God spake unto this wise, That this seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years. 7. And the nation to*

whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place. 8. And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day: and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.

^axlii. 1. ^bGen. xii. 1. ^cGen. xii. 5. ^dGen. xlii. 15. ^eGen. xlii. 16. ^fEx. xii. 40, 41. ^gEx. iii. 12. ^hGen. xvii. 9-11. ⁱGen. xxi. 4. ^jGen. xxv. 6. ^kGen. xxix. 32, &c.

The God of glory. This is not to be considered as a Hebraism equivalent to "glorious God," but it refers to the "glory" of the Jews—the glory of God, which, as a pillar of fire, guided them in the wilderness, and rested upon the mercy-seat in the tabernacle and in the temple—called by them the Shechinah. Hence Paul mentions "the glory" as one of the peculiar privileges of the Jewish nation. (Rom. ix. 4.) *Mesopotamia.* Abraham resided first in Ur of the Chaldees (Gen. xi. 28), which lay probably in the extreme north of Mesopotamia, near the sources of the Tigris. *Charran* (Gen. xi. 31), was also in the north of Mesopotamia, but south of Ur. It was the later *Carræ* of the Greeks and Romans, where Crassus was defeated and slain by the Parthians. Its position tallies remarkably with the sacred narrative. The ruins have been identified a few miles south of Urfa, on a road from the north to the southern ford of the Euphrates. Stephen's meaning evidently is that Abraham's call in Charran was not

the first which he received during his residence in Mesopotamia. We have no account of this first communication to the patriarch in the Old Testament, but it is implied distinctly in Gen. xv. 7 and Neh. ix. 7. Philo and Josephus relate the history of Abraham in accordance with the statement here, that he was called twice. *Of the Chaldeans.* Whose land belonged to Mesopotamia. *When his father was dead, he removed, &c.* Though Abraham was in Canaan before Terah's death, his settlement in it as the land of promise is here said to be after it, as being in no way dependent on the family movements, but a transaction purely between Jehovah and Abraham himself.

And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much, &c. But how does this consist with Abraham's purchase of a hereditary burial place (Gen. xxiii. 20; 1. 13)? We may understand the words to mean that He *had not yet given him*, or still more exactly, *did not give him, i. e.*, in the first years of his residence, the smallest portion of the land of Canaan. This is all that was necessary for Stephen's purpose; which was simply to show what changes had already taken place in the condition of the chosen people since the calling of Abraham. *Yet he promised, &c.*—it was promised to him only as a future possession. Stephen now mentions Abraham's *seed*, and, presupposing the special circumstance that his and Sarah's bodies were as if dead, gives prominence to his faith in the future. *Sojourn in a strange land.* (Comp. Gen. xv. 13, 14.) The residence of the Hebrews in Egypt is here referred to *four hundred years*. The exact number of years, as we elsewhere learn, was four hundred and thirty. (Ex. xii. 40; see also Gal. iii. 17.) Stephen avails himself of a privilege which cannot be reasonably denied to him, and merely mentions a round number, without taking into account the broken number. But the question is, From what period are these years to be reckoned? Do they refer exclusively to the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt, commencing at the removal of Jacob into that country? Or do they commence from the call of Abraham, and include also the sojourn in Canaan? Certainly, at first sight, the words in the

Mosaic narrative would seem to intimate that this was the period of Egyptian bondage, but Paul understands it differently. He reckons four hundred and thirty years as extending from the call of Abraham to the giving of the law. (Gal. iii. 17.) And there are interval marks in the Mosaic narrative which show that this reckoning is correct, for the mother of Moses was the daughter of Levi (Ex. vi. 20), which would be impossible were the whole period of Egyptian bondage four hundred and thirty years. The period of four hundred and thirty years appears to be divided into two equal parts, the one being the sojourn in Canaan, and the other being the sojourn in Egypt.

A covenant of circumcision may be either circumcision itself, as a covenanted stipulated rite, or a covenant of which circumcision was the sign and seal. (See Gen. xvii. 10, 11, where both these ideas seem to be expressed, and compare Gen. ix. 12.) *The eighth day.* Circumcision was fixed to take place on the eighth day. (Lev. xii. 3. "The fact that Moses fixed the eighth day, which might come on the Sabbath," says *Sier*, "notwithstanding the adoption of the seventh day of rest even among the ten commandments, may point out to us that God, in appointing the eighth day, prefigured the abolition, or rather the alteration, of the Old Testament Sabbath.")

9. And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him. 10. And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. 11. Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance. 12. But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent our fathers first. 13. And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren: and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh. 14. Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls. 15. So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers. 16. And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem.

Gen. xxxvii. 28; Ps. cv. 17. Gen. xxxix. 2, 21. Gen. xli. 40. Gen. xli. 54. Gen. xlii. 1, 2. Gen. xlv. 1, 16. Gen. xlvii. 27; Deut. x. 22. Josh. xxiv. 32.

Moved with envy. Stephen shows that the Jews' ancestors were already stiff-necked. *Sold into Egypt.* Removed from them him who was soon after carried into Egypt. But although they cast him off, *God was with him*, and "gave him favor in the sight of Pharaoh by his wisdom." (See Gen. xl. 8, xli. 16.) *Came a dearth, &c.* Egypt and Canaan are alike, though through the bless-

ing of Joseph's God there was bread in Egypt, whilst in the universal great affliction the children of Abraham found no sustenance. *Joseph was made known, &c.* (See Gen. xlv. 1-3, 16.) *Then sent Joseph, &c.* (See Gen. xlv. 17-21.) *Threescore and fifteen souls.* The Hebrew text reckons only seventy (Gen. xlv. 27; Deut. x. 22), but the Septuagint adds five sons of Ephraim and Manasseh, born in Egypt, from 1 Chron. vii., which make seventy-five. But as Stephen speaks only of those that went down with Jacob, without perhaps including the patriarch himself, or any who were in Egypt, the number may be thus reckoned. The eleven brethren, with Dinah their sister, and fifty-two who had descended from them, amount to sixty-four, to which add the eleven wives of Jacob's sons, and the whole will be precisely seventy-five. From so feeble a beginning the Hebrews soon grew to a mighty nation. (See verse 17.) Stephen would suggest to the mind that contrast.

And were carried over into Sychem. Sychem is the same as *Sichem* (Gen. xii. 6), and *Shechem* (Gen. xxxvii. 12), in the Old Testament. It was a city among the mountains of Ephraim, in the valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. The remark of Stephen does not relate to the burial of Jacob, but to that of the *fathers*, as distinguished from him; for, as we learn from Gen. xlix. 29, 30, l. 13, xxiii. 19, Jacob was buried in Hebron, not in Shechem. In regard to the patriarchs, the sons of Jacob, there was a current tradition among the Jews that their bodies were conveyed to Shechem, and there buried, with the exception of Joseph's body, which was preserved in Egypt, and was carried away by the children of Israel when they left Egypt for Canaan. (See Gen. l. 25, 26; Ex. xiii. 19.) The Old Testament gives us no account of the matter. *The sepulchre that Abraham bought, &c.* "Two accounts," says Dr. Adam Clarke, "seem here to be confounded: 1. The purchase made by Abraham of the cave and field of Ephron, which was in the field of Machpelah; this purchase was made from the children of Heth. (Gen. xxiii. 3, 10, 17.) 2. The purchase made by Jacob from the sons of Hamor or Emmer, of a sepulchre in which

the bones of Joseph were laid; this was in Sychem or Shechem. (Gen. xxxiii. 19; Josh. xxiv. 32.) The word *Abraham* therefore, in this place, is certainly a mistake; and the word *Jacob*, which some have supplied is doubtless more proper. *Bishop Pearce* supposes that Luke originally wrote *which he bought for a sum of money, i. e., which Jacob bought*, who is the last person of the singular number, spoken of in the preceding verse. Those who saw that the word *bought* had no *nominative* case joined to it, and did not know where to find the proper one, seem to have inserted *Abraham* in the text for that purpose, without sufficiently attending to the different circumstances of his purchase, from that of *Jacob*. Some ancient manuscripts of the Acts have here, instead of the word *Abraham*, the words *our father*, which may refer to Jacob.

17. ¶ But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, 18. Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph. 19. The same dealt subtly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live. 20. In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months: 21. And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. 22. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. 23. And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. 24. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: 25. For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they understood not. 26. And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? 27. But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? 28. Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday? 29. Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons. 30. And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush. 31. When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, 32. Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled and durst not behold. 33. Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground. 34. I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt. 35. This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a deliverer? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer, by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush. 36. He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, forty years.

Ex. i. 7-9. Ex. i. 22. Ex. ii. 2, &c. Ex. ii. 10. Luke xiv. 19. Ex. ii. 11, &c. Or, now. Ex. iii. 2, &c. Matt. xxii. 32. Heb. xi. 16. Josh. v. 15. Eccl. v. 1. Ex. xiv. 19. Num. xx. 16. Ex. vii. viii., ix., x., xli., xiv. Ex. xvi. 35.

Exceeding fair, or divinely beautiful, which rendered his preservation more desirable to his parents, and, most probably, was the

chief motive which influenced Pharaoh's daughter in securing his safety and future comfort. *Moses was learned*, &c. The Egyptians were anciently of distinguished knowledge, grandeur and wealth. It was a remarkable instance of self-denial for a man of literature, with every flattering prospect before him, to retire in the prime of life from the court of Egypt, and to live comfortably as a shepherd in the Arabian desert. *Mighty in words*—judicious and persuasive in his discourse, and in deeds—prudent and bold, consequently he would make a conspicuous figure, both in the counsels which he gave, and in the commands which he executed in that polite and justly-renowned nation. (Verses 23, 24; see Ex. ii. 11, 12.) *Put off thy shoes*, &c. A command intimating the reverence due to the place where Jehovah deigns to appear; the desert is, then, as holy as the temple at Jerusalem. Some nations to this day express their respect for a superior by putting off their shoes ere they enter his presence.

37. ¶ This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. 38. This is he, that was in the church in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; who received the lively oracles to give unto us: 39. To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt: 40. Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. 41. And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. 42. Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the most of heaven: as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts, and sacrifices, by the space of forty years in the wilderness? 43. Yea, ye took up the tabernacles of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them; and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

¶ Deut. xviii. 15, 18; chap. iii. 22. ¶ Or, as myself. ¶ Matt. xvii. 5; Heb. ii. 2. ¶ Isa. lxviii. 9; Gal. iii. 19. ¶ Ex. xix. 3, 17. ¶ Deut. v. 27, 31; John i. 17. ¶ Rom. iii. 2. ¶ Ex. xxxii. 1. ¶ Deut. ix. 16; Ps. cvl. 9, 20. ¶ Ps. lxxxi. 12. ¶ Deut. iv. 19; 2 Kings xvii. 16; Jer. xix. 13. ¶ Amos v. 25, 26.

Verse 37. See on chap. iii. 22. *In the church*—the collective body of God's chosen people, hence used to denote the whole body of the faithful under the Gospel, or particular sections of them. *In the wilderness with the angel and with our fathers*—alike near to the angel of the Covenant, from whom he received all the institutions of the ancient economy, and to the people, to whom he faithfully reported the living oracles, and among whom he set up the prescribed institutions. (See Ezek. xx. 5-8, 24.) *To go before us*. It

seems to have been the custom of the Oriental nations of antiquity, to bear the images of the gods before the people in journeys or military expeditions, or in going out to battle, since thus, they imagined, they should the more effectually enjoy their guidance, protection and support. (Num. x. 33; Deut. xxxi. 8, 15, iv. 3, 25, iii. 21.)

Made a calf. Thinking they were left to make their own laws (Ex. xxxiii. 1), the Israelites, after an Egyptian fashion, of symbolizing their divinities, made this symbol of the true God. Under the figure of *Apis*, who was a bullock, the Egyptians worshiped *Osiris*, who formerly was an Egyptian king, and was supposed to have invented or introduced agriculture, horticulture, &c. That the *ox*, which among the ancients was a symbol of agricultural labor, was to the Egyptians a symbol of *Osiris*, we learn from Plutarch.

Turned. Because "our fathers" (verse 39) *turned back*. *Gave them up*. Often, from the time of their making the calf, to the time of Amos, and afterward, as the people's perversity continually increased. (Rom. i. 24.) *The host of heaven*, i. e., the sun, moon and stars. The oldest form of idolatry, more plausible than the others. *Took up the tabernacle of Moloch*, i. e., to carry it with them in their marches, or in religious processions. Moloch was an idol of the Ammonites. This tabernacle was intended, no doubt, to resemble the one consecrated to Jehovah. *The star of your God Remphan*, rather, *Rephan*. Rephan is the translation in the Septuagint of the Hebrew Chiun. He is generally supposed to be the same as Saturn. According to *Kircher*, Rephan is a Coptic word, and answers to the planet Saturn, and Chiun is the Arabic term for the same planet, and as the translators were Egyptian Jews, they gave to the Hebrew word its Coptic equivalent. *Beyond Babylon*—into countries more distant than those inhabited by the captives who were carried from Damascus. This is the most natural reconciliation of the difference between Stephen's words and the original in Amos, where we have *beyond Damascus*, unless the reading here has been accidentally changed.

44. † Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen. 45. Which also our fathers that came after, brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David: 46. Who found favor before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. 47. But Solomon built him an house. 48. Howbeit, he that dwelleth not in temples made with hands, as saith the prophet, 49. Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? 50. Hath not my hand made all these things? 51. Ye still-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. 52. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers. 53. Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

*Or, who spake. †Ex. xxv. 40, xxvi. 30; Heb. viii. 5, †Josh. iii. 14. †Or, having received. †Neh. ix. 24; Ps. xlv. 2, lxxviii. 55. †1 Sam. xvi. 1. †1 Chron. xxii. 7. †1 Kings vi. 1, &c., viii. 20. †1 Kings viii. 27; chap. xvii. 24. †Isa. lxi. 1, 2. †Ex. xxxii. 9; Isa. xlviii. 4. †Lev. xxvi. 41; Jer. ix. 26; Rom. ii. 28, 29. †2 Chron. xxxvi. 16; 1 Thes. ii. 15. †Chap. iii. 14. †Gal. iii. 19.

Tabernacle of witness. So called because it was the tent where God gave witness of Himself, on which the glory of God the Shechinah, rested. *But Solomon built him an house.* David was not permitted to build the temple, because he was a man of war, and the temple was to be the abode of peace. *Howbeit.* This building a house must not be misinterpreted, as though the presence of the *highest* were limited to the temple! The passage quoted in verses 49, 50, is taken almost verbatim from the Septuagint. *Ye stiff-necked,* unwilling to submit to God, self-willed, perverse. *Uncircumcised in heart and ears*—a Jewish form of expression, meaning *utterly indisposed to obey, and even to hear,* the commands of God. Circumcision was regarded as a sign of moral purity and consecration to God. *Resist, literally, fall against,* implying active as well as passive opposition to the Holy Ghost, as the Divine author of all revelation, whether history or prophecy, doctrine or precept, law or Gospel. *Ye do always* is addressed to the whole race of Israel, past and present, as a collective or ideal person, as explained in the remainder of the sentence. *Which of the prophets, &c.* Deadly hostility to the messengers of God, whose high office it was to tell of “the Righteous One”—that well-known prophetic title of Messiah (Isa. liii. 11; Jer. xxiii. 6, &c.), and this consummated by the betrayal and murder of the Messiah Himself, on the part of those now sitting in judgment on the speaker, are the still darker features of the national

character depicted in these withering words. *Who have received the law, &c.* This may refer to the law being communicated by the ministration of angels. In the Psalms we are informed that the angels were present at Sinai (Ps. lxxviii. 17.) Paul expressly says that the law was ordained of angels (Gal. iii. 19.) And it is mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews as “the word spoken by angels.” (Heb. ii. 2.) The same opinion was among the traditions of the Jews.

The following brief paraphrase of Stephen’s defense, prepared by a competent hand, obviates the necessity of any extended exegetical remarks, and represents, we think, with much accuracy, the spirit, scope and point of Stephen’s argument.

“You charge me with disparaging the local character of our religion. You say that I speak of this temple as destined to an overthrow predicted by my Master. Let me remind you, then, how far, and how far only, the faith of our fathers is bound up with local conditions. The original home and cradle of our race was not Palestine, but Mesopotamia, in the far East, on the other side of the great river, the river Euphrates. It was there that the voice of God was first heard calling to fallen man. The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he even dwelt in Haran; before even that first migration which landed him not in Canaan but in a temporary resting-place. Hence in due season He removed him by the same Divine call, into this land in which ye now dwell. But how did he enter it? As an owner? As a conqueror? As a sovereign? Nay, he possessed not in it land enough to set his foot on, and yet the promises were all his even then; and the Divine favor and protection: and the Divine communion and friendship. Judge ye, therefore, how far God’s blessing is local! Judge ye, even in this first and greatest example, how far God is a respecter either of place or forms! And that independence of place which was first exemplified in Abraham, was indicated no less in the prediction of his children’s fortunes. In a strange land should they sojourn for centuries, and yet be

God's people and God's chosen still. See how that prophecy was fulfilled; by what sins, through what sufferings of man: by what providences and what interpositions on the part of God. Behold the young brother sold as a slave by foes of his own household; see him carried into a remote and unfriendly land; him the best and noblest of the sons of Israel; see him cast out of his father's home as one despised and forsaken, and yet, through vicissitudes as strange as they were sudden, raised to the pinnacle of greatness, while his father's sons bowed down to him. Does the thought occur to you, that in the varying fortunes of Joseph may have been prefigured the suffering and glory of a later and a mightier One? May not your own hands be red with the blood of a brother after the flesh, who is also after the spirit of your Lord and your Judge?

"Trace then yet onward the course of the national history and see the whole family of Israel seeking refuge out of Canaan; see generation after generation toiling on in Egyptian bondage, excluded from the land of promise, yet losing thereby no one mark of their ancestral privilege; still recognized, in heaven if not upon earth, as God's people, beloved for the father's sake. And yet, all this time, nothing was theirs in Canaan but a burying-place, and century after century was wheeling its slow course over their exile. Mark, then, how the national fortunes were sunk to their lowest level; the very permission to live sought in vain for their sons from their oppressors; when at last he arose, guarded by God's special providence from a threatened similar fate, who was to be first the deliverer from bondage, and then (under God) the founder of a new dispensation.

"And observe when he came, late in time and mature in age; came with thoughts and words of kindness, seeking to reconcile or avenge his brethren; how he was received and dealt with. Who made thee (it was said to him) a ruler and a judge over us? If he whom ye so much reverence was once thus despised and rejected of his countrymen, may it not perhaps have been so with One whom God sent to supersede him? Can you urge as

an argument against the mission of Jesus, that general reproach and rejection, which would have been equally fatal to the authority of Moses? For forty years he was in exile—a double exile; not from Canaan only, but from Egypt also. At last his call came, came once more, not in the land of promise, but in the wilderness; came, too, on the ground, not of a new, but an old relationship; not as to the founder of a new religion, but as to the inheritor of a patriarchal covenant. Forget not Abraham in Moses! Never allow yourselves to date from Sinai a possession which was yours from Mesopotamia and from Haran! In your zeal for a Levitical law, lose not sight of a patriarchal promise! The God who appeared to Moses in the burning bush of Horeb, was already the God of his fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob!

"This Moses, whom your ancestors refused, the same did God send to be their ruler and their deliverer. He brought them out. And do I disparage his high mission by declaring that he was neither the first nor the last of God's messengers; that his dispensation came in but by the way, between the patriarchal and the Messianic? Listen to his own words: A prophet (he said) shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear. He Himself pointed the eye of faith onward to One who should come; like himself, as to the human nature; yet greater than himself, in proportion as the forerunner is less than the foreannounced, the servant of one nation than the Lord of all. I then am but echoing the voice of Moses, when I declare that the customs which he delivered were not designed to be indestructible or final.

"This is that Moses; and how did you receive him? He was with the Church in the wilderness; with him was the angel of the Divine Presence; to him were delivered those living oracles by which God communicated with His people; how did you treat him? Again and again you thrust him from you, and in your hearts turned back again into Egypt. Little did you think then of that pleasant land which

you would now make the whole of your inheritance and of your hope; yea, in the very wilderness you committed idolatry, and drew down upon you, before you entered Canaan, the threat of a second exile, of a national dispersion.

"You charge me with blasphemy against the temple. What have I said of it? I have said, it may be that the temple was no more God's first or God's last dwelling-place below, than the dispensation of Moses was either God's earliest or God's latest revelation. I have said that before the temple was a tabernacle—a tabernacle fashioned under Divine direction, and exhibiting in solemn type realities which have their place in heaven. That was the center of the Divine Presence with Israel at the time when Joshua conquered, and through all the generations from Joshua to David. Does that consist with the idolatry of this temple, as though without it God's presence would be impossible? Nay; have not your own prophets declared that no temple made with hands can contain or enclose God? that heaven is His throne, and earth is His footstool, and the very house which you build for Him already His handiwork? But with what hope can I urge upon you suggestions of reason or arguments of revelation? There is in you a tradition of resistance to the Divine and the Spiritual. Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. As they did to the servants, so ye have done to the Master; they slew the heralds of the Just One, and ye have been now His betrayers and murderers. O blessed and privileged—knew ye but your happiness—above all nations! possessors of a law, in the promulgation of which, on Mount Sinai, the very principalities and powers in heavenly places exercised a solemn and terrific office! and yet not keeping it—trifling ever with God's day of visitation, until at last your house is left unto you desolate!"

It is, as will be observed, the main design of Stephen's discourse, as far as it proceeds, to combine both a vindication of himself, and also a sharp rebuke of his hearers, with explanatory statements of the history of the people of Israel. His speech, however, is evidently an unfinished

production. He was interrupted before He came to the conclusion. He had, we may well suppose, much more to say in relation to Jesus as the Messiah, and would have said it, if he had been permitted, but as *Henry* remarks, "they were wicked and unreasonable men with whom he had to do, that could no more hear than *speak* reason."

51. When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.
† Chap. v. 33.

Out to the heart, literally, *sawn asunder*, in allusion to the cruel mode of cutting criminals to death. This expresses, in the strongest manner, the effect of Stephen's speech on his accusers and judges. His accusations inflicted a wound on their pride, the pain of which goaded them on to madness. (See on chap. v. 23.) Such was the violence of their resentment, that they could not preserve even an external decorum toward him by whom the truth had been proclaimed, but *gnashed on him with their teeth*, like beasts of prey, ready to tear and devour him.

55. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,
† Chap. vi. 5.

Full of the Holy Ghost. The fact that this is again mentioned (see chap. vi. 5), intimates that Stephen had in that trying moment a special visitation of Divine strength and comfort. *Looked up steadfastly into heaven*, not attracted by the vision, which appears to have been vouchsafed afterward, while he was looking up. The action carries its own comment. It was an appeal from the injustice of earth to the eternal justice of heaven, from merciless men to a compassionate God. In Christian heroism man goes out of himself to a higher power; but strength is in his weakness, he trusts in another, an almighty power, and thus confesses that he can do nothing. Stephen looks steadfastly up into heaven, commits his case there, and becomes mighty through God. O let us learn, that when we sink we rise, when we are thus nothing, we possess all in God. *Saw the glory of God*. God Himself is invisible. "No man hath seen Him," and it is physically impossible that any man should see Him, because eyes of flesh are capable of perceiving only material objects. The

glory of God must therefore signify some symbol of His presence, perhaps a brightness surpassing that of the sun, which pointed out the place where He reveals Himself to angels and saints, who contemplate with admiration His infinite perfections, and, at the uncreated source itself, imbibe the delicious draught of immortality and joy. Such a view of heaven revives the spirits of a dying saint, and he would willingly pass through a sea of blood to participate of its bliss. *And Jesus standing, &c.* Mark says (xvi. 19) that our Lord, after His ascension, "sat on the right hand of God." If we bear in mind that it is not the posture, but the state, which, in both cases, should be considered, we will perceive that the different representations are not contradictory. Sitting is the posture of a sovereign, or a judge, or a person who has finished his labors, and is enjoying ease; standing is the posture of a man who waits to receive a friend, or is prepared to defend him. On the present occasion, when a holy man was undergoing a dreadful trial of his faith, Jesus rose, if we may speak so, from His throne, to send to him the necessary succors of His grace, to meet and welcome his spirit as soon as it should escape from its persecutors, and to introduce him into the presence of His Father, that he might receive from His hand the recompense of an unfading crown. To Stephen the sight was consoling. It sustained his courage amidst the terrors of a violent death, and enabled him to resign his mortal life in the joyful hope of a better.

56. And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.
 1Ezek. i. 1. 2Dan. vii. 13.

Heavens opened, not merely *open*, but just opened, *i. e.*, to the view of Stephen. *The Son of man*. This is the only time that our Lord is by human lips called "the Son of man" after His ascension. (Rev. i. 13, xiv. 14, are not instances.) And why here? Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, speaking now not of himself at all (verse 55), but entirely by the Spirit, is led to repeat the very words in which Jesus Himself, *before this same council*, had foretold His glorification (Matt. xxvi. 64), assuring them that that exaltation of the *Son of man* which they should hereafter

witness to their dismay, was already begun and actual. It is only *through* Christ and *in* Him, that the heavens are opened, whether we live or whether we die.

57. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord;

Cried out. They interrupted him with loud shouts, perhaps that the charge of blasphemy brought against Him was proved by his own words (verse 56), and that he should be stoned to death (Acts xxii. 22). They *stopped their ears*, to prevent them hearing any more such blasphemy. *And ran upon him, &c.* They rushed upon him with one accord: the audience was worked up into a frenzy: the Jewish fanatics then present seized upon Stephen; and some of the members of the Sanhedrim perhaps joined in the outrage; for when passion is excited, reason and justice are gone.

58. And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.
 1Luke iv. 29; Heb. xiii. 12, 13. 2Chap. vi. 13. 3Chap. viii. 1, 3, xxii. 20.

Not only did they stop their truth-refusing ears, as if to shut out a blasphemy, and in their hatred of God, rush upon Stephen, but they *cast him out*, just as they had thrust out from them the Lord, the prophets, and the first typical deliverer. They cast him, indeed, like a criminal, outside of the city, the holy places of which they professed to reverence, and *stoned* him. And when the false witnesses were about to cast the first stones, and were making themselves ready to execute their dreadful task, a young man took care of their clothes, with cordial acquiescence in their deed (chap. viii. 1, xxvi. 10), who himself soon after stood forth as an active persecutor of Christ's Church (chap. viii. 3), but only that he might ere long be changed into the greatest of the Apostles of the Son of man. Thus does the world show its impotence when it stones the witnesses for the truth! "The faithful witnesses of Jesus still hear the cry repeated: "Out of the city!" We cannot long preach Christ in any city without molestation; even if stones are not always thrown at us, the filth of slander is heaped upon us. The case of *Saul* teaches us, 1. How much evil may remain in the heart under a show of virtue. He kept the law,

as he thought, and yet he neither loved God nor his neighbor. 2. How capable the conscience is of being perverted. See a man so scrupulous as to pay tithes, no doubt beyond the letter of the law, of anise, mint and cummin, but as to "the weightier matters of the law," a cruel implacable murderer. 3. How truly salvation is of grace. The wonder of Paul shows this. "I obtained mercy!" he exclaims. We may bring less of guilt of some kinds than Paul, when we come to the mercy-seat for pardon and holiness, but none of us can bring more of merit. It is the "ungodly" whom the Lord justifies, and saved as ungodly we must be, or we shall not be saved at all.

59. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!
4Ps. xxxi. 5; Luke xxiii. 46.

The word "God" is printed in the italic character, which shows that it is a supplement, and in this case it is an improper supplement; The context requires that it should be read, "calling upon the Lord Jesus," or invoking, and saying, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." Thus he acknowledged Christ as the Saviour, the only Saviour of souls, in death. He paid, indeed, the same adoration to the Redeemer which the Redeemer Himself offered to the Father, when He said, "into Thy hands I commend my spirit." Shall any, then, presume to insinuate that this eminent saint, "being full of the Holy Ghost," could die in the commission of idolatry? But this horrible position must be maintained, if it be not allowed that Jesus Christ is God, equal with the Father. The prayer of Stephen was one of *confidence*. How little can the unassisted reason of man do toward solving the problem of our immortality! *Cicero* says, "I know not how it happens, that when I read, I assent, but when I have laid down the book, all that assent vanishes. "It is time," says *Soerates* to his judges, "for us to depart, that I may die, and you may live; to which of us it shall be better, is unknown to all but God." "I am going to take a leap in the dark," exclaimed an infidel in the prospect of dissolution. In contrast with this hesitancy, and uncertainty, and gloom, look at the assured confidence of the dying Stephen. There open up before him

the bright visions of immortality. No gloom of annihilation shades the heavenly luster which beams from his countenance. His eye, though melting under the tortures which he is enduring, is yet radiant with the rays of glory which fall upon him from the Eternal Throne, and knowing in whom he had believed, and being persuaded that He was possessed of power to preserve the sacred deposit about to be entrusted to Him, he exclaims with a confidence for which the despairing sinner, in his last hour, would give worlds, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

60. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge! And when he had said this, he fell asleep.
1Matt. v. 41; Luke xxiii. 34.

Kneeled down. When the punishment of lapidation, or stoning was inflicted, it was common for the object of vengeance to be thrown down, and then buried with stones. Stephen had contrived to rise so far as to reach his knees, and in this attitude he *cried with a loud voice*, &c. In the council, amidst the gnashing of teeth, there was in his shining face the triumph of *calmness*. In committing his soul to the Saviour, there was the triumph of *faith*. *Here* was the triumph of *charity*. In the spirit, and much in the manner of his dying Lord, he entreated that the fierce and bloody men who were inflicting upon him the greatest injury in their power, might be forgiven. What an example this for the Church in after ages! How illustrious a display of Divine grace! And what a striking display of the grandeur of soul which our holy religion can inspire! The records of Roman greatness of mind, and of Grecian magnanimity are ransacked in vain for another such example as this. Theirs is tumor, this is grandeur; theirs is heroism, this is Christianity; they died for their country; Jesus for his enemies, they implored the gods for themselves, Stephen prayed to Him who is "God over all and blessed forever," in behalf of his murderers! *He fell asleep.* He met his dissolution with as much composure as if he were retiring from the fatigues of the day, and seeking rest and refreshment in repose for his weary body. Notwithstanding the outward violence, all was peace within. He closed his eyes, not in the

darkness of non-existence, but to awake, and to rise again, at the resurrection of the just, with new vigor of nature, and capacities more enlarged and improved, to be happy with his glorified body, and perfected soul, in the enjoyment of God forever, far above the raging of every storm, and secure from the scathing of every tempest—"where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

1. How did Stephen answer the accusation of blasphemy? 2. Explain the words "God of glory." 3. What impression was made by Stephen's address? 4. How was he "full of the Holy Ghost?" 5. Where did he look? 6. What did he see? 7. What do we learn from "Jesus standing on the right hand of God?" 8. What did Stephen say? 9. What did his enemies then do? 10. At whose feet were their clothes laid? 11. What was Stephen doing when they stoned him? 12. What was his prayer? 13. What do we learn from his prayer? 14. Was Stephen the first martyr of the Christian Church? 15. Why is he said to have fallen asleep?

CHAPTER VIII.

1 *By occasion of the persecution in Jerusalem, the church being planted in Samaria, 5 by Philip the deacon, who preached, did miracles, and baptized many, among the rest Simon the sorcerer, a great seducer of the people: 14 Peter and John come to confirm and enlarge the church; where, by prayer and imposition of hands giving the Holy Ghost, 18 when Simon would have bought the like power of them, 20 Peter sharply reproveth his hypocrisy, and covetousness, and exhorting him to repentance, together with John preaching the word of the Lord, return to Jerusalem. 26 But the king sendeth Philip to teach, and baptize the Ethiopian eunuch.*

AND Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. 3. As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. 4. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

avii. 53. bxi. 19. exxvi. 10, 11; Gal. i. 13.

Among the many standing there whose hearts rejoiced in what had been done, was Saul. The word rendered *consenting*, is of stronger import than our translation bears. The amount of the expression is, that Saul even approved of the deed. *A great persecution against the church, &c.* It was not to be expected that they should spare the flock, who had already in many cases attacked the shepherds. The first object of the chief priests and rulers must be to restrain the Apostles. This had been tried. But now the persecution extended to those who followed them. Looking onward to these difficulties, the Lord had given a general direction, "When they persecute you in this city, flee into another." (Matt. x. 23.) The Apostles themselves could not at present do so; it was

needful for them, at all hazards, to remain at Jerusalem; the affairs of the Church required this. But others were at liberty to seek safety in flight, and were scattered abroad throughout all the regions of Judea and Samaria. But the persecution, instead of crushing the infant Church, tended to strengthen and enlarge it, and added another to the numerous instances in which "the wrath of man" is made, under providential direction, to minister to the grace of God. (See on verse 4.)

And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, &c. These were perhaps, or probably, men that had not yet avowed their attachment to Christ and His cause, but now came forward to make their first profession. *Great lamentation.* This was one testimony of their love to him, and of their sense of his value. The reason why devout men performed this service is, that it was a dangerous service, a service which none but devout men would have ventured to perform. Natural affection would have been intimidated.

As for Saul, &c. The kindly feeling shown toward Stephen no doubt exasperated the persecutors more and more, and Saul violently devastated and spoiled God's Church. *Haling*, rather, *dragging*, bearing off with violence. "*Haling*" is an old word for *hauling* or *hawling*. *And women.* Women in all ages have been exempted from the insults of tyranny, but not always freed from the persecutor's fury. And

blessed be God for that masculine courage and constancy which the feebler sex have shown, when they have been called forth to bear their testimony for Christ. Out of weakness they have been made strong. With what wisdom and courage have they answered their examiners, convicted their accusers, confuted their opposers, kissing the stake, hugging the faggots, embracing the flame! Thus can God help the weak things of the world to confound the strong, and teach the foolish to confute the wise.

Therefore they that were scattered abroad, &c. How evident it is that the "government" is upon the shoulder of Christ, who rules also in the midst of His enemies! (Ps. cx. 2.) He can confound the rage and malice of man, bring strength out of weakness, and good out of evil. This very persecution of the Christians, which appeared to the eye of man to threaten inevitable destruction of the Church, was converted into the means of invigorating and extending it. The dispersed Christians preached the Gospel; thus the storm which burst forth carried the seed which had hitherto been gathered together in a single spot, to many different regions, and, in some cases, to a considerable distance. And that seed germinated and produced fruit. "The enemy," says one, "have destroyed God's witnesses in the flames, and the sparks have been scattered forth in all lands, ay, and on they spread, now as ever! As Luther sang of the two martyrs at Brussels:

"Their ashes never can be washed away;
In every land their dust shall freely play.
Brook, pit, ditch, grave, they all in vain employ
To hide that dust the foe would fain destroy.
Those martyrs! saints, whose testifying breath
The foe hath silenced in the calm of death,
Though dead, yet speak; and I now in every tongue
The foe must hear the joyful triumph sung,
On every shore and every race among!"

5. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. 6. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. 8. And there was great joy in that city. ^{4vi. 5.} ^{2 Chron. xxx. 12.} ^{John iv. 41. 42.} ^{Mark xvi. 17.} ^{Mark ii. 3-11; chap. ix. 33, 31.} ^{Matt. xi. 5.}

Philip—one of the seven chosen in the daily distribution. (vi. 5, on which see notes; xxi. 8.) *The city*, &c.—a city in Samaria. There is no article in the Greek. (See on verse 1.) The work assigned to Philip in Jerusalem was finished, as the dispersion put an end to the primitive

community of goods, and daily distribution. We may mark the providence of God in sending a Hellenistic Jew to a people who from national antipathy would have been unlikely to attend to a native of Judea. (See on verse 1.) *Preached Christ*. The Christ who, less than nine years ago, had preached *Himself* to Shechem, in Samaria. There may have been hearers of Philip who remembered the person of Jesus Himself. And Philip himself had doubtless, heard from the Apostles the parable of the good Samaritan. The true servants of Christ may be compelled to change their place of abode, but they do not change their minds, and they are always engaged in fulfilling the duties of their vocation, wherever they may be.

The people with one accord gave heed, &c. The preaching of Philip was accompanied and followed by no small measure of signs and wonders, by which the Lord confirmed His word, and opened the hearts of the hearers, so that first by hearing, and then by *rightly* seeing these miracles, they were constrained to give heed to that which was spoken. *Unclean spirits*. (See Appendix.) *Bengel* observes that Luke in the Acts never employs the term *daimonia* in speaking of those possessed, although in his Gospel he employs it oftener than any other Evangelist, and from this he infers that the power of possession was feebler after the death of Christ. *Taken with palsies*, literally, *paralyzed*. Here, too, it will be observed, ordinary diseases, are distinguished from demoniacal possession. *Great joy in that city*—over the change wrought on it by the Gospel, as well as the cures which attested its Divine character. Joy is the proper fruit and characteristic of Christian truth (verse 39; chap. xi. 23, xvi. 34; Rom. xiv. 17; 2 Cor. i. 24). "There was never," says *Bacon*, "found in any age of the world, either philosophy, or sect, or law, or discipline, which did so highly exalt the public good, as the Christian faith."

9. ¶ But there was a certain man called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: 10. To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. 11. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. 12. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

ⁱChap. xiii. 6; Rev. xii. 15. ^kChap. v. 36; 2 Tim. iii. 2, 5. ^l2 Cor. xi. 19. ^mGal. iii. 1. ⁿVerse 37; chap. ii. 41. ^oi. 3.

A certain man called—the precise form of expression used in verse 1. *Simon*—celebrated among the early Christian writers as *Simon Magus*, or Magician. The term *Magos* is not applied to Simon by Luke, but the word rendered *used sorcery*, and which Luke here uses in the bad meaning (*magizing*), is the same word in a verb form. This man, for some time resident in the city, by his lying and infernal juggleries (in which he assuredly did not cast out many devils, or heal many sick persons), had brought into a state of stupid astonishment, not only this particular city, but the whole people of the Samaritans. He had made himself out to be an extraordinary and important man—*some great one*, but the exact nature of his assumption is purposely not told. Old people and children, the rabble as well as persons of higher standing, had paid regard to him, and this man had become to them the same thing which Philip now was, but yet in a different way; for *they themselves*, with a vague conception characteristic of the fanaticism of that period, had styled him the *power of God*—the so-called great personified authority of the Deity; but Philip preached to them Christ, and not himself, in his words and works, said and done in the power of God. This wretched man, by his long-continued course of fascinations had drawn to him this large body of adherents, only to see all his honors taken from him at once by the Evangelist's word! Philip's frequent, important and beneficial miracles had diverted the attention of the people from the silly babbler and cheat, and induced them to give heed to the messenger of mercy. And now the word that preached of the right nature of the true kingdom of God, and its foundation on the one only adorable name of Jesus Christ, met with such a response of faith, that the greater number of inhabitants, both men and women, were actually baptized.

13. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.
^v*Signs and great miracles.*

Simon's belief, of course, was a feigned faith. Philip's miracles had thrown his

wonders into the shade, and the credulous, superstitious multitude had left him for Philip. His popularity, like all popularity, urged him to go with the populace. Hence he professed to believe, and was baptized. Philip had no power to read the heart, otherwise he would have checked the cheat of this impostor. Why did this man join the followers of Philip? Was it to hide the shame of his own desertion and defeat? or was it from a wish to know the power of Philip's miraculous performances? or was it, as we have already hinted, to retain his popularity? Perhaps all these considerations had their influence upon him. (See on verse 21.)

14. ¶ Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15. Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: 16. (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus:.) 17. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.
^aChap. xix. 2. ^bChap. ii. 38, x. 48, xix. 5, 6; 1 Cor. i. 13. ^cChap. vi. 6; Heb. vi. 2.

"If," says Henry, "Peter had been, as some say he was, the prince of the Apostles, he would have sent some of them, or, if he had seen cause, would have gone himself, of his own accord, but, so far from that, he submitted to go as a servant to the body, whither they sent him. Two Apostles were sent to encourage Philip, and carry on the good work that was begun." *Who when they were come down*, &c. The design of their mission was to assist Philip in his labors, to confirm those who believed, and, in particular, to impart spiritual gifts. Philip, it would seem, did not possess the power of communicating them, which appears to have been exclusively granted to the Apostles, to distinguish them as the immediate ambassadors of Christ, and the first ministers in His kingdom. *As yet he* (the Holy Ghost) *was fallen upon none of them*, &c., that is, His extraordinary gifts had not yet been conferred upon the Samaritans. They had already received His regenerating influences, for they already believed, and faith is one of the fruits of the Spirit. Peter and John therefore prayed, that God would bestow upon them the same supernatural endowments, which had been so liberally distributed to the Jewish converts, and then "laid their hands on them." This solemn rite was used in the primitive

Church, both in setting apart a person to a spiritual office, and in conveying miraculous powers. In the present case, and in all others of the same nature, it was merely a sign, with which the thing signified was connected, not by the authority of the Apostles, but by the will of the Spirit.

18. ¶ And when Simon saw, that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money. 19. Saying, give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.—1 Tim. vi. 3.

Simon saw. Simon now takes no share in the laying on of hands. He stood by, a spectator, and *saw*. Simon the Magus is intently gazing on Simon the Apostle; the very emblem of error and sin malignly eyeing the power of Christian truth and holiness, incapable of understanding its nature. He sees a work performed on the young Samaritan converts that raises them above themselves. He notes how beautiful and miraculous the results. These Apostles he sees are higher than the deacon; they are the topmost masters of the new system, the possessors of the original wonder-working power, alone able to impart that power to others. From them, and not from their subordinate, Philip, must the true primal secret be obtained. *He offered them money, &c.* He regarded the capability of imparting the Holy Spirit rightly, as *something conferred*, as a *derived power* (see Matt. x. 1), but, *wrongly*, as one to be obtained by an *external method* without an *inward disposition*; and, since in external commerce everything may be had for gold, *he wanted to buy it*. The spirit of mercenariness was his inspiration. How terrible is covetousness! It is declared to be "idolatry," against which, as one of the most revolting forms of depravity, the most awful curses and heaviest judgments are denounced. From Simon's infamous attempt to bargain for the power of conferring the Holy Spirit, all the methods of turning the concerns of religion into a lucrative trade, are called *Simony*, of which there have been, and are, a great variety of species, and will be, so long as men continue covetous and ambitious, and verily suppose that "gain is godliness." It is much easier to expose and declaim against such impious practices, than to find an effectual remedy for them. Alas, Simon Magus has left far more indisputable suc-

cessors than Simon Peter has done, especially in that Church which grounds its claims on succeeding to St. Peter's authority; but not in that Church alone.

20. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

22. Kings v. 15, 16; Matt. x. 8. 1x. 49, xi. 17. 23. Jos. xxii. 25. 24. Ps. lxxviii. 36, 37; Ezek. xiv. 3.

Thy money perish, &c. These words are not a prayer, or a wish, they amount to no more than a strong expression of abhorrence for the avarice and hypocrisy which Simon had so shamelessly betrayed. *Thou hast thought—rather, thou thoughtest*. The historic force of the tense is to be kept here: the Apostle uses it as looking forward to the day of his destruction. *The gift of God*, elsewhere called "the gift of the Holy Ghost." (See ii. 38, x. 45.) The very terms imply gratuity, the Greek noun being used in the accusative as an adverb corresponding to the Latin *gratis*. (See Matt. x. 8; John xv. 25; Rom. iii. 24; 2 Cor. xi. 7; Gal. ii. 21; 2 Thes. iii. 8; Rev. xxi. 6, xxii. 17.) The sin and folly of the sorcerer's offer lay not merely in the thought of bribing God, but in that of purchasing what, from its very nature, could be only a free gift. *Part . . . lot*. The two words are apparently synonymous: the first being literal, the second figurative, but not without reference perhaps to the *inheritance* of the kingdom of God, the *incorruptible inheritance*. (1 Peter i. 4.) "Christianity, with its glorious doctrines, promises and provisions, is no more to thee than if it had never been, and all the past portion of thy existence is a blank, so far as the realizing thy destiny is concerned. *For thy heart is not right, &c.* The baptismal water had been applied to him externally, but his inward parts were still unclean. The baptism of the Spirit must be combined with the baptism of water, else the latter remains incomplete, and the individual is no true Christian. The heart is the worst part of man till it be renewed, and then it is the best. Where most evil lies, there we must first begin to be good: all will be good, if the heart, which is the seat, the sink and seed-plot of all evil, be made good. A heart truly right with God, implies, 1. That we venerate Him. 2. That we en-

tirely submit ourselves to Him. 3. That we maintain a sacred intercourse with Him.

²² Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God: *perhaps* the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee: ²³ For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

¹ Dan. iv. 27; ² Tim. ii. 25. ³ Jer. iv. 18; Heb. xii. 15.

⁴ Ps. cxvi. 16; Prov. v. 22; Isa. xxviii. 22.

Repent, &c., literally, repent from thy wickedness. Pray God. This shows how completely the Apostles referred the forgiveness of sins to, and left it in, the sovereign power of God, without undertaking it in virtue of any assumed delegated power of absolution. *If perhaps.* This expression of doubt was designed to impress upon Simon the greatness of his sin, and the need of alarm on his part. The *heart* and the *thoughts* are the prime and principal spring of that wickedness that ruins souls and turns them into hell forever. (Matt. v. 19; Jer. iv. 14; Ps. ix. 17.) *Gall of bitterness.* Gall here signifies "poison," as, according to the opinion of the ancients, the poison of serpents resided in their gall. (Job. xx. 14; Rom. iii. 13.) The expression denotes extreme depravity—the corrupting and poisoning influences of sin. *The bond of iniquity.* The meaning is, that Simon was wholly enchained by sin—confirmed in the habit of sin. It is in Simon's corruption of heart, that we find an explanation of his strange and sad conduct. Had he been free from this most false interpreter of all law, human and Divine, how could he have been capable of so great an absurdity (leaving guilt at present out of the question) as to imagine that for money he could purchase the power of conferring the gifts of the Holy Ghost?

²⁴ Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

¹ Ex. viii. 8; Num. xxi. 7; 1 Kings xiii. 6; Job xlii. 8; James v. 16.

Pray ye to the Lord for me. He thus refers back to the Apostles, their summons to him to *individual* prayer, and does it so that one might well doubt whether he spoke in derision or in truth, if it were not that he adds, *that none of these things, &c.* Simon here speaks in a very similar way to the stubborn Pharaoh in Ex. viii. 28, ix. 28, x. 17. He is afraid of "the perishing," but has no heart for repentance, and for the second time places man between him and his view of God, which

course of action would probably seem peculiarly natural to him, and would spring from the old fallacies of his previous system of deceit. He only half defiantly enunciates something which sounds like repentance, but is *not* repentance. And here Luke puts an end to the history.

²⁵ And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the Gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

The Apostles, having finished the business for which they came, returned to Jerusalem, for as yet they were not to disperse. *In many villages, &c.* Though the congregations were inconsiderable, their souls were precious, and hence the Apostles seized the opportunity to proclaim the Gospel to them. John was one of those, who formerly asked leave to call for fire from Heaven, to consume certain Samaritans, but his Lord had now taught him better things. The true torches of God, enkindled by the fire of Divine love, afford both light and warmth wherever they appear. Even when we are traveling, the fear of God should be our guide, and the love of our neighbor, be our companion. (John iv. 3-5.)

²⁶ And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.—Josh. xv. 47.

The angel of the Lord—rather, "an angel." *Saying, Arise, &c.* Philip appears to have received this direction in Samaria (verse 13), and soon after the departure of the Apostles. *Toward the south*, because in Samaria he was so far to the north of Jerusalem. This expression points out, not the direction of the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, but that in which Philip was to travel, in order to find the road. *Gaza* was about sixty miles southwest of Jerusalem. It is one of the oldest cities in the world, being mentioned in Gen. x. 19. It has passed through various vicissitudes of conquest and recovered freedom. It was an important city in the time of the Crusaders, and was finally taken by Saladin. At present Gaza is a considerable town, with a population of about 15,000, known by the name Ghuzzeh, and much frequented by merchants going between Syria and Egypt. There were several roads leading from Jerusalem to Gaza. The words *which is desert*, are to

be considered as the words of the angel pointing out to Philip the particular road which he should take—namely, that which was then known by the name of the desert road, or which led through the desert of Judea.

27. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship: 28. Was returning, and sitting in his chariot, read Esaias the prophet.
 29 Zeph. iii. 10. 30 Isa. lvi. 3-5. 31 2 Chron. vi. 32, 33.

Two countries were known in ancient times by the name of Ethiopia—the one lying south-east from Jerusalem, and the other situated in Africa, beyond Egypt and Nubia. In the last of these countries, now called Abyssinia, the queens were long distinguished by the name of Candace, as Pharaoh was a common name for the kings of Egypt. To this country the eunuch belonged. He was a proselyte to the Jewish religion, and is therefore not viewed as one of the Gentiles. It is pleasant to observe how far the knowledge of God had already spread, preparatory to the publication of the Gospel. The Jews were dispersed among all nations. *Eunuch*—not necessarily one mutilated. In the courts of Oriental monarchs, these were generally mutilated, hence eunuch came to mean such. *Had come to Jerusalem for to worship*, which is a proof that he was a worshiper of the God of Israel. *Was returning*, &c. He had profited by the religious exercises in which he participated in Jerusalem, and even in traveling, he is improving his time. A copy of the Scriptures lay unrolled before him, and he was refreshing his memory with one of those prophetic songs (see on verse 32), which probably had been chanted at the recent festival, and ruminating on the meaning of the mystic page. God sees his simplicity and earnestness, and provides him an instructor, who should lead him into the great truths of the Gospel; which, without such an one, he could not have understood. Many, after having done their duty, as they call it, in attending a place of worship, forget the errand that brought them thither, and spend their time on their return, rather in idle conversation, than in reading or conversing about the Word of God. It is no wonder that such

should be always learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

29. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. 30. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? 31. And he said, How can I except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.
 32 Isa. lxxv. 21; Hos. vi. 3. 33 Matt. xlii. 23, 51; Eph. v. 17. 34 Rom. x. 14. 35 Ps. xxv. 9.

The Spirit of verse 29, and the *angel* of verse 26, although coincident, are not identical, the Spirit being the Divine authority or power, of which the angel was the instrument or agent. *And Philip ran thither to him*, &c. On the supposition that Philip had never met the Ethiopian eunuch before, his conduct bears the appearance of rude and forward familiarity. But such is the simplicity of Eastern manners, than no sooner do two persons meet, than, although they are entire strangers to each other, they enter into free conversation—the first moment of their interview—difference of faith is forgotten, and they talk as if they had all their lifetime been the most familiar acquaintances. Accordingly, the question of Philip, *Understandest thou what thou readest?* instead of being regarded as an evidence of impertinent curiosity, would appear in the eyes of the eunuch no greater freedom than universal custom warranted him to use. Nor is there any difficulty in conceiving how Philip, walking on foot, could by an effort of running keep alongside the chariot of the stately traveler. The carriage of the eunuch, as well as all the carriages mentioned in the Bible, far from being like the light and nimble coaches of modern times, which soon leave the pedestrian at a hopeless distance, was a clumsily built vehicle, whose ponderous dimensions borne along on a rough and miserable road, were not very compatible with expeditious traveling. Moreover, in the East, when persons are reading privately in a book, they usually go on reading aloud with a kind of singing voice, moving their heads and bodies in time, and making a monotonous cadence at regular intervals, thus giving emphasis, although not such an emphasis as would please an English ear, and convey a knowledge of the sense. From this practice, we can be at no loss to understand how it was that Philip should hear what passage in Isaiah

the Ethiopian eunuch was reading, before he was invited to come up and sit in the chariot. *How can I, &c., literally, Why do ye ask me for, &c.* He confesses his ignorance. *Except some man*—he who has the first knowledge of Jesus, can understand the prophets without a human guide. How wonderful the modesty and humility of this distinguished individual! he thankfully accepts Philip's offer to instruct and teach him. Such as are modest and thoroughly humble are also truly docile and teachable, willing to learn knowledge, although from the mouth of an inferior. *He desired Philip, &c.* The guest in the chariot, who had been so courteously invited, soon becomes a guide to the true home. "The Holy Scriptures," says *Bengel*, "interest and delight the reader; even when he only partially understands them, the aroma of spices penetrates the envelope which encloses them."

32. The place of the scripture which he read was this, *He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:* 33. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away; and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.—*Isa. liii. 7, 8.*

As a sheep to the slaughter—from *Isa. liii. 7*, a chapter so descriptive of the Messiah, that almost every verse is quoted or alluded to in the New Testament. (*John xii. 33; Mark ix. 12; Matt. viii. 17; Mark xv. 28.*) Here is a description of the sufferings of the Messiah, which He endured with meekness and resignation, like a sheep quietly following the person who leads it to death, or a lamb submitting in silence to be robbed of its fleece, and a declaration that He was condemned through the injustice of men, and by violence was deprived of His life. *In his humiliation his judgment, &c., that is, he was unrighteously condemned in his humble condition*, while acting faithfully as God's servant, He was put to death under the false accusation of blasphemy. *And who shall declare his generation?*—that is, set forth the wickedness of His contemporaries? Of the various meanings which have been attached to this clause, *this* certainly best suits the context. "For"—as a proof and demonstration of this indescribable wickedness—"His life was taken from the earth," *i. e.*, He was put to death. There is some difference between the quotation in these

verses and the original passage in *Isaiah*, owing, it is probable, to the former being taken from the Greek version of the Old Testament.

34. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other man? 35. Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.—*Luke xxiv. 27.* Chap. xviii. 28.

The Ethiopian officer could hardly fail to have heard at Jerusalem of the sufferings and death of Jesus, and of the existence of a continually increasing party who acknowledged Him to be the Messiah. But his question to Philip, whether the prophet in this passage meant himself, or some other man, clearly shows that he had not the least idea of any connection between the prediction and those facts. *Of whom speaketh the prophet this, &c.* This question was answered by Philip's sermon on Christ. He showed to his new companion the glorious burden of the prophecy he was reading, and interpreted in the light of Christ's wonderful life. *He preached unto him Jesus*—Jesus as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. His sermon is not reported. We have nothing more than his text, and his grand theme—Jesus. By the blessing of God upon the preached sermon, saving faith was effectually wrought in the eunuch's soul. The knowledge of the Saviour comprises the knowledge of the whole plan of salvation. (1 Cor. ii. 2.)

36. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37. And Philip said, If thou believest, with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

xx. 47. Mark xvi. 16; verse 12. John xi. 27; 1 Cor. xii. 3; 1 John iv. 15.

See, here is water—more simply, "behold water!" as if already, his mind filled with light and his soul set free, he was eagerly looking out for the first water by which he might seal his reception of the truth, declare his conviction of the Messiahship of Jesus, and be enrolled among His visible disciples. Baptism was indeed suggested in the very prophecy the eunuch was reading: "So shall He (Messiah) sprinkle many nations," words which the Ethiopian, son of a distant nation, might feel rightly to include himself. "Robinson," says *Dr. Whedon*, "plausibly decides that this was 'a certain water,' as the Greek signifies, 'standing along the bottom of

the adjacent wady' (or valley, namely, of Tell el-Hasy). 'This water is on the most direct route from Beit Jibrin to Gaza, on the most southern road from Jerusalem, and in the midst of the country now *desert*, that is, without villages or fixed habitations. There is no other similar water on this road.' Undoubtedly 'many changes' may have occurred in the earth, rendering all such identifications somewhat uncertain; but the entire presumption is that the traveler stands on the very spot where Philip and the eunuch stood!"

What doth hinder, &c. There is a becoming modesty in his manner of soliciting baptism. He does not demand it as his right, but whilst the question is expressive of earnest desire, he leaves the Evangelist to determine whether he was worthy of so high a privilege. Philip throws no obstacle in the way of his desire. Simon, whose case is before related, had not believed with all his heart, and had "no part nor lot in the matter," though the rite of baptism had been solemnized. If the Ethiopian did believe—so believe that *Jesus Christ is the Son of God*, as to trust in Him for all that the soul can need, or God sees fit to bestow—then he had part in this salvation. The blood of Christ should "wash away his sins," as water cleanseth the defilement of the body; nay, there should be in him "a well of water, springing up into everlasting life"—he should "receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," to comfort, and strengthen, and purify his mind.

38. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. 39. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more, and he went on his way rejoicing.
1 Kings xviii, 12; Ezek. iii. 12, 14, 1Ps. cxix. 14.

Went down both into the water.....when they were come up out of the water. These words merely imply that Philip and the eunuch went into the water for the purpose of baptism, but they state nothing as to the mode of its administration. It is certain that *eis* does sometimes signify *into*, and *ek* *out of*, but it is equally certain that at other times the proper translation of the one is *to*, and of the other is *from*. When Jesus came to the sepulchre of Lazarus (John ix. 38), we know he did not enter

into it, and when ships came from Tiberias (John vi. 23), we do not suppose that they sailed out of the midst of the city, but that that was the place from which their voyage commenced. Besides, admitting that *eis* here means more than to the water's edge, the stronger sense of the words rendered "into the water" is fully satisfied, if we suppose that Philip and the eunuch stood in the water, which in any language would be naturally expressed by saying *they went into it*. The precise mode in which Philip baptized the eunuch is not certain, nor is it of any consequence.

The Spirit of the Lord caught away, &c. The removal was miraculous, although its mode and nature are not described. Similar miraculous removals appear to have happened in the case of Elijah. (1 Kings xviii. 12; 2 Kings ii. 16.) The same verb occurs in the description of the ecstasy of Paul. (2 Cor. xii. 2, 4.) *Saw him no more, &c.* How admirable, how perfect are the works of God! These two persons were brought together by the agency of an angel, and now they are parted asunder by a miracle, but a miracle of wisdom as well as of power. For this sudden and supernatural removal of the preacher was a powerful confirmation of the doctrine which he taught, and had an obvious tendency to impress on the mind of the new convert this important truth, that although a man had been employed as the instrument of his conversion, yet the work itself was truly Divine, and the glory of it due to God alone.

We can easily conceive that this man would go on his way rejoicing. We can understand his feelings, and enter into the state of his mind. We know that he was acquainted with the Scriptures, which had brought him to perceive his condition in the world, as the creature of a pure and holy God. He must often have felt within himself a doubtful and anxious apprehension as to his state in the sight of that God. The Scripture told him what God required, but he knew likewise his own heart and practice, and he could not but see in how many things he had offended, and "come short of the glory of God." Like a mariner on a stormy sea, in a sinking

vessel, he would be full of doubts and fears. Now came certainty instead of doubt, and hope instead of fear. He had found an anchor for his soul, and fixed it upon Christ, the rock of ages. He had received a proof, proof not to be disputed, of God's "good-will toward men," His love and pity for the creatures He had made. Nay, he had received for himself a token of that love, and was enrolled as one of His adopted children. So *he went on his way rejoicing*. A wanderer on the earth, he had been led into a safe and certain faith. A creature of God, he had found assurance of His favor. A sinful being, he had found a remedy for his sin; a dying creature he had found "life and immortality."

It would not be all joy with him, as he passed onward in his course. He would have, like other men, his troubles, like other Christians, he would have his trials, but for the future there was hope, and for the present there was joy: "joy and peace in believing."

⁴⁰ But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through, he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cesarea.

Found at Azotus, i. e., was next heard of there, after the transaction in the desert. This place was the ancient Ashdod, a city

of the Philistines, near the sea-coast. It was about thirty miles from Gaza. The ruins consist of a mound covered with broken pottery, and of a few pieces of marble. (See Amos i. 8.) A little village not far off, called Esdud, perpetuates the ancient name. *Cesarea*, probably his native place (xxi. 8, 9), was situated on the Mediterranean, and was anciently called Stratnice, or *Strato's Tower*. Herod the Great, who bestowed on the city much labor and expense in repairing and adorning it, and in constructing a harbor for it, named it *Cesarea*, in honor of the Roman emperor, Augustus Cæsar. A map of Palestine will show that, between Azotus, or Ashdod, and Cesarea, there were many considerable towns, in which Philip would have an opportunity to preach the Gospel. Cesarea is now a large heap of ruins, and its stones are used to build and repair the neighboring towns of Syria, whilst the old name Kaisariyeh still lingers to mark the spot where the proud metropolis of Roman Judea stood, and to teach a lesson of the vanity of earthly greatness. But in the Apostolic age Cesarea was at the height of its splendor—the city of palaces, the seat of Roman government and law, and the rival of Jerusalem as the capital of Judea.

1. What is said of Saul? 2. What effect was produced by the persecution of the Church at Jerusalem? 3. What kind of men carried Stephen to his burial? 4. What did Saul do? 5. What is recorded of Philip? 6. What is said of Simon? 7. To whom were Peter and John sent? 8. What did they do? 9. What did Simon ask of Peter? 10. What was Peter's answer? 11. What did Simon then request? 12. Where was Philip directed to go? 13. Who was the "man of Ethiopia" referred to? 14. What is said of him? 15. What part of the Scripture was he reading? 16. What did Philip preach unto him? 17. On what condition was he baptized? 18. How was Philip caught away? 19. In what spirit did the eunuch go on his way?

CHAPTER IX.

1. *Saul, going toward Damascus, is stricken down to the earth, is called to the Apostleship, and is baptized by Ananias.* 20. *He preacheth Christ boldly.* 23. *The Jews lay wait to kill him: so do the Grecians, but he escapeth both.* 31. *The church having rest, Peter health Eneas of the palsy, and restoreth Tabitha to life.*

AND Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that, if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

And, rather, But. The emphatic *yet* connects the course of Saul, as here set forth, with his earlier acts (viii. 3), and is intended to denote the remarkable fact that up to this moment his rage against the disciples burned as fiercely as ever. *Breathing*—not *breathing out*, literally, *inhaling*, as though *threatenings and slaughter*, or menace and murder, were the element in

which he lived. Can any man be conceived to be farther from Christianity than Saul at this time was? *The high priest*—probably Theophilus, brother and successor to Jonathan, who succeeded Caiaphas. *Letters*, of authorization: written by the high priest (in this case, but not always, president of the Sanhedrim) in the name of *the whole estate of the elders*. (xxii. 5.) The destruction of Christians in Jerusalem was not sufficient to gratify the wrath of this persecutor. He must go to *Damascus*, the capital of Syria, the great highway between Eastern and Northern Asia, about a hundred and thirty miles north-east of Jerusalem, the most ancient city perhaps in the world. As there was a large Jewish population in Damascus, there would be several synagogues. The Christians had not as yet ceased to worship there, and the rulers of the synagogues exercised an oversight over the religious opinions of their members. *This way*, rather, *the way*. If the expression was coined by the enemies of the disciples of Christ, it must have been a term of reproach, intended to represent them as being a separate faction or party by themselves. But if, as is more likely, the name was taken by themselves, and applied to them also by their enemies, then, in all probability, it was intended to set them forth as walking in the footsteps of Him who declares Himself to be “*The way*, and the truth, and the life.” *He might bring them bound*, &c. The Romans had granted the Sanhedrim the power of trial and condemnation in all religious matters: and Aretas, king of Arabia, then ruling in Damascus, was well disposed toward the Jews, and some think a Jewish proselyte, as he had married his daughter to Herod Antipas. The disciples of the Lord were now like a scattered flock without a shepherd, and Saul was like a beast of prey ready to devour them; they were like defenseless sheep, and he like a raging wolf seeking to destroy them; they were like lambs led to the slaughter, and he like a roaring lion thirsting for their blood.

3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus, and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 Cor. xv. 8; “Matt. xxv. 40, 45.

On verse 3, &c., see on xxii. 6, &c.

He journeyed. Can we trace the probable route of this young hunter of heretics? The journey from Jerusalem was probably made on the Roman road, i. e., that of the Itineraries, by Neapolis (Sichem) and Scythopolis, crossing the Jordan south of the lake Tiberias—Gadara, and so to Damascus. Or he might have joined either the Petra road, by Jericho and Heshbon, and so by Botsrah to Damascus, or the Egyptian caravan-track, which passes to the north of the lake of Tiberias, and near Cesarea Philippi. *He came near to Damascus*—so xxii. 6. Tradition points to a bridge near the city as the spot referred to. Events which are the turning points in one's history, so imprint themselves upon the memory, that circumstances the most trifling in themselves acquire by connection with them something of their importance, and are recalled with inexpressible interest. *Suddenly*. Already, perhaps, in sight of Damascus, his progress was arrested. God often permits the wicked to carry on their designs till they are on the eve of being accomplished, when He suddenly interposes to defeat them, in judgment or in mercy. He either overwhelms the builder under the ruins of his edifice, or makes him abandon his impious project, and consecrate his time and talents to the service of the sanctuary. *There shined round about him a light from heaven*. The light was instantaneous, not like that of the sun, for the full splendor of which we are prepared by the gradual illumination of the atmosphere, as he approaches the horizon, but like the lightning which, bursting from the clouds amidst the darkness of the night, dazzles and confounds us. Its brightness was unusual, as Paul himself informs us in his speech to Agrippa. (Chap. xxvi. 13.) It must have been different from any other light with which we are acquainted, for when the sun is in the meridian, and shining in a cloudless sky, lightning itself would scarcely be perceptible. It was a signal of the approach of the Son of God, “Who looketh on the sun, and it shineth not, and sealeth up the stars.” By this symbol—light—how clearly do we perceive the first step which the Almighty takes in the conversion of every

human soul which is brought out of the deadly darkness of sin, and the gloom of Satan's kingdom. (2 Cor. iv. 6.)

Saul fell to the earth, overwhelmed with a consciousness of the greatness of the Saviour who appeared to him, and of his own guilt, vileness and nothingness. Mark here the second step in a true and Scriptural conversion, a lowly, humbling, self-abasing view of our own heart, life and conversation, a view which throws all our thoughts of self-righteousness into the very dust, which lays us there ourselves with all our virtues, and all our amiable qualifications, as utterly poor, blind and naked, waiting the will of our Divine Master.

And heard a voice, &c. There was not merely an impression made upon Saul as if he had heard audible words, but he actually heard them. It was a part of the miracle that those who accompanied him heard the voice of the speaker, but failed to distinguish the words uttered. *Saul, Saul!* Though he was ignorant of Jesus, Jesus knew him—knew his name, his purpose, his mission, and appeals to him. *Why persecutest thou me?* The question appeals to Saul's conscience, and is designed to awaken in him a sense of the grievous wrong which he is committing. Paul strikes in Damascus—Christ suffers in heaven. Observe the unutterable tenderness, sympathy and loving kindness which are implied in the manner in which the Son of God here identifies Himself with His own persecuted, despised and suffering people. He charges Saul with persecuting *Him* when he persecuted *them*, and we can be at no loss here to discern the doctrine which he elsewhere informs us He will maintain at the final judgment: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of my servants, ye have done it unto me." (Matt. xxv. 40, also, 45. *Why persecutest thou me?*) What have I done to merit this at thy hands? What have my people done to receive such treatment? What makes my cause so odious in thy sight? Why shouldst *thou* have done all this?—*thou* who knowest the law, and the prophets, and the psalms—*thou* who shouldst have known that all these things must have

been fulfilled which you are now resisting, and *thou*, who shouldst have believed that the Son of man ought to suffer many things, and to enter into His kingdom. "Why persecutest thou me?" I who have loved thee with an everlasting love, who have laid down my life for thy sake, who have interceded with my Father that this worse than barren fig-tree should be let alone until I should "draw him with the cords of a man, with the bonds of love?"

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.—verse 39.

That Saul *saw*, as well as *heard* this glorious speaker, is expressly said by Ananias (verses 17, 22, 14), by Barnabas (ix. 27), and by himself (xxiv. 16); and in claiming apostleship, he explicitly states that he had "*seen the Lord*" (1 Cor. ix. 1, 15, 8), which can refer only to this scene. *Who art thou, Lord?* This question of the bewildered persecutor indicates that he did not *immediately* recognize Jesus, although a presentiment respecting the nature of Him who spoke, may have at once followed the appeal made to his conscience. *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.*

Never did information more unexpected and alarming burst upon the startled ear. Jesus, whom the Jews had crucified as the vilest of malefactors, without the gates of their city; Jesus, whom Saul believed to be an impostor, and whose name he had never mentioned but in terms of execration; Jesus, whose helpless followers he had, on all occasions, treated with the utmost indignity and cruelty; this Jesus now appeared in heavenly glory. *It is hard for thee, &c.* This is a proverbial expression, denoting that the design of a person will prove abortive, and will terminate in his own ruin. It is an allusion to a fierce ungovernable animal, which kicks at short spikes of iron, and which as it vents its impotent rage, destroys itself. "It is hard for thee to rush upon the bosses of Jehovah's shield, it is hard for thee to fight against Omnipotence, it is hard for thee to contend with God, for thou shalt not prosper, and it is hard for thee to seek the injury of my people, for thou wilt thereby merely injure thyself, because I am with them, and they shall be mine in that day

when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spareth his son that serveth him, and he that toucheth them shall touch the apple of his eye." Self-ruin is the inevitable lot of those who persecute the Lord Jesus and His followers. (See Deut. xxxii. 15; 1 Sam. ii. 29.)

⁶ And he trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.—^c xvi. 30.

The effect produced on Saul is just what might have been expected. *Astonished*—at himself, his blindness, guiltiness, madness and cruelty, at the long-suffering patience that bore with such a bloodthirsty persecutor, at the marvelous goodness and mercy that condescended to expostulate with him, notwithstanding all that he had done. *Trembling* also at the same time, because he knew that he was in the presence of the Holy One of Israel, because he felt that he was condemned of his own conscience, as well as charged with persecuting the Son of God, and lest there should be no forgiveness for one like him, yet, notwithstanding all his doubts and fears, and terrible perplexities, he lays himself low at the foot of the cross, asking the question, so marvelous, considering from whom it came, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* This inquiry is, 1. *Personal* in its aim—*me*. We should think of ourselves in Divine things, and bring home every truth to our own business and bosoms. 2. *Practical*—not to know, to hear, to believe, to talk of, but to *do*. Practice is essential to religion. 3. *Impartial* *it its desire*. The true convert says not to Jesus, if the service be honorable or profitable, that is, carrying worldly credit or profit in it, then will I do it: no, but whatever it is, if it be Thine, and Thou appoint me to it, *Here am I*. (Is. vi. 8.) Five principles demand and more than justify the absolute surrender of ourselves to Christ: 1. The righteousness and excellency of His requirements. 2. The endearing relations in which He stands to His people. 3. His greatness. He is Lord of all. 4. The obligations He has laid us under by His kindness. 5. His engagement to reward our devotedness to Him. The recompense must be of grace, and not of works; but it is real. He is not unrighteous to forget our work

of faith and labor of love. *Arise, and go, &c.* Perhaps, in the present state of his mind, he could not have given attention to the instruction of the Saviour, and his situation on a public road, and in the midst of his unconverted companions, was unfavorable. It was in the calm and leisure of privacy, that he was to be prepared for the important services in which Jesus purposed to employ him. *And it shall be told thee, &c.* Not by me, not in a voice from heaven, not by some angel messenger, specially sent down to instruct and enlighten thee, but by some poor, unknown, ignoble disciple one of "*that way*," which thou hadst intended to persecute to the death, one who has himself learnt by the appointed means of grace, and by constant application at the throne of grace, all that he shall be commissioned to teach thee. Thus does God destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent, that no flesh should glory in His presence, but that he that glorieth may glory in the Lord. In the apology of Paul before Agrippa (xxvi. 16-18) a longer address is given than is here recorded in verses 5 and 6. (See on next verse.)

⁷ And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. ^aDan. x. 7.

Hearing a voice. In xxii. 9, we read: "They heard not the voice of him that spake," &c. The Greek word for *voice*, like our word utterance, may signify either the vocal sound or the articulate words. So a man partially deaf would be said, popularly but truly, *to hear* and *not to hear* the same utterance. (Compare John xii. 29.) *Seeing no man*. They saw not, as Saul did, the speaker. The discrepancy in the two accounts of this great event are only seeming, not real—only in the *letter*, not in the *spirit*. Those only will stumble at the difference in the forms of narration, who from enmity to the truth are striving to create or magnify discrepancies. "The devout and intelligent student of Scripture," says *Alford*, "will see in such examples a convincing proof of the simple truth of the narrative—the absence of all endeavors to pare away apparent inconsistencies or revise them into confor-

mity—the *bona fide* work of holy truthful men, bearing each his testimony of things seen and heard under the guidance, not of the spirit of bondage, but of that spirit of whom it is said, “*where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.*” The difference between these men and Saul marks the difference between mere convictions and true conversions. Many *hear* the word in a general way, and *see* enough to make them tremble, but then it is only truly effectual when it is addressed to us as the voice of One that speaks to us from heaven, when it disarms us of our enmity to Christ, excites in us the desire of knowing Him, and makes us willing, without hesitation or delay, to obey His commandments.

8. And Saul arose from the earth, and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

When Saul's eyes were opened, he found himself blind. The blindness is not to be explained on natural principles. It was supernatural light that blinded him. It is more than probable that this blindness had a moral purpose, and served not only to intimate to Saul the blindness of the state in which he had been, but also to impress him with a deeper sense of the power of Jesus as the protector of his people, and to turn his thoughts inward, while he was rendered less liable to distraction by external objects. *But they led him by the hand, &c.* In how different a manner did Saul enter Damascus from that which he had planned! He is led, humbled, afflicted and blind, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, whose disciples he intended to drag to prison. Submissively he moves forward, asking no questions, starting no objections, and pleading no difficulties. He did not shrink from the ridicule he knew he would have to encounter at the instance of his old associates, or from the dangers to which he would be exposed at the hands of the scribes and Pharisees.

9. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

The anxiety of his mind and the anguish of his heart were so great that he had no appetite for food. It is not necessary to suppose that *three entire days* are here meant. According to the Jewish mode of speaking, they may have been

parts of two days, with one intervening whole day. But what three days must those have been! Only one other space of three days' duration can be mentioned of equal importance in the history of the world. “While his sight and taste were inactive,” says *Bengel*, “he was inwardly reunited in his retirement through prayer. (Verse 11.) The business of conversion is worth the bestowal of whole days, when one is being drawn to God.”

10. ¶ And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias, and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul: for behold, he prayeth: 12. And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. —xxii. 12.

Disciple, i. e., of Christ, a believer, a converted Jew, as we know from xxii. Ananias. All that we know of him is recorded here, and in the chapter just referred to. Not Peter, or James, or John, no great and eminent Apostle need be sent for to instruct the learned and highly-talented Saul, but some poor, simple-hearted Christian, of whom the Divine Word has never before made mention, is fully sufficient in God's hand, to teach this most richly endowed of all the early converts. Ananias may have taken refuge in Damascus from the persecution at Jerusalem. (See on verse 3.) *In a vision.* A real vision of the Lord Jesus, not an angel, for Ananias calls him “Lord,” and Christians “His saints.” (Verses 13, 14.) *Behold, I am here.* This answer implies that the person hears and waits to listen further (Comp. Gen. xxii. 1, 7, xxvii. 1; 1 Sam. iii. 8, &c.) He felt that the Lord was with him in reality.

Straight—a name which the street in that old city still retains. *House of Judas.* The house is still pointed out as the place where Saul lodged. “We visited the great cathedral,” says *Mr. Tristram*, “in the street which is called ‘Straight,’ and several of the mosques. The great mosque, once the Christian cathedral, and in yet earlier ages a heathen temple, is a noble structure, though, of course, without the interest or the splendor of the Mosque of Omar. We looked in at one magnificent portal, over which still remains engraven the inscription in Greek, ‘Thy kingdom,

O Christ! is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.' There stand the words, unread by the Moslem. We will take them as a silent prophecy that the day is coming when this dark land shall be Christ's once more, and He shall reign forever and ever. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." *Saul of Tarsus*, afterward called *Paul*. Tarsus was the capital of the province of Cilicia, lying along the north-east coast of the Mediterranean. It was situated on the river Cydnus; was a "large and populous city," says *Xenophon* (and see chap. xxi. 39), "and under the Romans had the privilege of self-government." *For, behold, he prayeth*. Saul, as a strict Pharisee, had often formally performed this outward exercise of devotion, but now he *prayed*. The prayer of a converted heart, the prayer of faith, for the first time now passed his lips.

Observe the reasons assigned for the message received: 1. that Saul was praying, and, 2. that he had received—perhaps in answer to his prayer—a vision of Ananias coming and *putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight*. Saul's prayer reached the heart of Christ, and the mission of Ananias was the answer. Conscious, as we are, of the Omniscience of the great Jehovah, perhaps we are never so much struck by it, as when He thus condescends to demonstrate it to us in His dealings with ourselves, or our fellow-sinners; calling forth one man by name, describing the identical spot where another lodges. How accurately does it mark God's knowledge of all our movements, of the city, the street, the house in which we dwell; how certainly, therefore, of all that passes there!

13. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 11. And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.—iv. i. *iv.* 21.

I have heard, &c. Saul had been a distinguished persecutor. These words do not seem to be the expression of reluctance, as some suppose, but of astonishment, as if he had said, "Is it possible that I should be sent by my Lord to Saul of Tarsus, the violent opponent of the Christians—Saul, who was coming here with power and authority from the chief priests

to persecute the disciples." It could hardly fail to have been notified to the Christians at Damascus by their brethren at Jerusalem, that Saul was on his way to persecute them. *That call on thy name*. That Jesus Christ was worshiped by the primitive Christians, is a fact so clearly established in the New Testament, that nothing but prejudice, blinding the mental eye, can hinder any person from perceiving it. The truth is, that this worship was so general, and so publicly known, that it is used as a description of His followers, who are more than once denominated those "who called upon His name," a phrase which often occurs in the Scriptures, and signifies invocation or prayer. (See 1 Cor. i. 2, 3; 2 Tim. ii. 22; Acts ii. 21, xxii. 16; also 2 Cor. xii. 8; 1 Thes. iii. 11, 12; 2 Thes. ii. 16, iii. 16.)

15. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. 16. For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

¹Chap. xiii. 2; Rom. i. 1; 1 Cor. xv. 19; Gal. i. 15; Eph. iii. 7, 8. ²Rom. xi. 13; Gal. ii. 7, 8. ³Chap. xxv. 24, &c. ⁴Chap. xxviii. 17, &c. ⁵Chap. xx. 23; 2 Cor. xi. 23-27; 2 Tim. i. 11, 12.

Go thy way, &c. Here is another, and the main argument, with which the message was again urged. The argument is, that Saul had been divinely ordained for great work and great trial. Saul's subsequent history realized all that is here stated. He bore the name of Christ to the Gentiles, he made the heathen world ring through all its temples with the doctrine of the cross. Before kings and rulers he stood expounding its meaning and enforcing its claims. (xxv., xxvi., xxvii.) *Great things* he suffered, too, for Christ's name's sake. The whole of his Apostolic life was a life of martyrdom. (2 Cor. xi. 23-28.) Our Lord, it should be observed, sends the messenger to tell Saul, not what great things he shall *do*, but what far greater things he shall *suffer*. And yet, notwithstanding this message, Paul accepted and fulfilled the ministry to which he was called! What resistless evidence, then, have we here, of the sincerity and unservedness of Paul's consecration of himself to the service of Him whose tender expostulation had reached him from the cloud of light! Sufferings are, after all, the great achievements of the Christian. We should not, then, be disappointed, if

with every desire to do great things for our Divine Master, we are denied the power or the opportunity. If, as has been beautifully said,

They also serve who only stand and wait,"

how much more do they serve who are called upon to endure and to suffer! Yes, in the chamber of sickness, upon the bed of pain, we may as greatly glorify our Redeemer, as amid the trials of life.

17. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house: and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even Jesus*, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.—viii. 17. Chap. ii. 4.

Ananias immediately obeys, and proceeds to the designated house. *Putting his hands on him*, as the Apostles did in Samaria, but with a solemn declaration of the authority by which he did it. *Brother Saul* does not refer exclusively, nor even primarily to their common nationality as Israelites, but to the connection or fellowship now existing between them for Christ's sake, of which the former had already been assured by the words of the Lord. Beware of all those contracted views of Christian fellowship, which are daily dividing the seamless garment of our Lord into the veriest shreds and tatters, learn to make no distinction except that which the converted Paul himself made in after days, when he said: "Grace be with all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." Let this be the broad platform of our Christian fellowship; let every minor point, whether of doctrine or of discipline, be merged in this—in every lover of our Redeemer recognize a friend, to the feeblest lamb of His fold stretch out a helping hand, to the weakest of His true and sincere followers offer a sympathizing heart. *The Lord, even Jesus*. This clearly shows in what sense the term "Lord" is used in this book. It is *Jesus* that is meant, as almost invariably in the Epistles also. *Hath sent me*, this was his commission. The design of his commission was twofold, outward and inward, bodily and spiritual. The physical effect was to be the restoration of sight. The other effect was that *he might be filled with the Holy Ghost*, a stronger expression than *receive the Holy Ghost*. (John xx. 22; Acts. viii. 15,

xvii. 19; comp. ii. 4, iv. 8, 31, vi. 3, v. 7, 55.) It is therefore the more worthy of remark that the instrumental agency employed was the imposition of the hands of one whom we do not even know to have been a deacon or Evangelist. That gift was so peculiarly Divine that the external medium was comparatively unimportant.

18. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. 19. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.
*xxvi. 20; Gal. i. 17.

The declaration of the purpose for which Ananias came is followed by the record of its instantaneous accomplishment, which, with the express Divine command, shuts out the idea of a natural cure. *He arose*—apparently without leaving the room. This symbolized His resurrection from the dead: he was a new man. The arch-bigot was gone forever, and the Apostle was up to do a work that the ages would bless, and which eternity would celebrate. *And was baptized*. Thus he was received into the communion of the Church, and dedicated to the service of Christ. *He received meat* (food) and *was strengthened*. The new feelings that had flooded his soul had taken away his appetite; now his spirit was calmed by a new faith, his appetite returned, he took food and was revived. *Then was Saul certain days*, &c. He associated with the disciples at Damascus, went to their meetings, and joined in communion with them. How amazing the change! Such are the aspects, in which Paul, thus far in this chapter, is presented to us. First, as an *enemy to the cause of Christ*, then as *conquered by the revelation of Christ*; and then, as *enlisted in the service of Christ*. What a change! How great! how Divine! how influential! It was the opening of a perennial fountain in the world's desert, the kindling of a bright and quenchless guiding star in the world's firmament.

20. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. 21. But all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? 22. But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.
*Gal. i. 13, 23. *Chap. viii. 3. *Ps. lxxxiv. 7. *Chap. xviii. 28.

Synagogues—Jewish place of worship. That *he is the Son of God*. This expression

is here used, as in John xi. 27, to denote the Messiah, as an official title. *Called on this name.* (See on verse 14.) The word rendered *proving* is taken from mechanics—proving by quotations of Scripture, skillfully arranged, and compared together, and connected with each other. (xvii. 1-4.) Observe 1, the time of Paul's preaching—*straightway*. He entered at once on his Master's work, not consulting flesh and blood about the difficulties and dangers that might attend it, but performing his duty with such zeal and immediate application, as became a person of his holy character and profession. 2. The effect of Paul's preaching. Some of his hearers were astonished and surprised that so bitter and persistent a persecutor had become a powerful preacher. Others were confounded, being unable to withstand the force and eloquence of his argument, by which he proved that *this is very Christ*—the very Messiah predicted by prophets and longed for by Israel. With such a theme as the Divinity of Christ, and all the life-giving and saving doctrines which flow from it—such as the great doctrine of the atonement, that Christ died for our sins to purchase to Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; of the resurrection, that He rose again for our justification; of the intercession, that He ever liveth to make intercession for us; of His coming again, that He may judge the world and save His people—we cannot be surprised that the Apostle “increased the more in strength,” &c. If we, as preachers, desire to produce these effects, the confounding of our spiritual adversaries, the increase of strength in our own souls, if we, as hearers, desire to participate in them, let us be assured that we must be content with this one subject, and, as the Reformers of old were contemptuously called, by the learned *Erasmus*, “men of one book,” because they read but the Bible, so we must be content to be called men of one subject, and to preach but Jesus Christ.

Many days. According to Paul's statement, he went immediately after his conversion to Arabia, and returned to Damascus, and it was not until three years after that he went to Jerusalem. (Gal. i. 16, 17.) By “many days,” then, are here meant these three years, spent partly in Arabia, and partly in Damascus. *Took counsel to kill him.* “The Jews again,” says *Chrysostom*, “have recourse to the logic of force. They no longer seek for suborned men, and false accusers and false witnesses.” *Gates.* As the only outlets from the city. Paul must have been very closely concealed, as there can be no doubt that the ethnarch or viceroy of Aretas, then master of Damascus, rendered them every aid to apprehend him. *The disciples took him by night, &c.* Here remark two things. 1. The escape was not miraculous. In this way the Lord has often delivered His servants, and in this way He is continually able to deliver them. But He never needlessly multiplies miracles. In this instance the deliverance could be effected by human means, they were therefore properly employed, and Providence only rendered them successful. 2. We are not to sacrifice our lives if we can preserve them consistently with a good conscience. Our Lord told His disciples to beware of men, to be wise as serpents, as well as harmless as doves, and if they were persecuted in one city to flee to another. He Himself eluded apprehension till He knew His hour was come.

26. ¶ And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all a raid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. 27. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. 28. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. 29. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. 30. Whereupon when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

Gal. i. 18. 1iv. 36. verse 20, 22. verse 23.

Assayed to join himself, &c. The disciples were despised and persecuted. Saul had himself once hated them, and endeavored to exterminate them from the earth. But now the world is not worthy of them. He ranks them above princes and philosophers; in them is all his delight. Have we the same mind in us? Though in the course of duty, unless we go out of the world, we must often mingle with others,

23. ¶ And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him. 24. But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. 25. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall, in a basket.

xxiii. 12. xxv. 3. 12 Cor. xi. 26, &c.: Ps. xxi. 11, 37. xxiii. 23. Josh. ii. 15.

yet are Christians those with whom we delight to associate? *But they were all afraid, &c.* They supposed that he only pretended to be a disciple, but was really come among them as a spy or informer. They well knew what a bitter adversary he had been and had not heard of him since the wolf had been turned into a lamb. If there seems something strange in this, let it be observed that Damascus was one hundred and fifty miles from Jerusalem; that the modes of modern communication were not then known, and that the war raging between Herod Antipas, and Aretas, must have interrupted the intercourse between the two capitals. Neither is it unlikely that the unbelieving Jews maliciously and artfully represented him as acting the part of a deceiver. (See on verse 28.)

Barnabas stood high among the disciples at Jerusalem. (iv. 36, xi. 22, on which see notes.) It is very probable that Barnabas and Saul may have been personally known to each other in youth. Cyprus is only a few hours' sail from Cilicia. The schools of Tarsus may naturally have attracted one who, though a Levite, was a Hellenist, and there the friendship may have begun, which lasted through many vicissitudes, till it was rudely interrupted in the dispute at Antioch. (xv. 39.) *The Apostles*, viz.: Peter and James. (Gal. i. 19.) The other Apostles were probably absent from Jerusalem at this time. *Declared unto them*, related fully, since they may have heard a report of their occurrence, but had received no definite information concerning it. *In the name of Jesus*, as the sphere of his preaching.

And he was with them, &c. He was fully admitted to their friendship, and recognized as a true Christian brother. He went in and out, had free intercourse with them. His stay here, however, on this occasion, was only fifteen days. (Gal. i. 18.) We may here see, 1. That those disciples were careful whom they admitted among them. They were only such as they *believed to be disciples*. They did not desire, for the sake of largeness, a church filled with indiscriminate members, and they could not bear them that were evil. 2. It is possible to err on the side of caution. We may be too strict as well as too

lax. It is easy to carry our suspicion too far, especially with regard to those against whom we have entertained any prejudice, or from whom we have received any injury or offense. 3. We may depend on testimony concerning character in the absence of personal knowledge. This, indeed, is not always infallible, but there are cases in which it ought to be admitted, and should be deemed sufficient not only for individuals, but churches to act upon, in receiving others to their countenance and their communion. 4. The introducing of a young convert to the fellowship of the saints is a good work, and should be encouraged. Some are backward, not from a want of inclination, but they want confidence and help. Many are kept back when they ought to come forward.

Spoke boldly. His boldness was that of the strongest conviction, founded on irresistible evidence, and backed by his own conscience. *Disputed*. He did not, as a fanatic would, pour mere declamation on their ears, but submitted his theses for reasoning and discussion. *The Grecians* were the Hellenists, or foreign Jews, of whom Saul was one himself. (See on vi. 1.) *In the name of the Lord Jesus*. Notice the subject of his ministry. As a man of genius and learning, he could have taken to them many subjects. He could have discussed the beauties of their classic literature, charmed them with sketches of their wonderful history, or dilated on the ethics of revelation. Such subjects would have been acceptable to them, but he selected a subject which they hated, which he once hated, but which now possessed him—"the Lord Jesus." This became his subject forever now, he viewed everything through it, he judged the world by it. *But they went about to slay him*. (See on verse 23.) *When the brethren knew* their hostile design, Paul departed in conformity with their advice. Another motive concurred with this. (See xxii. 17.) *Cesarea*. (See on viii. 40.) *Tarsus*, Saul's native city. It was the capital of Cilicia, on the river Cydnus. (See on viii. 40.) In sending Saul away from Jerusalem, the disciples not only consulted for his safety, but complied with the Saviour's direction in Matt. x. 23. The Apostle

tells us that when he left Jerusalem on this occasion, he came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia (Gal. i. 21), which seems to imply that he did not go to Cilicia by sea, but traveled thither through Syria.

31. Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were seduced, and walking on the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

(Zech. ix. 1; chap. viii. 1. *Ps. xciv. 13. *Rom. xiv. 19. *Ps. lxxxvi. 11; Col. i. 10. *John xiv. 16, 17. *Zech. viii. 20-22.)

Rest—from both the persecution by Saul, and the persecution of Saul. But concurrently with this, it is supposed that the trouble of the Jews arising from the project of the Emperor Caligula of placing his statue for worship engrossed all their thought and arrested the persecution of Christians. The trouble of her foes was the peace of the Church. Thus it is also with ourselves. Our trials may be varied and numerous, wave may follow wave, until we are almost tempted to believe that they will never cease, and yet, amidst the darkness of the storm, our God is preparing for us the light and placid sunshine. *Edified*, or, built up. It probably refers to both external and internal strength and accession of grace. *Walking*, a common Hebraism to denote a course of conduct. *In the fear of the Lord*, in conformity with that state of mind, denotive of rule or manner. The word rendered *comfort*, rather means *exhortation*, *admonition*, *encouragement*. *Multiplied*. Even when referring only to the influence of the Holy Ghost, on the external growth of the Church, Luke still testifies that *that* influence was an essential, animating and moving power in the life of the Church.

32. *And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. 33. And there he found a certain man named Eneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy. 34. And Peter said unto him, Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole, arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately. 35. And all that dwelt in Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned unto the Lord.

(*Chap. iii. 6, 16, iv. 10.—Chron. v. 16.—Chap. xi. 21; 2 Cor. iii. 16.)

This and the following miracle form the introduction to the very important portion of Peter's history which follows in chap. x. *Passed throughout all quarters*—not now fleeing from persecution, but peacefully visiting the churches. *Lydda*, the Lod or Ludd of the Old Testament (Ezra ii. 33), was about a day's journey from Jerusalem. It was at this

period a place of considerable importance. *Josephus* observes that it was not less than a city in size. At present it is a considerable village, retaining its ancient name Ludd. The probability is that Eneas was a Christian, for it is said that Peter "came down also to the saints which dwelt in Lydda," and in general faith was a prerequisite in those upon whom miracles of healing were wrought. Observe, 1, the difficulty of the cure here effected. The disease was *palsy*, which had taken away the use of the man's limbs, and confined him to bed for *eight years*. 2. The manner of the cure. He does not even name himself as the instrumental cause, or involve the name of Christ (as in iii. 6), but expressly represents Him as the efficient and immediate agent. In comparing this with the manner of Christ's miracles, the different characters of the *servant* and the *Son*, the *creature* and the *God*, are everywhere apparent. 3. The effects of the cure. The instantaneousness of the cure shows that it was miraculous. The man at once arose, proving thus that the cure was perfect. *Make thy bed*. (See on John v. 8.)

And all that dwelt, &c. The miracle seems to have been wrought publicly, the man was well known. *Saron*, Hebrew, *Shareni*, was an extensive and fruitful plain, extending from Carmel to the vicinity of Joppa. It was proverbial for the fragrance of its flowers. This miracle was the occasion of a general conversion to the new religion in that part of the country. It symbolizes the mission of Christianity, which is *restorative*. Christ came to seek and to save, &c. The Gospel is the *power* of God unto salvation. It does not create new faculties, but, under the Spirit's blessing, *restores*. It implants in the soul a new principle of life, and restores it, 1, to God's knowledge; 2, to God's fellowship; 3, to God's image.

36. Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. 37. And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber. 38. And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them. 39. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing him the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. 40. But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, *Tabitha, arise. And she

opened her eyes : and when she saw Peter, she sat up. 41. And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up ; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. 42. And it was known throughout all Joppa ; and many believed in the Lord. 43. And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.
 *1 Tim. ii. 10; Titus ii. 7, 14. *Or, be grieved. *Eccl. ix. 10. *Matt. ix. 23. *Mark v. 41, 42; John xi. 43. *1 Kings xvii. 23. *John xii. 11.

Joppa—the modern *Jaffa*, on the Mediterranean, a very ancient city of the Philistines, afterward and still the seaport of Jerusalem, from which it lies distant forty-five miles to the north-west. *Tabitha*. This name, in Aramaic, answers to *Dorcas*, in Greek, signifying a *gazelle*. It appears also in the rabbinical books as a female name; the gazelle being in the East a favorite type of beauty. (See Song of Sol. ii. 9, 17, iv. 5, vii. 3.) *Lightfoot* remarks, that she was probably a Hellenist (*i. e.*, a Grecian Jewess), and thus was known by both names. *This woman was full of good works*. She is described by her personal religion. This was not only real, but eminent. She was not like multitudes whose life is filled up with vanity and vice. She was full—not of pretenses, and of words, but of *good deeds*. Her religion was substantial and practical. She not only obeyed, but *abounded* in obedience. We should constantly make progression in religion. We should be anxious, not only to gain heaven when we die, but to glorify God, and serve our generation while we live.

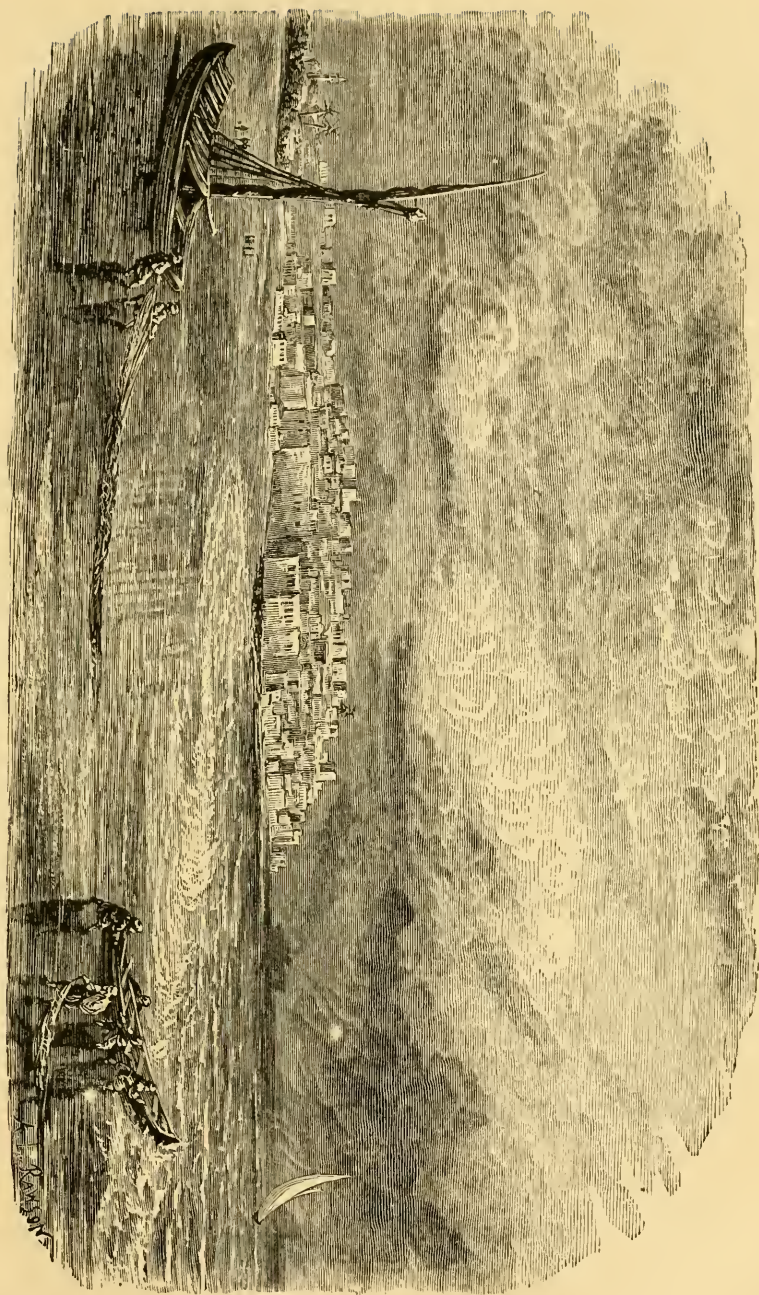
She was sick, and died. This was during the period in which Peter abode in the vicinity. *Washed*. The custom of washing the dead was common, not only among the Jews, but also among the Greeks and Romans. *Upper chamber*. It was common to deposit dead bodies alone in some sequestered chamber of the house. Religion does not exempt us from the common calamities of life, or the ravages of mortality. The grave is “the house appointed for all living.” This peculiar consideration, indeed, attends the death of the godly, that they are disposed of infinitely to their advantage, and in this view, “if we love them we should rejoice because they go unto the Father.” But this very consideration also aggravates our grief. That which prepares them for the enjoyment of another world, qualifies them for their passage through this, and in proportion to their gain is our loss.

Nigh to Joppa. The distance between the modern village of Ludd (the ancient Lydda) and Jaffa is only about nine miles.

Disciples sent two men. The Christian love of all for the departed Gazelle, says *Dr. Whedon*, is unanimous in the prayer that she may return to life. There is a blessed faith in the existence of a truly *present* resurrection power. The chiefest of Apostles, the wonderful first disciple of Jesus, is but nine miles distant. Perhaps he can restore to us even our beloved dead. *Would not delay*. They do not expressly utter the request for a miracle. Only they hope he will not delay; just as if the soul might soon go too far to hear and return.

And all the widows, &c. These were the particular objects of *Tabitha's* beneficence. They are a class of claimants upon kindness and charity, more frequently mentioned in the Scriptures than any other, unless it be “the fatherless,” who are commonly noticed along with them. And, surely none have greater demands upon our tenderness and compassion. We ought to have some *definite* plan of usefulness to pursue. But we should not bind ourselves down so exclusively to any one class of beneficiaries as to be unable or unwilling to aid other claimants, however deserving or pressing; nor should we lay such stress upon our own objects of charity as to think slightly or meanly of those which may be preferred by others. *Weeping, &c.* It was only after death that it became known what a treasure she had been to the Church; the odor of the costly ointment filled the house, when the vessel in which it lay concealed, was broken. (John xii. 3.) *Coats and garments*. These were specimens of the articles of clothing *Dorcas* had made for poor widows. She did the work *herself*; she did not, as is customary with many in these days, employ others to do it for her, and feel that she had done her duty by giving a subscription for the purpose, she used her own hands, she plied the needle herself. *While she was with them*. She viewed life as “the time to serve the Lord,” and her “own generation by the will of God.” Some are future benefactors. They do not refuse, they only procrastinate. This is unwise,

JOPPA (NOW JAFFA).



for in the meanwhile both the benefactor and beneficiary may die. (Prov. iii. 27, 28.) Some are benevolent when they leave us, not while they are *yet with us*. But if it is well to bequeath, it is better to achieve. Dying alms are commonly suspicious; they arise from necessity rather than choice. There is little merit in distributing what we can hold no longer. Let us, therefore, be our own executors.

Peter put them all forth, after the example of his Master, and in order that he might be undisturbed in his prayers. (See 2 Kings iv. 33; also Matt. ix. 25.) *Prayed*, namely, to Christ, in whose name the Apostles performed their miracles. (See verse 34, iii. 6, 16, iv. 10.) "This prayer is the essential feature by which the resurrection of Tabitha is distinguished from that of the daughter of Jairus. Jesus, without any preceding prayer, took the dead child by the hand, and recalled her to life, but Peter does not do so until he had prayed to the Lord for this miracle." Peter's words were not, "I say unto thee, Arise," in the language of authority, but simply, *Tabitha, arise*, as an intimation that Jesus had restored her life; and it should also be remembered that there was no witness to the transaction. Peter speaks as one who felt assured that his prayer had prevailed. (See Matt. xvii. 20.) *And when she had opened her eyes*, &c. The graphic minuteness of detail here imparts to the narrative an air of charming reality.

And he gave her his hand—in the way of welcome or congratulation. (See Mark i. 31.) *He presented her alive*. Touching spectacle! *Peter giving and they receiving* this present! "There, take your benefactress, and dry up your tears." We here see that kindness was the principle of the miracle, not self-applause, not vain glory. Then Peter would have claimed her as an attendant, and required her to follow him

as a standing proof of his supernatural powers, but he resigns her to those who stood in need of her services. It is exceedingly cheering when a pastor can publicly diffuse the blessing which he has sought in his closet on his knees, and scatter it as the seed of new and more abundant fruits. Luke mentions the grief of the widows as they stood around the corpse of Dorcas, but does not describe their joy when she was restored to life—it could not be described.

Many believed in the Lord, literally, *upon the Lord*—Christ, whose Gospel had been so signally attested as true. This was the moral purpose of the miracle, and it was realized. Tabitha was raised more for the good of others than her own, for her being restored to natural life was the occasion of raising many to a life of faith. Peter remained here *many days*, because the place was large, and the people evinced a preparation for the reception of the Word. The Apostle's host on this occasion was a namesake of his own. When God opens a wide door for a minister on any spot, it becomes his duty to tarry as long as possible, so that the good seed may take root. The occupation of Simon was that of a *tanner*. That Peter made his abode with this individual, whom some of his countrymen would have disesteemed on account of his employment, is evidence that he thought little of worldly dignity in connection with his being an Apostle. His Master had taught him by instruction and example, that true greatness is best adorned by condescension. (Matt. xviii. 4; Mark ix. 35.) The sphere in society, indeed, to which Peter had been accustomed, was that of ordinary, though very respectable, men, and he, doubtless, would not think of any special difference, as to the common usages of life, between himself and Simon of Joppa.

1. For what purpose did Saul go to the high priest? 2. What occurred as he came near Damascus? 3. What did the voice say unto him? 4. Whose voice was it? 5. What did he reply? 6. What did the Lord then say to him? 7. What is next said of Saul? 8. What direction did the Lord give to Ananias? 9. What did Ananias answer? 10. What did the Lord then say to him? 11. What took place when Ananias went to Saul? 12. What effect was produced by Saul's preaching? 13. Why were the disciples afraid of Saul? 14. Who brought him to the Apostles? 15. State the particulars of the cure of Eneas by Peter. 16. What was the character of Dorcas? 17. By whom, and how, was she restored to life? 18. With whom did Peter spend many days in Joppa?

CHAPTER X.

¹ *Cornelius, a devout man, 5 being commanded by an angel, sendeth for Peter : 11 who by a vision 15, 20 is taught not to despise the Gentiles. 31 As he preacheth Christ to Cornelius and his company. 44 the Holy Ghost falleth on them, 48 and they are baptized.*

Thus far, in the progress of the Gospel, efforts for the conversion of men to Christianity had been confined to Jews and circumcised proselytes. The disciples of Christ had not yet entered fully into the spirit of the Gospel, so far as concerns its extension to all nations, they still adhered very much to Jewish opinions in respect to ceremonial cleanness and the impropriety of associating with people of other religions. They believed, indeed, as the terms of their Lord's last commission to them plainly showed (Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15), that the Gospel was to be everywhere spread, and preached to all men. Still they expected that people of other nations would first become Jews, and adopt Jewish rites, and then, *as being Jews*, would become followers of the Messiah. (See 28, 45, xi. 2, 3, 18, xv. 1, 5.) This prejudice would have operated so as finally to prevent the Gospel being preached to the Gentiles, had not God, by a particular interposition of His mercy and goodness, convinced Peter, and through him all the other Apostles, that He had accepted the Gentiles as well as the Jews, and would put no difference between the one and the other, purifying their hearts by faith, and giving the Gentiles the Holy Ghost, as He had before given Him to the Jews. The means which He used to produce this conviction in the minds of the Apostles, are detailed at length in this chapter, in which, what Abraham is to the Jewish saints, Cornelius is seen to be to the Gentile Christians—the first called out miraculously by God—the moral father of the great family.

THERE was a certain man in Cesarea, called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band:

A certain man. Eneas also, who likewise had a Roman name, was only thus styled in ix. 33. *Cesarea*—a city on the coast of the Mediterranean between Joppa and Tyre, about seventy miles north-west of Jerusalem. It is sometimes called *Cesarea Palestine*, to distinguish it from

Cesarea Philippi. Herod the Great enlarged the city, and gave it its name in honor of Augustus Caesar, the Roman Emperor. Its inhabitants were chiefly Greeks: it contained a fine harbor, many splendid temples, palaces, and other buildings. It was the seat of the Roman governor, and became the capital of Palestine after the overthrow of the Holy City. It was one of the most magnificent cities of the Eastern world. After the destruction of Jerusalem, when Judea became a Roman province, *Cesarea* was the chief city of Palestine (Acts xxiv. 27, xxv. 1–13), and was often visited by Paul (Acts ix. 30, xviii. 22, xxi. 8). It was here that he made his eloquent defense before Felix, Festus and Agrippa (Acts xxiii., xxv., xxvi.), and here he suffered two years' imprisonment. Philip the Evangelist resided here (Acts xxi. 8).

Cornelius, a familiar but honorable name in Latin, being that of a distinguished Roman family. A *centurion* was strictly the commander of a hundred men, but the title was applied with some degree of latitude to those who led the subdivisions of a legion. *The Italian band*, so called, as distinguished from native soldiers quartered at *Cesarea*. An ancient coin makes express mention of such a cohort in Syria. Many of these soldiers were alive when these things were written, and could testify to them. Cornelius, though a Gentile, though a soldier, though a commissioned officer, was yet a pious, charitable, good man. Alas! how little the soldiers of our day, in general, resemble the centurion! In all nations, places, and lawful pursuits, God has a number of persons to honor Him in the world, according to their present measure of light received from Him. (See on verse 2.)

² A *devout man*, and one that ^bfeared God with all his house, which gave much alms to ^cthe people, and prayed to God *always*.

^aviii. 2. ^bxxii. 12. ^cEcc. vii. 18. ^dGen. xviii. 19. Ps. ci. 2-7, xviii. 8. ^ePs. xli. 1. ^fPs. cxix. 2; Prov. ii. 3-5.

Cornelius was one of those Gentiles, not uncommon in the Apostolic age, who had become dissatisfied with the religious worship of his ancestors, and was attached to the purer religion of the Jews. (See on verse 4.) He worshiped God, the know-

ledge of whom he probably obtained by residing with his men in Judea. *Feared God with all his house.* Here is a union of *personal and relative duty.* This was like Joshua, who said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." *Which gave much alms to the people.* The reference is to the Jewish people. (See verse 22.) *And prayed to God always.* Philip the Evangelist was probably already in Cesarea, preaching the Gospel (Acts viii. 44). The narrative supposes that Cornelius was not ignorant of the facts of the life of Jesus. (See particularly verses 36, 37.) Hence it is not improbable that the great subject of his prayers was that he might obtain more religious light, and especially might be led to the truth with regard to Jesus Christ. (See on 3, 4.) Here is an union of *piety and morality*, or, of *devotion to God and charity to men.* And their union forms the consistent, the graceful, the respectable character of the real Christian, the man of true worth. If we leave either of them out of our system, even though we excel in the other, we can stand trial only in one point of view. It is only on one side our character is fair, on the other it will always be open to much reproach. And as we dishonor ourselves, so we do great injustice to religion. For, by dividing its parts from one another, we never fail to expose it to the censure of the world: And perhaps, by this sort of partial and decided so-called goodness, religion has suffered more in the esteem of mankind than by open profligacy. The unbeliever will scoff at our piety when he sees us negligent of moral duties. The bigot will deery all morality when he sees us pretending to be a follower of virtue, though we be a despiser of God. Whereas he who fears God, and is at the same time just and beneficent to men exhibits religion to the world with full propriety. It shines in his conduct with its native splendor, and its rays throw a glory round him.

3 He saw in a vision evidently, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.—Heb. i. 14.

The angel appeared to him about the ninth hour (3 o'clock; P. M.), or the third hour of prayer, which the devout pagan probably observed of his own accord, in company with the Jews. He then saw in

a vision (that is, by an internal process, of which God was the author, but, in other respects, *distinctly*, not by a deception of the senses) an angel of God, who entered the chamber, and addressed him by name. (See Dan. ix. 20, 23; Luke i. 11, &c.) Hours of prayer are truly hours of grace, when the angels of God are most of all prompt in coming.

4. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.—Isa. xiv. 19.

Afraid, as the flesh ever is in the presence of spiritual beings. *Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God*, that is, "they have ascended to heaven, like the smoke of the sacrifices, so that they remind God of thee." It will be observed that the angel places the "prayers" and "alms" in a different order to Luke, in verse 2. *There* the outward acts were placed before the inward, according to the custom of men, but *now* the inward feelings are placed first, as they are valued before God. Nothing ascends to God as a sweet savor, except that which came from Him, was wrought by Him, and was done for His sake. (Phil. ii. 13.) The acceptable sacrifices of the New Covenant are, 1. The prayer of faith. 2. The alms of love. What Abram was, in respect of justification, before he heard and believed what was promised him concerning the Messiah, Cornelius was in respect of salvation before he heard and believed the words by which he was to be saved. Both were the *subjects* of faith according to their light. Abram believed from the time that he left Ur of the Chaldees, and Cornelius could not have *feared God* without believing in Him; but the *object* by which they were justified and saved was not from the first so clearly revealed to them as it was afterward. Hence, what is said of Cornelius in verses 2, 4, is easily reconciled with the fact, that after this he was directed to send for Peter, who should *tell him words by which he and all his house SHOULD BE SAVED.* (Chap. xi. 14.)

5. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter. 6. He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

bix. 43. xi. 14.

Joppa. (See on ix. 38.) He who was to speak to Cornelius this great message

is exactly specified both by name and surname, his city, locality and house being mentioned, but yet no title of honor is given to him. The fact that Peter was sent for to come to Cornelius, and not just the reverse, is likewise suitable to the greatness of the event; it forms, as *Bengel* remarks, the beginning of the Apostles' *going forth* to preach to all nations. *By the sea-side*. The ancients had their tanners' houses and workshops apart from towns (on account of the fetid odor), and near rivers, for convenience of water necessary in preparing skins. *He shall tell thee*, &c. What an honor was here put upon the Gospel ministry! Cornelius has now an angel from heaven talking to him, yet he must not receive the Gospel from him, nor be told by him what he ought to do, but all that the angel has to say is, "Send for Peter, and he shall tell thee." God has not employed as the messenger of His mercy, superior beings, whose greatness would have made us afraid, and to the charms of whose eloquence the success of His Word might have been ascribed. "He hath put the treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of men." We are addressed by mortals like ourselves, to whom we can listen without terror, and who, being sinful, weak and imperfectly enlightened, can be considered only as instruments of the Divine operations.

7. And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually: 8. And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

Was departed—another token of the objective reality of the vision. *He called*. He did not go himself for Peter. This he would have readily done, but he was ordered by the angel to *send* (verse 5.) *His* presence was proper and necessary at home. He was a man in office, and in command. He had a weighty trust reposed in him; and we are to abide with God in our callings. *Household servants*, i.e., two of his domestics. They were in all probability godly servants. (Verse 2.) A godly man will choose, as far as he can, those that are religious to attend him. (Ps. ci. 6, 7.) Or, he will be likely to render them such, if they are not such

when he engages them. The *devout soldier* had the same religious spirit as his master; he also had renounced idolatry, and was a worshiper of the true God. *And when he had declared all these things*, &c. Here we have not a harsh injunction, not a bare order, couched in a few unexplained terms, not the sealed instructions, the orders of a tyrant, who is to be implicitly obeyed, and is afraid to trust. Here is intercourse, openness. How happy, when in such relations in life, there is union and harmony, condescension, kindness, unreserve, on the one side, and respect and obedience, without encroachment on the other.

9. On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the house-top to pray, about the sixth hour: xxi. 5, &c.

On the morrow—Starting at three in the afternoon, they completed the journey of almost thirty miles from Cesarea to Joppa on the next day about noon. Thereby their arrival and Peter's noon-day prayer would coincide. *Upon the house-top*, the roof which, according to the Oriental manner, was flat, or but slightly inclined. It was the place often chosen for the performance of religious duties. The situation does not expose one necessarily to public view. (See 2 Kings xxiii. 12; Jer. xix. 13, xxxii. 15.) *Sixth hour*, or noon. This was one of the stated hours of prayer among the Jews. Prayer is the heavenly attendant of the Christian during the whole day. (Ps. lv. 17.) He who would see "heaven opened," must pray.

10. And he became very hungry, and would have eaten; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance:

Peter is prepared, in mind and body, for the extraordinary revelation which awaits him. *Would have eaten*, rather, *desired to eat*. *While they made ready*; while his friends, the people of the house, were preparing either his noon-day meal, or in anticipation of it, and at his request. *He fell into a trance*, in Greek, there fell on him an *ecstasy*, a preternatural, abnormal state of mind, preparing him for the reception of the vision. In the mode of instruction which God employed in this instance, He adapted Himself to the peculiar circumstances in which Peter was placed. "The divine light that was making its way to his spirit, says *Neander*.

revealed itself in the mirror of sensible images, which proceeded from the existing state of his bodily frame."

11. And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth;
*Chap. vii. 55; Rev. xix. 11.

Heaven opened (not the heavens, as Stephen, vii. 55). *A certain vessel*. The word *vessel* is here used in a general sense, like our word *article*, or *implement*. A more particular description is immediately given. *A great sheet, &c.*—a large square piece of cloth, drawn up at the corners, and thus capable of holding what might be placed in it.

12. Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

All four-footed beasts, &c., i. e., the clean and the unclean (ceremonially) all mixed together. The Apostles, while they thought that the distinction of clean and unclean animals and meats was to continue, and the Gentiles were *unclean*, had forgotten, or never understood, the contrary declaration of Christ, in Matt. xv. 17, 18. Even our Lord's command, indeed, "Go, teach all nations," &c. (Matt. xxviii. 19), they had misunderstood, thinking the command applied only to those who had previously embraced the Jewish religion; for which reason they had hitherto avoided the society of Gentiles, and had not communicated to them the doctrines of Christ. We see, therefore, how *necessary* it was, that this intention of God should be manifested more strongly than language could do it, by a most impressive exhibition of the *thing itself*, which could not be mistaken. At the same time, it is true, that the removal of the distinction of meats need not have seemed strange to the Apostles, since we find from the rabbinical writings, that the Jewish masters maintained that this would take place in the time of the Messiah.

13. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter, kill, and eat.

Came a voice—a voice became audible. *Rise*, this may imply that he was on his knees. The direction to prepare food for himself from that collection of animals, was intended to excite in his mind the thought that the ceremonial, or religious distinction between clean animals and unclean, was abolished. (See on next verse.)

14. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.
*Lev. xi. 2, &c., xx. 25; Deut. xiv. 3, &c.; Ezek. iv. 14.

The same Peter who, on a previous occasion would not consent that the Lord should wash His sinful servant's feet, cannot even now believe that He is able to cleanse that which was unclean according to Jewish principles. *Common, i. e., not sanctified by Divine permission to eat of it, and so "unclean."* The distinction of meats was a sacrament of national distinction, separation and consecration. The devout Jews religiously kept the precepts of the Mosaic law concerning this distinction. (See Dan. i. 8, 12.) Hence the course Peter now pursued in reference to a command, against which all his religious notions as a Jew revolted.

15. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

*Matt. xv. 11; verse 23; Rom. xiv. 14, &c.; 1 Cor. x. 25; 1 Tim. iv. 4.

The prohibited animals were not unclean from any natural impurity, but in virtue of a positive institution, in consequence of which an Israelite could not use them for food, without contracting defilement. They were cleansed when the institution was revoked, and might thenceforth be eaten without any other scruple than what arose from a regard to health, or to taste.

16. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

This was done thrice, for the same reason that the dream of Pharaoh was doubled, "because the thing was established by God, and God would shortly bring it to pass."

17. Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, 18. And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. 19. While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. 20. Arise, therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

*Chap. ix. 43. *Chap. xi. 12. *Chap. xv. 7.

Eastern houses are surrounded with a quadrangular court, and the entrance being by a small but well-secured gate, which is at a considerable distance from apartments occupied by the family, visitors have often to stand long at the gate knocking or calling aloud, before they obtain admittance. The houses of the richer class cannot boast of a statelier approach, and as in the limited establish-

ment of Simon the tanner, there might be no servants, and that artisan himself, together with his family, were in all probability enjoying their meridian repose, the messengers of Cornelius had to exercise all the patience which an application for access into a house in the East generally requires. Observe, 1. How Peter meditated on what he had seen and heard. Whatever passes from God to man, either by the eye or through the ear, ought to be the subject of our deepest meditation. 2. The care which the Holy Spirit took to settle satisfactorily Peter's doubts and reasonings. Here we see both the Divinity and the Personality of the Holy Ghost. He that knows the thoughts of man's heart, as He did Peter's, is truly and really God, and He that commands and forbids, as Peter was here commanded to go to Cornelius, and forbidden to doubt of the lawfulness or success of his journey, is really a Person.

21. Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius, and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek; what is the cause wherefore ye are come? 22. And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel, to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. 23. Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. 24. And the morrow after they entered into Cesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.

¶ Verse 1, &c. ¶ Chap. xxii. 12; Heb. xi. 2. *Verse 45.

Behold, I am he whom ye seek, &c. As *Chrysostom* observes, Peter shows that he had no thought of concealing himself from them, by first making himself known and then inquiring why they sought him. *Cornelius the centurion, a just man, &c.* (See on verses 2, 4.) The description here given by the messengers of Cornelius of their Master, is worthy of notice, and is highly creditable to him as coming from them who knew him best. Instead of "devout," as in verse 2, we have now "just," a term descriptive precisely of that trait of character with which the dependents of the man would be best acquainted from experience. *And of good report, &c.* This statement was eminently judicious, both in reference to themselves, who were pagans, it is true, but doubtless were favorably inclined to the Israelites, and also in reference to Peter, to whom they thus intended to recommend their master. *To send for*—otherwise Cornelius

himself would not have hesitated to come. *Hear words of thee*, but of what kind they could not as yet tell. *Then called he them in, &c.* They were wearied with their journey, and needed refreshment, and it was thought expedient that they should rest that night with Simon the tanner. *Certain brethren from Joppa, &c.* Some of the believers who dwelt at Joppa, that they might witness and be ready to attest the whole of what passed on this unprecedented occasion. They were six in number, as we learn from chap. xi. 12. *And the morrow after, &c.* (See on verse 9.) *And Cornelius waited for them.* He had not occupied himself in other business meanwhile, but wholly devoted himself to this matter, and during this whole time was being prepared for it. *Called together*, not merely to do honor to his visitor, but for their own instruction. *His kinsmen*, from which some infer that Cesarea was his native place, or at least that he had formed intimate connections in the country. *Near friends.* This bond is more comprehensive than kindred, and applies even to relationship by marriage, neighborhood, &c. Not all kinsmen and connections are *friends*. He assembled those who he thought would wish to be present. They were therefore men themselves not unlike Cornelius. (Verse 2.) How often friendship, cultivated with the good or bad, unexpectedly results either in our profit or injury! The desire that others should share in our spiritual gifts, is the great characteristic of love and friendship. "We impoverish ourselves," says *Quésnel*, "when we share our earthly goods with others, but the more liberally we impart our spiritual riches to them in love, the more abundantly we ourselves become endowed with them."

25. ¶ And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. 26. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up, I myself also am a man. —Chap. xiv. 14, 15; Rev. xix. 10, xxii. 9.

Cornelius met him, at the door, or in the court of the house. The first interview appears to have taken place there, and then the centurion and the Apostle proceeded to the room where the company were assembled. (See verse 27). *At his feet*, rather, *upon the feet*, viz., of Peter. The word here rendered *worshipped* denotes a total and reverential prostration of the

body to the earth; a mark of profound respect, which the Jews and other Orientals rendered, not to kings only, but also to persons of high dignity. But the Romans yielded this homage to the Deity only, and therefore Peter declined it, by saying, *I myself also am a man*. Yet it does not follow that Cornelius meant to have transferred the honor due to the Deity, to Peter, for he was *devout and fearing God* (verse 2), and Peter had just been represented in the vision as a man, but, struck with reverential awe at the sight of a Divine legate, he could not preserve the due distinction between the honor to be rendered to the ambassador and the Principal.

27. And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.

Talked with him—familiarly. He went in—into the inner part of the house. Many—a joyous harvest.

28. And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation, but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

^aJohn iv. 9. ^bChap. xv. 8, 9; Eph. iil. 6.

Ye know, &c. There is no command in the Law of Moses, forbidding familiar intercourse with the Gentiles, but this was an interdiction of the Jewish doctors, who had burdened the Mosaic Law with many added injunctions. *Josephus* says, "Those strangers who came to us on any other account but that of religion, he (Moses) permitted not to be mixed with us in any familiarities." *Tacitus* says, "The Jews entertained among one another obstinate hate, ready mercy; toward all others hostility and hate." *That I should not call any man, &c.* The intent of the vision which had appeared to Peter was now distinctly perceived by him. To visit a Gentile was no longer to be regarded as an act of impiety.

29. Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for. I ask, therefore, for what intent ye have sent for me?

*Therefore—*Peter thought it necessary to let them know how he came to change his mind in this matter, by a Divine revelation, lest he should be upbraided with want of stability. *For what intent—for what reason.* Although Peter knew the reason, both from revelation and from the messengers of Cornelius, yet he desires him to relate it for the benefit of the com-

pany, and that Cornelius himself might be the more impressed by the narration. Among the reasons and intents under which the services of ministers, in matters which relate to their spiritual interests, can only be sought by any people, the following may be mentioned: 1. In general, a regard to their personal salvation. 2. Instruction in the truth. It must be their desire to "hear words of him." 3. Faithful and constant application and enforcement of truth. 4. The continuance of the ordinances and discipline of the Church of Christ. Those who send for ministers to be over them in the Lord, should maintain a teachable spirit, and be "intent" upon growth and advancement in knowledge and piety.

30. And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour, and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,—^aMatt. xxviii. 3; Chap. i. 10.

Four days ago, &c. This probably means, four days ago unto this hour in which he was then speaking. The fast commenced with the day and had continued unbroken until the ninth hour (corresponding with our three o'clock, P. M.), when the angel appeared. This view agrees with the number of days which had elapsed since the angel's communication, viz.: four, and allows time enough for the abstinence to justify the use of "*fasting*." *I prayed in my house—*house being put for household, as is ordinary. An old writer observes: "He was praying in his family in his ordinary course, and there he had the benign appearance of that kind messenger from heaven, to direct him to the way by which he might come to a more distinct knowledge of the Mediator, and of worshipping God in Christ. According to the light he had, and the sincerity that God had given him in proportion thereunto, his acceptance above was declared before. But God resolved to help him, in the method and way which he most approved, unto more distinct notices, and these he is directed how to come by, even at the time when he was engaged in his domestic performances of religion in his house." (See on verse 2.) Religious fasting, in order to the greater seriousness and solemnity of praying, was used by devout people that were not Jews, as at Jonah, iii. 5. *In bright clothing.* Effulgent dress,

probably the same with the white raiment of the two men upon Olivet. (See on chap. i. 10.) This may be regarded in both cases as an emanation or reflection of the Divine glory, with which these messengers from heaven were invested, and as a proof of their legation and a source of awe to the beholders.

31. And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. *Verse 4, &c.; Dan. x. 12; Heb. vi. 10.

See on verse 4.

32. Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon whose surname is Peter: he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner, by the sea-side; who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.

See on verses 5, 6.

33. Immediately therefore I sent to thee: and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. *Deut. v. 27.

Thou hast well done. A formula of praise. He praises Peter because he had not delayed to come. *Before God, i. e.,* in the presence of God. He who so wonderfully arranged matters as to call us together, is present with us, to assist you in speaking and us in hearing. Would that all congregations had a consciousness of God's presence! *All here present, &c.* Our public worship would prove much more both comfortable and profitable, if our hearts met in it as one, so that we could use this expression concerning our hearing of the Word. *All things that are commanded, &c.* They were assembled, not as a matter of custom, not for a mere performance, not for entertainment, but to learn. They were not seekers after a knowledge of Peter's private speculations, or of aught that was human in thought. They desired information concerning the *Divine will*: and they wanted to know "*all*" of it. As Peter himself was, so all the ministers of Christ are, confined within their commission, they must only speak what God commands, neither are hearers bound to receive anything else. Woe unto us, if when God sends us on His errand, we tell our own tale. The word is the *counsel of God*, and it is the counsel of God only, and the whole counsel of God also, that we are to declare, and our people are to hear.

34. ¶ Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35. But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

*Deut. x. 17; chap. ii. xix. 7; Job xxxiv. 19; Rom. ii. 11; Gal. ii. 6; 1 Peter i. 17. *Rom. ii. 13, 27, iii. 22, 29, x. 12, 13; Eph. ii. 13-15.

Then Peter opened his mouth, these words (as in viii. 35) inform us, with great solemnity, that the following address contains important truths. The address itself, consists of three parts: 1. The introduction, verses 34, 35, stating that all men, without regard to national distinctions, may alike be received into the kingdom of God, provided that they fear Him, and do that which is right. 2. A brief exhibition of the life and work of Jesus, extending to the judgment, verses 36-42. 3. The assurance, supported by the prophetic word, that through Christ, every one who believes in Him, shall receive remission of sins, verse 43. *Of a truth I perceive*—in truth, I comprehend. Truth is the foundation, so that Peter's knowledge rests on the truth, and, indeed is truth. *No respecter of persons, i. e.,* not partial in the way of regarding one man as better than another, on the ground of national descent.

But in every nation, &c. These words have often been quoted to prove that the works of heathens are pleasing to God, as well as those of Christians, but they are grossly perverted. Any person who considers the context, will see that they do not teach that men of every nation may work righteousness, but that, to whatever nation those who work righteousness belong, they are accepted. No two things can be more different, and that the latter is the true meaning is evident, because the Apostle is speaking in reference to the prejudices of the Jews, who believed that they were the objects of the Divine favor, to the exclusion of every other people. This he now discovered to be an error, for, in the case of Cornelius, God had shown that if there were any righteous Gentiles, they also were acceptable to Him. But Cornelius, it must be remembered, was not such a Gentile as Socrates, or Cato, or Aristides, but one who knew the true God, and worshiped Him. (See on verse 4.) Besides, as Cornelius was directed by a vision to send for Peter, who would tell him "what he ought to do" (verse 6), it cannot be supposed that the Apostle, in the first words he utters, would declare that the Gospel, which God had interposed in a miraculous manner, to make known not the centurion, was not

necessary to him, because there were other means, by which the Divine favor might be obtained—in other words, that the great end of religion might be accomplished without his instructions. Before the words can be applied to mere heathen, therefore, it must be proved that a person, by unassisted reason, may acquire the knowledge of the true God, and, without the aid of supernatural grace, may perform such works as the unerring Judge, “by whom actions are weighed,” will accept. “I think the text proves,” says Doddridge, “that God would sooner send an angel to direct pious and upright persons to the knowledge of the Gospel, than suffer them to perish by ignorance of it. But so far from intimating that such persons may be found among those that reject Christianity it determines nothing as to their existence in every nation.”

36. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all.)^a Isa. lvii. 19; Col. i. 20. ^bPs. xxiv. 7-10; Matt. xxviii. 18; Rom. xiv. 9; 1 Cor. xv. 27; Eph. i. 20, 22; 1 Peter iii. 22; Rev. xvii. 14.

Peace—salvation in general—the glad tidings of the Gospel. *Of all*—masculine, not neuter: Lord of all men, and therefore of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. This description evidently refers not to God, but to Jesus Christ, the last antecedent: He is the Supreme Head and King of men.

37. That word, *I say*, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, a-ter the baptism which John preached:

Know. The word so rendered, does not here mean full and accurate knowledge, but, in a popular way, “*hear and know*,” as in *ji*. 22, v. 7, ix. 13. Philip had preached at Cesarea. (viii. 42.) “*That word*”—the report concerning Jesus they had heard.

38. How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with him.
^aLuke iv. 18. ^bHeb. i. 9. ^cMatt. xiii. 15. ^dJohn iii. 8. ^eJohn iii. 2.

Jesus transfers the mind from the Gospel history to the personal subject of it. *Of (or, from) Nazareth*, as the place of His residence. (See Matt. ii. 23.) *Anointed*, endowed Him with extraordinary spiritual gifts for the performance of His Mediatorial functions, and thus consecrated Him

to His great offices as the Messiah. (See on i. 2, and on iv. 26.) *With the Holy Ghost and with power*, i. e., with the power of the Holy Ghost, or with power as a necessary consequence of this endowment. *Who went about*, &c. Jesus did good by His miracles, His ministry, and His example. His motives in doing good were pure and perfect. Some men do good for a time, but Jesus persevered in doing good. (See Rom. v. 7, 8; 1 Peter ii. 21.) Three things are observable in the ministry of our Lord: 1. His unwearied diligence. (John iv. 34, ix. 4.) 2. His self-denial. (Matt. iv. 2; John vi. 16.) 3. His love for perishing sinners. In order to copy the bright and beautiful example of Jesus, we must have the mind which was in him. (Phil. ii. 8.) We cannot imitate His miracles. The attempt would be presumptuous. But let us follow Him in diligence and zeal, in pure benevolence, and in disinterested love. Let us go about as we may have opportunity, and do good to all. We should visit the sick, relieve the needy, instruct the ignorant, and direct perishing sinners to Christ. *Healing all those that were oppressed*, &c. His triumph over this form of Satanic agency is singled out as the highest exhibition of His wonder-working power. (See Appendix.) *For God was with him*. This Nicodemus also perceived, and honestly acknowledged. “No man,” said he (John iii. 2), “can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with him.”

39. And we are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem: whom they slew and hanged on a tree.—^bLuke xxiv. 18.

Witnesses. You know the report, and we are witnesses of the facts. *Whom they slew*, &c. As the truth of the resurrection must depend on the reality of the death of Christ, it was necessary that this should be stated, and shown to rest on the most indubitable evidence. Peter was not ashamed to own that the person whom he preached as the Messiah suffered an ignominious death. The shame of the cross was done away with by the glory of the resurrection.

40. Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly: 41. Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.
^aMatt. xxviii. 1, 2. ^bJohn xiv. 22. xx. 21. ^cJohn xv. 16.

Him God raised up the third day. He lay long enough under the power of death, to prove that He was dead, and not too long, lest it should be supposed that His disciples had time sufficient to have practiced some deceit or imposture, to prevent which, the Jews took care to have the tomb well guarded, during the whole time He lay there. (See on chap. ii. 27.) *Not to all the people*, for it was impossible without raising a mob. Those who knew Him best were the only persons perfectly qualified to judge, and become witnesses. If they, without any secular motive, and even contrary to every one, testified that He was risen, who can question this fact? No fact is ever attested by a multitude; witnesses are always selected. The *witnesses* were not so by chance, but *chosen before of God. Eat and drink.* (See on Luke xxiv. 41; John xxi. 10.)

42. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.
1. Matt. xxviii. 19, 21. 2. John v. 22, 27; chap. xvii. 31; 2 Cor. v. 10; 1 Peter iv. 5.

Commanded us, or peremptorily required us, not leaving it to our discretion, but making it a part of our official duty. *To preach, i. e.*, proclaim, publicly announce, as heralds did. *Testify*—bear witness. *Ordained of God*—by an unchangeable decree. *Quick*, or, living. By the living are meant those who will be alive when Jesus comes to judgment, and by the dead those who lived previously but will then be dead. In naming Christ's office as Judge, the climax of His dignity is testified to, so that there may be held out to the penitent, faith in the atonement through Him. This important truth of the Christian religion the Apostle Paul also explicitly declared to the Athenians, as a chief reason why men should repent and embrace the Gospel. (Chap. xvii. 31.) Our Lord had also taught before His crucifixion, that the final judgment of men was to be a part of His official work (John v. 22, 27), and He had, according to Peter's declaration, instructed His Apostles to bring forward this truth in its due prominence.

43. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.
1. Luke xxiv. 27, 44, John v. 39. 2. John iii. 14-17; Rom. x. 11.

Forgiveness through this exalted One, is the closing note of Peter's beautifully simple

discourse. *To him give all, &c.*—i. e., This is the burden generally, of the prophetic testimony. It was fitter thus to give the spirit of their testimony, than to quote them in detail on such an occasion. But let this Apostolic statement of the evangelical import of the Old Testament writings be devoutly weighed by those who are disposed to rationalize away this element in the Old Testament. *Whosoever believeth, &c.* This was evidently said with reference to the Gentile audience then before him, and formed a noble practical conclusion to the whole discourse. (See Matt. iii. 17, xxvi. 28; Heb. ix. 22; Acts v. 31.) Let not the peculiarities of the preaching of the Apostles, as set forth in verses 36-43, be overlooked. 1. The substance of its testimony—the life, sufferings and resurrection of Christ. 2. The authority by which it is supported—the command of Christ, and the call of all men unto salvation. 3. Its object—the salvation of believers through the peace of Christ. How does Jesus Christ bestow peace? (Verse 36.) 1, As our Prophet (verses 37-39), 2, as our High Priest (verses 39, 43), and, 3, as our King (verses 40-42.)

44. ¶ While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.
1. Chap. iv. 31.

Here is the issue of Peter's sermon. God owned Peter's word, by conferring the Holy Ghost on the hearers, even while he was speaking. This descent of the Spirit was necessary, in order to his admitting Cornelius and his friends into the Church, without the remonstrance of his Jewish brethren who were present. They were not yet prepared for acknowledging the Gentiles, their brethren, without circumcision and submission to Moses' law. It is a blessed and cheering sight, when the servants of God can perceive that the word takes hold of their hearers, and that, through it, the Holy Spirit powerfully influences their hearts.

45. And they of the circumcision, which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost: 46. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47. Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48. And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.—4. Ver. 23. 5. Chap. ii. 4. 6. Chap. viii. 12.

They of the circumcision . . . were astonished. The Jews had long ago a proverb

among them, "That the Holy Spirit never rests on a heathen." This *astonishment* shows that notion prevailed even in these Christians, whether the proverb was so old or not. *Gentiles*, literally, *the nations*, *i. e.*, all besides the Jews. We should never yield to a feeling of dissatisfaction, when God bestows His gracious gifts on others, but rather rejoice in their happiness, and praise the Lord for it. *Speak with tongues*, &c. Various and foreign languages. This is the Pentecost of the Gentiles. What is called (chap. ii. 11) "speaking the wonderful (or mighty) works of God," is here more concisely expressed, *magnifying God*, *i. e.*, setting forth His greatness. *Can any man forbid water*, &c. Peter at once makes the practical application: If these men have received the Holy Ghost as well as we, that is, believers belonging to Israel, who then can refuse the water, so that they shall not be baptized? The reason here assigned is, that they who had received the baptism of the Spirit must certainly be fit for that of water. Why should the sign be withheld from those who were possessed of the thing signified? If God was willing to accept them as converted Gentiles, why should man insist upon their

coming forward as converted Jews? *He commanded them to be baptized*. Peter did not baptize them himself, but ordered others to perform that ceremony. So our Lord did not Himself baptize, and it was Paul's usual custom to employ others to administer baptism. (See John iv. 2. 1 Cor. i. 14, v. 17). "As none of these expressions" (says an able commentator, in reference to the passages just pointed to) "can be intended to detract from the value and importance of the rite in question, they may be best explained as warning us against the error of exalting this part of the Christian system to a disproportionate importance, which may be just as superstitious as the eucharistical corruptions of Popery, or the hierarchical excesses of prelacy. *In the name of the Lord*. That is, as disciples of the Lord Jesus, acknowledging Him as their Lord. Baptism in His name was the public avowal of their being His disciples. The Church should never refuse to recognize him to whom God has given the certificate of His Spirit. *Tarry certain days*—remain. And as we are in the next chapter informed, Peter complied with the request: he remained and did eat with them. (xi. 3.)

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1. Who was Cornelius? 2. What was his character? 3. What did he see? 4. What did the angel say to him? 5. What did Cornelius do? 6. As the messengers drew near to Joppa where was Peter? 7. What did he see in the trance? 8. What did he hear? 9. What was the meaning of the vision? 10. What did the Spirit say to Peter? 11. State the interview between Peter and the messengers. 12. How did Cornelius receive Peter? 13. What did he say to him? 14. What did Peter say in reply? 15. What great event took place "while Peter yet spake these words?" 16. What is said about baptism?

CHAPTER XI.

¹ *Peter, being accused for going in to the Gentiles, smaketh his defence, 18 which is accepted, 19 The gospel being spread into Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, Barnabas is sent to confirm them, 26 The disciples there are first called Christians, 27 They send relief to the brethren in Judea in time of famine.*

AND the apostles and brethren, that were in Judea, heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. ² And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, ³ Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. ⁴ But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying; ⁵ I was in the city of Joppa, praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, ⁶ A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: ⁷ Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. ⁸ And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter: slay and eat. ⁹ But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. ¹⁰ But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. ¹¹ And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. ¹² And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Cesarea unto me. ¹³ And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover, these six brethren accompanied me: and we entered into the man's house: ¹⁴ And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter: ¹⁵ Who shall tell thee these words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. ¹⁶ And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. ¹⁷ Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. ¹⁸ Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God? ¹⁹ When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

^a x. 23. ^b Gal. i. 12. ^c chap. x. 9, &c. ^d Job. ex. 23. ^e Gal. ii. 12. ^f Luke i. 3. ^g ix. 10. ^h ex. 15. ⁱ b. x. 19. ^j ix. 30.

The descent of the Holy Spirit on the Gentiles at Cesarea, and their reception into the Church, was an event so extraordinary that the tidings of it would soon reach the ears of the other "*apostles and brethren*," who were still resident in Judea. *They that were of the circumcision*, that is, the believing Jews. These held the opinion common to the Pharisees, that it was not lawful to eat with Gentiles, but in this they had no countenance from the law of Moses. *Contended with him*. They held him not for a pope, but a heretic. What will become of Moses, the law, and the temple if he, the most eminent of the Apostles, lowers himself to the level of Saul of Tarsus, and allows baptism to be, not the sequence, but the *substitute of circumcision*!

Thou wentest in, &c. It can scarcely be doubted that there was a great deal of that miserable, narrow, and malign feeling peculiar to intolerant religionists, expressed to Peter on this occasion. *Peter*

rehearsed, &c. (From 4 to 16; see on x. 10-18, &c.) He listened attentively to what was spoken, nor, when he replied, did a whisper of censure escape his lips. He was calm, generous, dignified, and said that which was best adapted to justify himself and conciliate them. His account differs a little in form from the facts recorded in the preceding chapter, but the difference being simply formal, serves to show his consciousness of accuracy. *Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift, &c.* This is the logic of his address. He regarded the facts as showing unmistakably that it was God's will that the Gentiles should have the Gospel, and that therefore it would have been the utmost presumption on his part to have attempted to withstand that will. *When they heard these things they held their peace*. His argument was conclusive and satisfactory; and more than this, for it is said *they glorified God*, "they devoutly rejoiced in the new conviction that God had also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." In consequence of Peter's statement, "the objectors not only expressed themselves satisfied, so that they in silence withdrew their reproaches, but they glorified God, because that God had also to the Gentiles given repentance unto life. The inseparable connection between repentance and eternal life should not pass unnoticed. Yet repentance is no recompense to God, it is not the thing that shall make Him our friend, for He "grants," or gives this repentance. But it is necessary to make us capable of relishing the pleasures of His friendship, which we can never do if we do not turn to Him.

¹⁹ ¶ Now they which were scattered abroad, upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. ²⁰ And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. ²¹ And the multitude of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

^j Chap. viii. 1. ^k Matt. x. 6. ^l Chap. vi. 1, ix. 23. ^m Luke i. 66. ⁿ Chap. xv. 19; 1 Thes. i. 9.

Now they which were scattered abroad. Luke here resumes his account of the Christians who had become fugitives in consequence of the hostility of which Stephen, and, immediately afterward, the Church in general, had been the objects. Phenice, properly the strip of coast, about 120 miles

long, extending from the river Eleutherus (near Aradus), to a little south of Tyre, and belonging at this time to the province of Syria. (See xv. 3, xxi. 2.) Its principal cities were Tripolis, Byblos, Sidon, Tyre and Berytos. It is a fertile territory, beginning with the uplands at the foot of Lebanon, and sloping to the sea, and held a distinguished position for commerce from the very earliest times. *Cyprus* is an island near the north-east angle of the Mediterranean Sea, next to Sicily in size, remarkable for its richness of soil and the dissoluteness of its inhabitants. In Christian history it is celebrated as the birth-place of Barnabas, and as one of the fields of Paul's memorable labors.

Antioch. Here we have the first notice of this important city. Antioch was the capital of Syria, and the residence of the Roman governors of that province. It was founded by Seleucus Nicator, and named after his father, Antiochus. It was almost an oriental Rome, in which all the forms of the civilized life of the empire found a representative. *Preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only*, who were dispersed in all those parts, and had synagogues of their own, they did not yet understand that the Gentiles were to be fellow-heirs. *Men of Cyprus, i. e., Jews born in Cyprus.* (See ii. 5-9.) *And Cyrene* (See xiii. 1, ii. 10.) These, as well as the Cyprians, were more accustomed to associate with Gentiles. *Grecians.* (See on vi. 1.) *Preaching the Lord Jesus*—the Gospel concerning Jesus, wherever they came. This they did, even though they were not Apostles, nor held any other office in the Church. That they did not act presumptuously in adopting this course, was demonstrated by the blessed results stated in the next verse. *The hand of the Lord was with them.* The hand is the organ or instrument of working in man; when it is attributed to God, it denotes His power and help. *A great number believed, &c.*—many more than could have been expected, some of all sorts. They were convinced of the truth of the Gospel, embraced it, and the effect of this was, that they turned away from all their former grounds of confidence, to trust only in the righteousness of Christ—turned from their

loose, careless, carnal way of living, to a spiritual, holy, heavenly life.

22. 1 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the Church which was in Jerusalem; and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch, 23. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. 21. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith; and much people was added unto the Lord. 24. 27. 13 John. iv.—xxiii. 43, xiv. 22. 1 Ps. xvii. 3, 2 Cor. i. 17. 1 Prov. xxiii. 13, 26.

The Church which was in Jerusalem, partly from its seniority, partly from its local situation, and partly from its connection with the Apostles, still continued to be the center of influence to the Christian world. *Sent Barnabas as far as Antioch.* (See on verse 19.) It is here implied that on the way to Antioch he found Churches to visit. It was in the first instance, no doubt, a mission of inquiry, and no one could be more suitable to enquire into the proceedings of those Cyprians and Cyrenians than one who was himself a "Grecian" of Cyprus (iv. 36), and "a son of consolation." (See on iv. 36, and ix. 27.) In those places where the work of God prospers, the Church should send ministerial help, to promote and build up that work. An infant Church is placed in critical circumstances. Young converts have but little light; they are weak and feeble, their carnal friends and relations oppose them, and they are opposed by all the powers of darkness.

Had seen the grace of God. Grace means Divine influence, and is so called because it is derived from the free and unreserved communication of God. As grace is an internal principle, it is, of course, discernible only in its effects. Experience is valuable; there is no real religion without it, and it is from our inward dispositions we must chiefly assure our minds before God; but as others cannot read our hearts, only our lives, therefore in our lives our godliness must appear. *Was glad.* He rejoiced, 1. As a man of piety. Piety is, so to speak, absorbed in the promotion of God's glory, and whenever a man is converted, there is one in whom He is glorified. 2. As a man of benevolence. He knew that the body is nothing as compared to the soul, and that every subject of divine grace is not only blessed in himself, but he is made a blessing to others. 3. As

a minister, who regarded salvation as the very end of his office, the design of his labors. 4. His pleasure was disinterested. Barnabas could rejoice, though he had not been the means of producing here the results in which he took so much pleasure. Some, alas, cannot rejoice to see things done by others, especially if they do not belong to their own communion, if they cannot pronounce the shibboleth of their party. *Echorted them all*—young, old, those who had just entered a religious course, and those who had been walking in it; the weak and wavering in the faith, and the strong and established. None must put off his armor till he has quitted the field. *Purpose of heart, i. e.*, a purpose sincere, earnest. Religion is a poor business unless the heart be in it; but everything will follow the heart. *They would cleave unto the Lord*—adhere to Jesus—as their Teacher, who should lead them into all truth; as their Saviour, whose blood cleansed them from all sin, and whose righteousness justified them before God, and gave them access with confidence; as their Helper, in every duty and conflict, without whom they could do nothing, and through whose strength they could do all things; as their Comforter, the consolation of Israel; as their Example, whose life was to be made manifest in their mortal bodies; and as their Master, who had every claim upon them, having bought them with a price, and rescued them from their enemies, and to whom as their rightful Owner they had given themselves, body, soul and spirit.

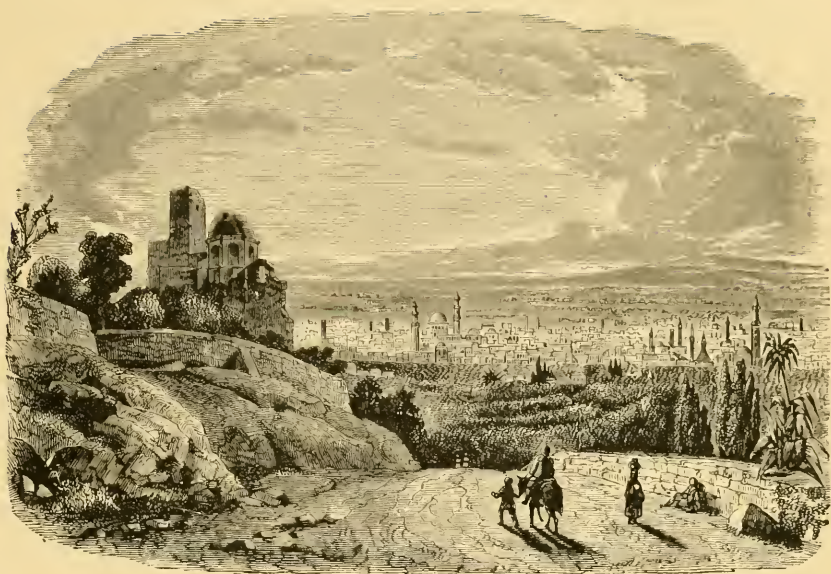
Three things are here said of Barnabas in a way of commendation: 1. *He was a good man.* The life of this great and good man, as related in other parts of Scripture, abundantly confirms the character here given him. He sold his possessions for the support of the infant cause of Christ. (iv. 36, 37, ix. 27.) As he loved Jesus, so he loved His people. He appears to have possessed much of the tender and affectionate, being called “a son of consolation.” Assiduous in discovering and encouraging the first dawns of God’s work, he was the first person that introduced Saul into the company of the disciples. (See on next verse.) 2. He was *full of the Holy Ghost.* This expression

here signifies His indwelling and ordinary operations, or what is elsewhere called “an unction from the Holy One.” (See Gal. v. 22, 23.) The word *full* is not here to be understood in an unlimited sense, but in a comparative sense, and denotes that he was habitually and eminently under the Spirit’s influence. 3. He was *full of faith.* This term appears, in this connection, to include, at least, the three following ideas: Having the mind occupied with Divine sentiment, being rooted and grounded in the truth of the Gospel, and daily living upon it. The first of these ideas distinguished him from those characters whose minds are void of principle, the next, from such as are always hovering upon the borders of skepticism, and the last, from those who, though they have no manner of doubts about the truth of the doctrines of the Gospel, yet scarcely ever, if at all, feel their vital influence upon their hearts and lives. *And much people was added unto the Lord.* The labors of Barnabas resulted also in the accession of new believers. It may be laid down as a rule, which both Scripture and experience will confirm, that *eminent spirituality in a minister is usually attended with eminent usefulness.* We do not say their usefulness depends upon their spirituality, as an effect depends upon its cause, nor yet that it is always in proportion to it. God is a Sovereign, and frequently sees proper to convince them of it, in variously bestowing His blessing on the means of grace. But yet He is not wanting in giving encouragement to what He approves, wherever it is found. Our want of usefulness is often to be ascribed to our want of spirituality, much oftener than to our want of talents.

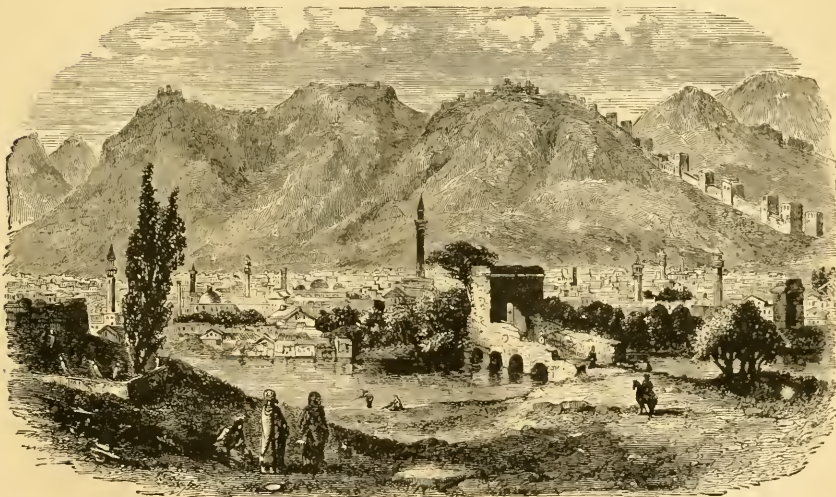
23. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul. 24. And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the Church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

*Chap. ix. 27, 30. *Matt. xxviii. 19.

To seek Saul, &c. Here is additional evidence of the goodness of Barnabas. As a preacher he does not seem to have been equal to the Apostle Paul, yet so far was he from caring about being eclipsed by Paul’s superior abilities, that he went in search of him, and brought him to Antioch, to assist him in the work of the Lord. How worthy this example of imitation!



DAMASCUS.



ANTIOCH IN SYRIA.

If this spirit was more common, might it not be hoped that, according to God's usual manner of working, more *people would be added to the Lord?* *A whole year*, viz.: that of A. D. 44. The Apostle had spent the intervening years, from A. D. 39 to 44, in Syria and Cilicia. *Assembled themselves*, &c., *i. e.*, they met in (and with) the Church, for worship and instruction. *Taught much people*, or more exactly *a sufficient crowd*, implying that their hearers were not only numerous, but of various classes and descriptions. *And the disciples were called*, &c. Was the name "Christians" given by human or Divine authority? On this the Scriptures offer no certain information, nor can anything be affirmed with confidence. It is not at all probable an appellation so inoffensive, and even so honorable, originated with their enemies, they would have invented one that was more opprobrious. But supposing it to have been assumed first by the disciples themselves, we can scarcely suppose they would have ventured to take a step so important as that of assuming an appellation by which the Church was to be distinguished in all ages, without Divine direction, especially at a time when the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were so common, and in a church where prophets abounded. (See chap. xiii. 1.) Nor is it easy to imagine that they would assume a new appellation without recourse to the prophets for that direction, or that, supposing it to have had no other than a human origin, it would have been so soon and so unanimously adopted by every part of the Christian Church. This opinion receives some countenance from the Greek word here rendered "called," which is not in any other instance applied to the giving a name by human authority. In its genuine import, it bears some relation to an oracle. Names, as they are calculated to give just or false representations of the nature of things, are of considerable importance, so that the affixing one to discriminate the followers of Christ in every period of time seems to have been not unworthy of Divine interposition.

What significance is there in the fact that, not in Jerusalem, the city of the Old

Covenant, the city of the people who were chosen to the exclusion of all others, but in a heathen city, the Eastern centre of Greek fashion and Roman luxury, and not until it was shown that the New Covenant was inclusive of all others—that then and there God's people were first called Christians, and the Church received, under an overruling God, its true and honorable name! What blessed import is there in this name, reminding us, as it does, that those who worthily wear it, have, from a mature deliberation and an unbiased mind, embraced the religion of Christ, received His doctrine, believe His promises, and make it their chief and habitual care to shape their lives by His precepts and example! What sad regrets, too, we may add, does this name inspire, as it bears us back from the present divisions of God's people to the happy period when the Church of Christ was "one fold under one Shepherd," and the seamless coat of the Redeemer was of one entire piece from the top to the bottom!

27. ¶ And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. 28. And there stood up one of them, named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cesar. 29. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwell in Judea: 30. Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. *Chap. ii. 17, xiii. 1; Eph. iv. 11. *Chap. xxi. 10. *Rom. xv. 26; 1 Cor. xvi. 1; 2 Cor. ix. 1, 2.

Came prophets. These were evidently endowed by the Holy Spirit, with the power of foretelling future events. The scarcity, predicted by *Agabus*, was to extend *throughout all the world*, as the Roman empire was ostentatiously called. The famine might be very general, and severely felt in the various provinces of the empire, though some places might be less straitened than others. *Eusebius* says of this famine, that it oppressed almost the whole empire, and that it was recorded by historians most averse to our religion; viz.: by *Suetonius*, in the life of *Claudius*, who says, it happened "through a long barrenness." *Josephus* says that it raged so much in Judea that many perished for want of victuals: and *Dion Cassius*, that it was a very great famine. *In the days, or, reign, of Claudius Cesar.* *Claudius* reigned thirteen years, from the year 41 to 54. In his reign, and

therefore within these years (probably in the years 44 to 45), this famine took place. It is not implied that this prediction of *Agabus* was made before *Claudius* commenced to reign, but it is merely an intimation by the historian when the famine occurred. *Every man*. There was not one disciple who did not contribute something. The new love glowed in every heart, and found its expression in the gift of every hand. *According to his ability*. Not according to what other people did, or what other people expected, but "according to his ability." Each did the utmost he could. *Determined to send relief*, &c. The beneficence was prompt. They did not postpone sending the relief, or adjourn it for future consideration: the thing was done at once. *Sent it to the elders*—an office well-known to be borrowed from the synagogue, after the model of which, and not at all of the temple, the Christian Churches were constituted by the Apostles. *By the hands of Barnabas and Saul*. This was Saul's second visit to Jerusalem after his conversion. It is thus evident that the disciples ar-

ranged judiciously for the distribution of the relief they sent, in a most effective way. Here, then, we have a beautiful display of that philanthropy which the ancient seers beheld as the light of coming ages, and which has ever been the inspiration of the godly. It is

"That bright chain of love which God hath given,
Reaching from heart to heart, and thence to heaven."

True faith always manifests its power and efficiency by works of love. (Gal. v. 6.) When indications of the approach of afflictions appear, our first thoughts and efforts should not be solely devoted to the work of adopting precautionary measures in our own behalf, but should also refer to others, whose situation may be more exposed than our own. Cases often occur like that of the widow of Sarepta (Luke iv. 26; 1 Kings xvii. 9), who was first of all directed to bestow her limited store on the prophet Elijah, but who was abundantly afterward consoled by the provision which was made for her and her son. Such will be the experience of those in whose hearts faith and love abide.

1. Who contended with Peter at Jerusalem? 2. Why? 3. What did Peter say? 4. What effect was produced by his address? 5. What is said about "those which were scattered abroad?" 6. What success had they in preaching? 7. Whom did the church in Jerusalem send forth to Antioch? 8. What is said of Barnabas "when he came, and had seen the grace of God?" 9. What was the character of Barnabas? 10. Where did Barnabas then go? 11. How long did he and Saul labor at Antioch? 12. What were the disciples called first in Antioch? 13. Who came from Jerusalem unto Antioch? 14. Who predicted a great dearth? 15. Did it come to pass? 16. What did the disciples determine to do? 17. By whose hands was the "relief" sent to the elders?

CHAPTER XII.

1 *King Herod persecuteth the Christians, killeth James, and imprisoneth Peter; whom an angel delivereth upon the prayers of the church.* 20 *In his pride taking to himself the honour due to God, he is stricken by an angel, and dieth miserably.* 24 *After his death, the word of God prospereth.*

NOW about that time, Herod the king, stretched forth his hands, to vex certain of the church.

^aOr, began.

About that time, i. e., when Barnabas and Saul went to Jerusalem, as has just been related. This Herod was the grandson of Herod the Great, by his son Aristobulus, and nephew to Herod Antipas. The royal title of the family expired with the

first Herod, but was restored to this man, whom the Roman emperor constituted king of Judea. He was praised by the Jews for his attachment to their laws and nation. He began to persecute, by vexing certain of the Church, perhaps by fines and imprisonments, but a nobler sacrifice was necessary to appease his rage, and to gratify his sanguinary counselors.

2. And he killed James ^bthe brother of John with the sword.—^bMatt. iv. 21, xx. 23.

James, one of the Apostles whom Jesus honored with peculiar intimacy. (See Ap-

pendix.) He is here called *the brother of John* to distinguish him from James the son of Cleopas. *Killed with the sword, i. e.,* beheaded him, for he had the power of life and death, as had the Roman procurators before him. Our Lord predicted (Mark x. 35-40) that the sons of Zebedee would be called to suffer great affliction with Him. This, as we see, was fulfilled in the elder, in the violent death he now suffered.

3. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

xxiv. 27. ^aJohn xxi. 18. ^bEx. xii. 14, 15.

Saw it pleased the Jews. To obtain popular applause was, as *Josaphat* tells us, one of the chief motives which influenced the conduct of Herod; for this reason he sacrificed the life of James, and now desired to sacrifice the life of Peter. It was pleasing to the Jews. The people were now hostile to the Christians. The Pharisees, the popular faction, had declared against them. Perhaps observing the numerous conversions to Christianity, they regarded the Jewish religion as in danger, and looked upon Christians in general as they did on Stephen, as blasphemers of Moses and of God. Such are too often the motives that influence the actions of ambitious men, when exalted to power; they do not so much consider what is right and just, as what may render them popular and pleasing. *Then were the days of unleavened bread.* For seven days at the feast of the Passover the Jews had to eat unleavened bread. (Ex. xii. 15.) The passover itself was partaken on the first day, but the feast was continued six days longer, hence it is called "the feast of unleavened bread." (Ex. xii. 13.)

4. And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers, to keep him, intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people. [For after Easter we should rather read, "after the Passover," i. e., after the whole festival was over. The word in our authorized version is an ecclesiastical term of later date, and ought not to have been employed here.] 5. Peter therefore was kept in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. 6. And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains; and the keepers before the door kept the prison. 7. And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. 8. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals: and so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. 9. And he went out, and followed him, and wist not that it was true, which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. 10. When they were past the first and the second ward,

they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city, which opened to them of his own accord; and they went out and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. 11. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. 12. And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. 13. And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to him, named Rhoda. 14. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. 15. And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel. 16. But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished. 17. But he beckoning unto them with the hand, to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go, shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place. 18. Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter. 19. And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Cesarea, and there abode.

^aOr, instant and earnest prayer was made; 2 Cor. i. 11; Eph. vi. 18, 19; 1 Thes. v. 17; James, v. 16. ^bPs. xxxvii. 32, 33; chap. v. 19. ^cChap. xvi. 26. ^dPs. cxlvi. 1. ^eChap. x. 3, 17. ^f2 Chron. xvi. 9; Ps. xxxiv. 17; Dan. iii. 28, vi. 22; Job. i. 14. ^gPs. xxxiii. 18, 19, xlviii. 16; 2 Cor. i. 10; 2 Peter ii. 9. ^hVerse 5. ⁱOr, to ask who was there. ^jMatt. xviii. 10. ^kChap. xiii. 16. ^lPs. lxxvi. 16.

A light shined. The angel brings to the prisoner no lantern, lamp or candle, yet he brings a *light*, the beaming of his own person. Peter sees by it his prison, his chains, his cloak, his sandals, and his emancipator. *Chains fell from his hands.* Literally, *the chains.* What human hand could have snapped those manacles, and freed him without the knowledge of his guards? Would the shock of an earthquake or the flash of lightning have done it, without injuring him or the soldiers? *Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals, &c.* Here again is personal intelligence. The angel did for Peter what he could not do for himself—break his fetters; but does not do for him what he could do for himself—put on his tunic and mantle. *Wist not that it was true*, actual, as distinguished from a dream or vision. Peter's uncertainty arose from the extraordinary nature of the interposition; it was too strange to be credited. He was bewildered by the scene, unable at the moment to comprehend that what he saw and did was a reality. *And forthwith (suddenly) the angel departed from him.* Hitherto it seemed to Peter as if he were dreaming. But now, when he stood alone in the midst of the city, his consciousness first returned fully and distinctly, and he said, "Now I perceive in truth—and I am sure that I do not deceive myself—that the Lord has sent His angel

and delivered me from the power of Herod and the eager expectation of the Jews, which shall not now be fulfilled." *It is his angel.* The Jews believed tutelary angels were appointed to all men; so did the Gentiles, for *Censorinus* says, "The genius is a god, in whose protection so far as each one is, he lives: it is appointed so assiduous an observer of us, that it is never absent longer than an instant, but accompanies us from birth to the last day of life." (See Matt. xviii. 10.) *Beckoning unto them.* His motive was *haste*: he tells briefly the particulars of his deliverance, and, while it was yet night, hastily departs. *Into another place.* "I see in these words," says *Alford*, "a minute mark of truth in our narrative. Under the circumstances, the place of Peter's retreat would very naturally at the time be kept secret. It probably was unknown to the person from whom the narrative came, or designedly left indefinite." *Now, as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers what was become of Peter.* His mysterious deliverance created great excitement and confusion. Fear and wonder filled them with mental tumult "as soon as it was day." Day would reveal the enormity of the night, and the revelation would produce "no small stir," &c. *Now as soon as it was day, &c.* It may easily be imagined that the soldiers who had been commanded to guard the prisoner, and who were responsible for his safe-keeping, were greatly embarrassed when it was day, as they knew not what had become of Peter. And when the diligent search which was instituted, led to no results, Herod subjected the guards to a trial before a military court, and directed that they should be executed. *From Judea, i. e., from the inland or interior.* Herod resided usually at Jerusalem, and went now to Cesarea, as *Josephus* informs us, to preside at the public games in honor of the Emperor Claudius.

Observe, 1. *The miraculous deliverance.* The Romans secured their prisoners in a singular way. A quaternion, or four soldiers, were appointed to mount guard over them, and four such quaternions were considered indispensable to watch the cell, and the approaches to it, as well as

to afford the means of relieving those whose duty it was to be in immediate attendance on the prisoners, by a regular night watch of three hours each. Around the right arm of the criminal was fastened a pretty long chain, while the other end was attached to the left of a soldier, so that a guard was bound to the prisoner, and was under the necessity of attending and moving with him in every change of place, and almost every variety of posture. When the security of the prisoner was of more than ordinary importance, two guards were appointed, one on each side, having a chain attached to both hands; and it was in this irksome and painful manner that Peter was fettered, with a chain both on his right and left arm, extending to two guards, on either side, on the occasion of the angelic visitant so unexpectedly releasing him from confinement. So strict was the discipline to which soldiers on guard were subjected, that if, by any means, the prisoner who was chained to them was permitted to escape, their negligence was visited with capital punishment, and hence we can easily imagine the indescribable state of confusion and terror into which the guards were thrown the next morning, when they found that the Apostle had disappeared. No clanking of the chains, no harsh grating of the ponderous doors, no sound of footsteps betrayed the motions of Peter, as he followed his supernatural guide, and, accordingly, as neither a clue could be obtained of the prisoner's retreat, nor an account given of his mode of escape, except that he had effected it while they slept, Herod determined to carry the military law into execution, by commanding those who had been appointed to the office of guarding Peter, to be put to death.

Observe, 2. *The state in which Peter was found when his deliverance came*—he was sleeping. What an instance of sublime composure this! Think of the place A prison—a dark, filthy cell. Think of his position. Chained to two soldiers—linked to two wretches from whom his nature must have recoiled with horror. Think of those who were watching him—sixteen soldiers. Think of the time. It was the night when Herod intended to bring him forth and put

him to death. Peter must have been aware of his danger. He knew that the wretch who was "vexing the Church," who had just killed James, and who imprisoned him, intended to take away his life. Yet he sleeps, sleeps far sweeter and safer than his bloody persecutor could sleep that night. His sleeping in these circumstances suggests three things: First, A gracious Providence. Sleep is one of the choicest of the temporal gifts of God. How it reinvigorates the frame! What more did Peter want than sleep? It was the right and needful thing for the season, sleep for the night. "He giveth His beloved sleep." Secondly, An approving conscience. A condemning conscience would have kept sleep away. Peter knew that he was engaged in the right work. Thirdly, A sense of security. He had no fear or alarm about the future. He had committed himself to the care of heaven. He felt himself safe in the hands of his Master. He knew that Christ had said, "I give unto my sheep eternal life." What need we fear when this is done? "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Observe, 3. *The efficacy of united, believing and persevering prayer.* Whilst Peter was in prison, "prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him." Prayer is the refuge and solace of those who are in any trouble. It is, indeed, one of the designs of affliction to excite us to pray more frequently and earnestly. And intercession or praying for others, as well as for ourselves, is a duty. Thus our Lord teaches us, when we pray, to say, "*Our Father*," and "give us day by day *our* daily bread." Thus we are commanded to pray for all men—and surely, therefore, for the servants of Christ, and those who are suffering according to the will of God. The Church did not draw up a petition and present it to God. They go at once, not to the jailer, but the judge, not to the servant, but to the Lord of all. Let us imitate their example. Let us, when we wish even to carry an enterprise with our fellow-creatures, engage the Lord on our side, and follow the admonition of David, who had often tried the measure and found it successful: "Commit thy way unto the

Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass." Nor, as it was on the very night preceding the day that Herod would have brought Peter forth for execution that his deliverance was effected, let us despair if the Divine interposition in our behalf is delayed, as it was in the case of the woman of Canaan, who cried to Jesus so piteously on behalf of her daughter, or of Abraham, when Isaac was even bound and laid on the altar, and the knife was uplifted.

"Just in the last distressing hour,
The Lord displays delivering power;
The mount of danger is the place
Where we shall see surprising grace."

Observe, 4, *The instrument employed in the rescue.* "The angel of the Lord came upon him." The age of miracles is past. Angels do not now come in a visible manner, to perform services to the saints but their agency is as real and beneficent as ever. "They are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." They defend the people of God against the incursions of their spiritual adversaries, and preserve them from dangers which are often unperceived. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." These glorious creatures do not disdain to minister to man, who was made a little lower than they. His nature, united to the Son of God, reigns above all principalities, and powers on the throne of the universe, and every believer can call the Lord of angels his friend and brother. Perhaps, those remarkable events, which sometimes occur in the history of the saints, and for which it is difficult to assign any satisfactory cause, those wonderful escapes, those inexplicable impressions on the mind, those unexpected revolutions in their favor, the sudden and unlooked-for patronage of the wicked, the unaccountable failure of the designs of their enemies, the surprising accomplishment of their hopes, when the ordinary means had been tried in vain, and every appearance seemed to justify despair, may be referred to the secret operation of their powerful and vigilant guardians.

Observe, 5, *How strongly Peter's bondage represents the case of man by nature.* A cap-

tive of Satan—fast bound in the prison of an unconverted state, tied down to earth by a thousand chains of sinful propensities, and watched by infernal spirits! What but the same power which released Peter could release this spiritual prisoner? What but the light of God's Spirit shining into his heart could dispel the moral darkness? What but the force of Omnipotence could burst his chains of sin? And what but Almighty Providence could open for him an easy passage through the midst of opposing difficulties? All that God did, *literally*, for Peter, He does, *spiritually*, for those whom He delivers from Satan's bondage. Do we feel that we are in this pitiable situation? Are we groaning under the yoke of sin? Then are we in a fair way of being rescued, for whenever a person renounces all dependence on himself, realizes his moral helplessness, and cries, through Jesus, for deliverance, the Lord will assuredly hear, and answer him. And if we have any friend in this captive state, who is yet unconscious of his danger, let us do as the disciples did—pray fervently—and the Lord who released Peter, in answer to prayer, may likewise answer ours.

20. † And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and having made Blastus the king's chamberlain, their friend, desired peace, because their country was nourished by the king's country.
*That was over the king's bed-chamber. †Ezek. xxvii. 17.

According to the statement at the close of the last verse, Herod, who resided usually at Jerusalem, went now to Cesarea. This was done, as *Josephus* informs us, to preside at the public games in honor of the Emperor Claudius. Was highly displeased, &c. Herod probably showed his displeasure, the cause of which is unknown, by putting restrictions on the commerce of Tyre and Sidon (which were then subject to the Romans), preventing them from obtaining supplies from Judea, and closing his ports against them. *Having made Blastus, &c.* Having conciliated Blastus, probably, by means of a bribe. Blastus is a Roman name, and Herod being long resident in Rome, it is not improbable that he would have a Roman as his chief steward. *Desired peace, &c.* Peace is not here opposed to war, but to alienation—reconciliation. Phœnicia being a

district of narrow limits, depended upon the adjoining countries for its supplies of grain. It seems from the days of Solomon to have been specially dependent on Palestine. (1 Kings v. 11.) Besides, Judea must have been one of the principal countries where the Phœnicians disposed of their goods. The splendid harbor of Cesarea also must have been most convenient for their numerous ships. It was therefore their policy to live on good terms with Herod Agrippa, as it was in his power to cripple their trade, and to stint them in their supplies of grain.

21. And upon a set day, Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. 22. And the people gave a shout, saying It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. 23. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.—v Jude 16.

The Jewish historian says that Herod's robe was richly wrought with silver, which, reflecting the rays of the rising sun with an unusual splendor, gave his flatterers an occasion of complimenting him with the title of a deity, which he did not reject, as he ought to have done, with abhorrence, and that immediately he was seized with exquisite racking tortures in his bowels, so that he was compelled, before he left the place, to own his folly in admitting such compliments. Five days after, he expired in violent agonies. *The angel of the Lord smote him.* Angels are friends or foes, according as they have the friends or foes of God before them. Peter, who is chained, guarded, and condemned to death, is rescued. Herod, sitting on his throne, surrounded by courtiers, and worshiped by the people, is punished. Who would not, in both cases, adore the ways of God?

24. † But the word of God grew and multiplied.
*Col. i. 6.

There is something inconceivably delightful and sublime in these words, considering their context. The enemies of God and His Son shall perish, but His Gospel shall grow by their opposition, and eternally triumph. The Word of the Lord is incorruptible seed; no one can deprive it of its power to produce fruit.

25. And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.
*or, charge. xi. 23, 30.

Barnabas and Saul, who were previously mentioned last in xi. 30. The connection

between that verse and the one before us, makes it highly probable, if not entirely certain, that the intervening narrative records events which took place during this official visit to Judea. *Returned from Jerusalem, i. e.,* made that their last point of departure. *Barnabas and Saul* is still the order of the names, and so continues,

until the public recognition or appearance of the latter in the character of an Apostle. *John* was a relative of *Barnabas*, as we learn from Col. iv. 10, and this relationship may have led to the present connection. He appears next in the history as their associate in missionary labors. (xiii. 5.)

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1. What vexed certain of the church? 2. Whom did Herod kill? 3. How? 4. What did he do to Peter? 5. By whom was prayer made for Peter? 6. In what state was he when Herod would have brought him forth? 7. What is said of "the angel of the Lord?" 8. Describe Peter's release from prison. 9. What is said of him when he "was come to himself?" 10. Where did he then go to? 11. State how he gained access to the house of Mary? 12. What did he say to those gathered there? 13. When Herod could not find Peter what did he do to the keepers of the prison? 14. What is said of the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon? 15. Why did the angel of the Lord smite Herod? 16. What is said of the Word of God?
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CHAPTER XIII.

1 *Paul and Barnabas are chosen to go to the Gentiles.* 7 *Of Sergius Paulus, and Elymas the sorcerer.* 14 *Paul preaches at Antioch, that Jesus is Christ.* 42 *The Gentiles believe:* 45 *but the Jews gainsay and blaspheme:* 46 *whereupon they turn to the Gentiles.* 48 *As many as were ordained to life believed.*

The first seven chapters of this book might be entitled, *The Church among the Jews*; the next five (viii.-xii.) *The Church in transition from Jews to Gentiles*, and the last sixteen, beginning with the present chapter, *The Church among the Gentiles*.

NOW there were in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers; as *Barnabas*, and *Simeon* that was called *Niger*, and *Lucius* of *Cyrene*, and *Manaen*, which had been brought up with *Herod the tetrarch*, and *Saul*.—Or, *Herod's foster-brother*.

The mention of prophets and teachers presupposes the existence of a flourishing Church at Antioch, a Church composed probably rather of Gentile than of Jewish Christians. *Prophets*—those who were gifted with inspiration, and delivered Divine communications to the Church. *Teachers*—those who devoted themselves to the work of instruction. *Barnabas* is first named, probably because the eldest. *Simeon* is one of those Jews who bore a Latin surname in addition to their Hebrew name, like *John*, whose surname is *Mark*, mentioned in xii. 25, and like *Saul* himself. Of this man we find no mention elsewhere. The name *Niger* is of Roman origin, signifying *black*, and was probably added to his

original name by some Roman acquaintance. *Lucius*, probably the same as is mentioned in Rom. xvi. 21, was a native of *Cyrene*, that African city abounding with Jews, and which sent to Jerusalem our Saviour's cross-bearer. *Manaen* is a Hellenistic form of the Hebrew *Menahem*. (2 Kings xv. 14.) *Manaen* is spoken of as the foster-brother of *Herod the tetrarch*. This was *Herod Antipas*, the tetrarch of Galilee, and since we learn from *Josephus* that this *Herod* and his brother *Archelaus* were children of the same mother, and afterward educated at Rome, it is probable that this Christian prophet or teacher had spent his early childhood with these princes, who were now both banished from Palestine to the banks of the Rhine. Let us not pass this slightly over. What different courses do men take who were once in the same condition! Here we see *Herod* and *Manaen*, brought up together in the same house; the one becoming a profligate, a persecutor, the actual murderer of *James*, and the intentional murderer of *Peter*, awfully ending his course, being smitten of an angel of the Lord, and eaten of worms, the other becoming a disciple of *Jesus*, and a preacher of the Gospel. So diverse were the characters of these two individuals, brought up together,

playing in the same room, hearing the same voices, and surrounded with the same examples, during the most impressive period of life!

2. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.
Gal. i. 15. 1 Tim. ii. 7.

As they ministered to the Lord, &c.—as they were engaged in religious services, particularly prayer. The mention of *fasting*, in this connection, seems to intimate that the occasion was one of peculiar solemnity, probably having reference to some anticipated efforts for spreading the Gospel. *The Holy Ghost said.* While they were thus engaged, perhaps to all at once by audible communication, or by special revelation to some one among them. *Separate.* The verb contains the idea both of selection and consecration. *Me, for me, or to me, i. e., for the Holy Spirit.* The Spirit makes the revelation, selects the missionaries, assigns to them their work. The personality of the agent may be inferred from such acts. The command in this form was addressed to the associates of Barnabas and Saul, but the latter would hear the same voice pointing out to them their duty and directing them to perform the service laid upon them. *Called them, i. e., Barnabas and Saul, but not the rest of you.* This work was not to supersede or take the place of the stated ministry, but to be superadded to it.

3. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

The immediate consecration and dismissal of the two men, demonstrates that their associates had clearly understood the revelation of the Spirit. While fasting and praying, they laid their hands on both—solemnly commended them, their journey, and its great object, to the protection and the grace of God (xiv. 26), and thus sent them forth.

4. So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. 5. And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.

Departed, rather, went down from Antioch, which was inland, to *Seleucia*, which was near the coast. Seleucia, built by Seleucus Nicator about B. C. 300, was a strong and almost impregnable city on the Orontes, about four miles from its mouth. It was the port of Antioch, and was about

sixteen miles distant from it by land, and about forty by the river, on account of its windings. *Thence they sailed to Cyprus.* This large and fertile island, situated off Syria, nearly opposite to Seleucia, is about forty-eight miles distant from the coast, and may be seen from the mouth of the Orontes. It is about 130 miles in length, and fifty in its greatest breadth. In ancient times it was remarkable for its fruitfulness, being celebrated for its wine, wheat, oil, pomegranates, figs and honey. In the time of the Apostles it had many considerable cities, of which Citium, Salamis, and Paphos were the principal. If the sentence of excommunication, which had been published against those who confessed Jesus to be the Christ, was still in force (John xi. 57), it is evident that it was little noticed at a distance from Jerusalem: for the Apostles were constantly allowed to preach in the synagogues. John and Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas, to perform such services by their direction, as he was capable of, with a view, no doubt, of his being employed more and more as a preacher of the Gospel.

6. And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus: 7. Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man, who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. 8. Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him. 10. And said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? 11. And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. 12. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.
42 Tim. iii. 8.

Unto Paphos. (See on verse 4.) This place was situated on the western extremity of Cyprus, and was famous for its luxury and licentiousness. It contained a splendid temple, dedicated to Venus, whose worship was of the most dissolute character. *A certain sorcerer.* One of a numerous class of impostors who, at this time of general unbelief, were encouraged even by cultivated Romans. (See on viii. 9.) *A false prophet (and) a Jew, or a Jewish false prophet,* as the last word in Greek may be either an adjective or a substantive. This man was, therefore, not a heathen sorcerer, like Simon Magnus, but a Jewish renegade, or still more probably a

professed Jew, but falsely claiming inspiration. *The deputy*—Roman deputy—*of the country*, the island of Cyprus. *A prudent man*, &c. How remarkably does the application of terms, by the mouth of the Spirit of God, differ from their application by the mouth of the world! If we can conceive an instance of what the world would term the height of imprudence, we have it here. A Roman governor of high rank, condescending to send for the teachers of a new religion, for men who were preaching certain doctrines promulged by one Jesus, who had suffered as a criminal under the Roman governor of Judea, and desiring to hear from them the word of God! The strong probability that if he received it, he would lose not only his office, but his life, the certainty that if he even rejected it, he would seriously injure his character among his Gentile friends by the inquiry, would have been quite sufficient to stigmatize him in the eyes of the world as a most imprudent and injudicious man. Yet the Spirit of God has declared this man to be a "prudent man." And surely the term is most appropriately applied, for can there be a better evidence of prudence than passing onward as we know ourselves to be, to a state of boundless existence beyond the grave, seriously to inquire, whether the faith which we profess, the religion to which we belong, be indeed the word of God, and sufficient to carry us safely into the eternal mansions?

Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation), or, *for so his name signifies*. These two appellations refer to his assumed character, not his proper name; that was *Bar-jesus*, son of Joshua. *Saul*, (*who is also called Paul*.) The historian from this period distinguishes the Apostle by the latter name. Learned men have conjectured that this change was made by Saul himself, out of deference to Sergius Paulus, who was perhaps the first idolatrous Gentile, or at least the first person of rank, converted by his instrumentality. It was customary among the Romans to assume the name of a person whom they highly esteemed. We have an example of this in Josephus, who adopted the name of Flavius, in compliment to the Emperor

Vespasian, of whom he was a great favorite. But others ascribe the change to the Apostle's new situation. He was hitherto chiefly conversant with the Jews and Syrians, to whom the name of Saul was familiar; but coming, and indeed remaining the greater part of his future life, among the Greeks and Romans, they would pronounce his name Paul, proper names undergoing a partial change in different languages. But in whatever manner the change of the Apostle's name happened, certain it is that ever after he was known among the Gentiles by the name of Paul. From this time, likewise, he is generally mentioned by the historian before Barnabas, because he was now shown to be the principal person, although formerly he was mentioned after Barnabas, because he was the younger disciple, and because his Apostolic authority was not fully understood. What did Paul? "Filled with the Holy Ghost" he "set his eyes on him." We are not fond of hard names and harsh language, says an eminent divine, and there is nothing we should more guard against than mingling our passions with the cause of truth: "for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." The same actions require not only the same circumstances, but the same warrant. When, therefore, the Samaritans would not receive our Saviour when He was going up to Jerusalem, and James and John seeing this said, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?" He turned, and rebuked them and said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Paul not only knew the depravity of this wretch, how he misrepresented their doctrine, and calumniated their designs, but he was "filled" with the Spirit as a "spirit of judgment and of burning," he spoke in the name of the Lord, and as a prophet, whose appeal was sanctioned by the event. Observe, secondly, his denunciation.

And now behold, &c. The doom had five characters. It *corresponded with the crime*. Here was blindness for blindness, judicial blindness for criminal blindness. It was

suddenly inflicted. Immediately there fell upon him a mist and a darkness. It was comparatively mild. It was only the loss of sight: but Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead. It was temporary. He was not to "see the sun for a season." It was useful. Like other judgments at the beginning of the Gospel, it was to guard Christianity from abuse, and to awaken attention, that others might hear and fear, and turn unto the Lord. And as this was the design, so this was the effect of it. When he saw what was done, &c. Had this "prudent man" listened to the dictates of worldly policy, had he attended to the advice of worldly counselors, he certainly never would have arrived at this merciful conclusion; but determining, through the grace of God, to hear and to inquire for himself, he was brought in humility, and faith, and obedience, to Him, whom truly to know is everlasting life.

13. ¶ Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia, and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.

¹Chap. xv. 38.

Paul and his company. (See on verse 9.) *Loosed*, launched, or sailed. *Paphos.* (See on verse 6.) The first city they come to is *Perga in Pamphylia*. Pamphylia was a province of Asia Minor, lying over against Cyprus, and Perga was the metropolis of the province, situated not on the sea-coast but on the river Cestrus, about seven miles from its mouth. A bar obstructs the entrance of this river at the present time, but *Strabo* says expressly that it was navigable in his day as far up as Perga. The ruins of this city are to be seen still, sixteen miles north-east of the modern Adalia, or Satalia. They consist of "walls and towers, columns and cornices, a theater and a stadium, a broken aqueduct, and tombs scattered on both sides of the site of the town. Nothing else remains of Perga but the beauty of its natural situation, between and upon the sides of two hills, with an extensive valley in front, watered by the river Cestrus, and backed by the mountains of the Taurus."

And John departing from them, &c. What induced John to leave the mission and return to Jerusalem, we are not informed. It is generally supposed that he shrank from the dangers and difficulties of the

mission. That his return was not altogether justifiable, is evident from Paul's afterward refusing to take him on his second missionary journey. (Acts xv. 37-9.) Possibly John was influenced to some extent in his course, by regard for his aged, and, as it appears, pious and widowed mother, then living at Jerusalem. If so, this tends, in some degree, to diminish the culpability of the desertion of the scene of his labors. That he should have remembered the claims which such a parent had upon him before he embarked in the great cause of evangelizing the heathen, is true, that he who "loves father or mother more than Christ, is not worthy of him," is equally certain, but whatever be the verdict which many may pass upon him, who may thus have deserted for a season the work in which he was engaged, from the strength of filial affection, and the love of a tender and perhaps declining parent, we cannot speak harshly of an act where such may have been the motive, and surely He will not judge harshly of it, who, amid the agonies of the cross, looked down upon her who had given him birth, and provided for the remaining years of her embittered pilgrimage, a solace and a home.

14. But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. 15. And after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.—¹viii. 4. ²Verse 27; ³Heb. xiii. 22.

Into the synagogue, &c. They met them in their place of worship. Sabbath days should be kept holy in solemn assemblies, they are instituted chiefly for public worship. Paul and Barnabas were strangers, but wherever we come, we must inquire for God's faithful worshipers, and join them, as those that desire to keep up a communion with all saints. *Sat down*, probably near the entrance. The Pentateuch was so distributed, as to allow of being read through in the year, and to each passage was adjoined a portion, having some affinity with it, from the prophets. The reader, or another, then explained. *Bengel* thinks Deut. i. and Isa. i. were the lesson, since these chapters are even yet read on one Sabbath, and Paul, at verse 18, refers to Deut. i. 31. *Rulers, &c.* These

were probably the elders of the Jews in Antioch, *i. e.*, the heads of families, or other hereditary chiefs and representatives, as such conducting or controlling public worship. These now *sent* the hyperetes (or clerk) to Paul, &c. *If ye have any word, &c.*, literally, "if any word of exhortation be in you." There is, says *Beza*, some emphasis in this Hebraism, by which it is understood, that whatever there is in us of Divine grace, is derived to us from God, that we may carry it about as a treasure shut up in earthen vessels.

16. Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with *his* hand, said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.

Paul seized the opportunity, accepted the invitation, and with the bearing of an orator, "beckoning with his hand," and the zeal of an Apostle, commenced his sermon. By "men of Israel" Paul means the Jews and Jewish proselytes then present; and by "those that fear God," the devout Gentiles who had renounced idolatry, and worshiped God in the synagogues, without, however, becoming proselytes to Judaism by submitting to the rite of circumcision—the so-called proselytes of the gate.

17. The God of this people of Israel chose *our* fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an *high* arm brought he them out of it.

¹Deut. vii. 6, 7. ²Ps. cv. 23. ³Exod. xiii. 14, 16.

Exalted, made them numerous and powerful. *With an high arm, i. e.*, one raised on high, and so ever ready to protect and defend them. (Comp. Exod. vi. 6.)

18. And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.—Exod. xvi. 35.

Suffered he their manners, i. e., bore with them, endured them. Another reading differing in a single letter, and preferred by most modern critics, yields the meaning, *bore them as a nurse does, i. e.*, nursed or nourished. (See Num. xi. 12; Deut. i. 31; also 1 Thes. ii. 7.)

19. And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.

¹Deut. vii. 1. ²Josh. xiv., &c.

Destroyed, or, cast out; seven nations. (Comp. Deut. vii. 1; Josh. iii. 10, xxiv. 11.)

20. And after that, he gave *unto* them Judges, about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.—Judges ii. 16.

As this appears to contradict 1 Kings vi. 1, various solutions have been proposed. Taking the words as they stand in the Greek, thus, "after that by the space of

450 years, he gave judges," the meaning may be, that about 450 years elapsed from the time of the covenant with Abraham *until* the period of the judges, which is historically correct, the word "about" showing that chronological exactness was not aimed at. But taking the sense to be as in our version, that it was the period of the judges itself which lasted about 450 years, this statement also will appear historically correct, if we include in it the interval of subjection to foreign powers which occurred during the period of the judges, and understand it to describe the whole period from the settlement of the tribes in Canaan to the establishment of royalty. Thus, from the exodus to the building of the temple were 592 years (Josephus, *Antiqui.*, viii. 3, 1); deduct forty years in the wilderness; twenty-five years of Joshua's rule (Josephus, *Antiqui.*, v. 1, 29); forty years of Saul's reign (v. 21), forty of David's, and the first four years of Solomon's reign (1 Kings vi. 1); and there remain just 443 years, or, in round numbers, about 450 years.

21. And afterward they desired a king; and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

¹1 Sam. viii. 5. ²1 Sam. x. 1.

Desired a king. They wished to have a government like that of the nations around them. (See 1 Sam. viii. 5, 7, 22.) *Saul the son of Cis.* Cis is the same as *Kish* in the Old Testament. (1 Sam. ix. 1, 2). For the manner of Saul's selection to be king, &c., see 1 Sam. ix. 10. *Forty years.* This agrees with Josephus, (*Antiqui.*, vi. 14, 9.) The Old Testament does not mention the length of Saul's reign.

22. And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

¹1 Sam. xxxi. 6. ²2 Sam. v. 3. ³1 Sam. xiii. 14.

Had removed him, literally, *having removed* (or *deposed*) *him, i. e.*, from his kingly office, as recorded in 1 Sam. xv. 11, 23, 35, xvi. 1. *I have found David, &c.* These words do not occur in the Old Testament, but are made up from two passages: Ps. lxxxix. 20, where God testifies, "I have found David my servant," and 1 Sam. xiii. 14, where Samuel, addressing Saul, says, "The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart." *After mine own heart*, referring to the general character of David. He was

not, like Saul, a bad man, who had occasional fits of piety, but a good man, notwithstanding the transgressions he committed, and which he so bitterly repented of. *My will*, literally, "the wills." Implying the several particulars, in which David, a prophet, a king, and a type of Christ, accomplished the commands and purposes of God.

23. Of this man's seed hath God, according to *his* promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: 24. When John had first preached, before his coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 25. And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he; but, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose.—Ps. cxxxii. 11. *Matt. i. 21. *Matt. iii. 1-11.

The emphasis of this statement lies, 1, in the *seed* from which Christ sprang—David's—and the *promise* to that effect which was thus fulfilled; 2, on the *character* in which this promised Christ was given, of God—"a Saviour." His personal name, "*Jesus*," is emphatically added, as designed to express that very character. (See on Matt. i. 21.) *When John had first preached*, &c. (See on Matt. iii. 1-11.) *Fulfilled his course*. John's ministry finished the legal, and brought in the evangelical dispensation. His career was brilliant and his success extraordinary. By the authentic historian *Josephus* he is spoken of in terms of the highest encomium. His course was hurried and impetuous, eager, as it were, to reach his destination, and to mingle his grand soul with its kindred elements in eternity. He was raised up for a particular service, and when that was accomplished he was removed. Note, 1. There is a prescribed course or sphere of action appointed to every individual by the Author of our nature. 2. There is a set and limited time allotted to that sphere, and course of action. 3. Our happiness and our honor consist entirely in completing the course which God has assigned to us. It is a great mistake to suppose that we should be able to conform ourselves to the will of God, and to our own sphere of action, better in some other state, and therefore to be dissatisfied with that precise state in which His providence has placed us. The wisdom of each consists in fulfilling his *own* course. The memory of John the Baptist is perpetuated with honor, because he "fulfilled his course," while that of Herod and Pontius Pilate

are covered with infamy. Which of these characters will we imitate? Will we be among those whom God condescends to honor, to whom He will say, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord?" or will we now surround ourselves with a few sparks of worldly pleasure, and lie down in eternal darkness?

26. Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. 27. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and the rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath-day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. 28. And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. 29. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.—Matt. x. 6. Luke xxiv. 20, 44.

Children of the stock of Abraham. All ye that are Jews. *Feareth God*, (i. e., the true God), although not belonging to the chosen people. *To you*, i. e., as some understand it, you as distinguished from the Jews of Palestine, referred to in the next verse. But as we know that these were not excluded from forgiveness and salvation, the meaning rather seems to be, that the rejection of the Gospel by the people at Jerusalem, ought not to occasion its rejection elsewhere. *The word of this salvation*, &c. The Gospel brings salvation, 1. By way of *discovery*. It reveals salvation exclusively of any other way; no angel in heaven could have discovered it, if God had not first declared it in and by the Gospel. 2. By way of *tender and offer*. This joyful message of salvation is sent to every man's door, and entreats every sinner to accept it. 3. By way of *efficacy and power*. The Gospel, says an old writer, brings with it a convincing and converting power to put men into a state of salvation, and has also an establishing and confirming power to preserve them in that estate. Blessed be God, that to us, even to every one of us, is the word of this salvation sent. What monsters, then, are they who are enemies to the preaching of the Gospel! They are enemies to our salvation: the only way to heaven is by Christ, the only way to Christ is by faith, and the only way to faith is by the word—it cometh by hearing. *Because they knew him not*. A gentle excuse for the persecuting high priests, &c. They did not know that Jesus was the Christ, because they did not know the

prophets. And *why* did they not know the prophets, *which were read every Sabbath day?* Because they did not *desire to know His will*, and therefore they knew not the doctrine of God: nor did they know that in condemning Christ, they fulfilled those very Scriptures which were read every Sabbath day in their synagogues. (See on ii. 23; iii. 17.) Jesus Christ is the subject of all the prophecies. *No cause of death*—Christ's innocence. *Though they found, rather, because they found no cause*, although they sought it. Human judges found no fault in Him, but there was another Judge, who found Him laden with the sins of mankind. *Fulfilled all*, &c. All that was foretold concerning the sufferings of the Messiah was fulfilled in Christ, and circumstances are noticed here, that made His resurrection the more illustrious. They *laid Him in a sepulchre*, and thought they had Him fast. "Let no one take offense at a Saviour to whom Jerusalem could give nothing better than the accursed tree, and a grave which the civil authorities sealed. Thus it is written, and thus it must needs be." (Chap. xvii. 3.)

30. But God raised him from the dead: 31. And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. 32. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers: 33. God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. 34. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. 35. Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

•Chap. i. 3. •Rom. iv. 13. •Ps. ii. 7. •Ps. xvi. 10

But God raised him, &c. To take away the scandal of the cross, the Apostle shows that our Saviour's resurrection was as glorious as His death was ignominious. God wiped away the reproach of the cross by raising up Christ from the grave, and declared Him to be His Son with power, by the resurrection from the dead. *And he was seen*, &c. (See on chap. i. 3.) *Glad tidings*, &c. The Apostle intimated that the doctrine he preached, if received aright, and understood by them, would bring them the greatest honor and satisfaction imaginable, because, in the resurrection of Christ *the promise which was made unto the fathers, the patriarchs, &c., was fulfilled unto their children. Thou art my Son*, &c. Some refer these words to the incarnation of

Christ, but here they are introduced as a prediction of His resurrection. Although He was the Son of God from eternity, yet by His resurrection he was openly declared to be so: it was the inauguration of His Sonship. As the Apostle in Rom. i. 4, regards the resurrection of Christ merely as the *manifestation* of a prior Sonship, which he afterward (chap. viii. 32), represents as *essential*, it is plain that this is his meaning here. "The expression in the Psalm, *I have begotten thee*," says Dr. Alexander, "means, I am He who has begotten thee, *i. e.*, I am thy father. *To-day* refers to the date of the decree itself (*Jehorah said, To-day*, &c.); but this, as a Divine act, was eternal, and so must be the Sonship it affirms. *The sure mercies of David*. From Isa. lv. 3.—"I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David," *i. e.*, of Christ, the Son of David, as frequently in the Old Testament (Jer. xxx. 9; Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24, xxxvii. 24, 25; Hos. iii. 5), and it may refer particularly to the last words of David, "an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." It was the resurrection of Christ, which rendered His mercies sure to His people, who without that, could have no hope from Him. (1 Cor. xv. 14.) *See corruption*. "Experience putrefaction." (See on ii. 27.)

36. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:—1 Kings ii. 10

"Served his *own* generation." Not indeed exclusively, for he has served every generation since. He is now serving the present. Christians now living bless God for His writings. Who has not found in them a treasury of experience, a flame at which he has often lighted his torch, a harp that has often driven away his evil spirit? There are some who not only serve their own age, but levy a tax of admiration and gratitude upon every future one. Such were the Reformers. Such were Luther, and Calvin, and Knox, and others. And nothing can be more unjust than to censure these men who did so much, because they did no more, or diminish their fame by reproaching them with a few faults, which were rather the errors of the times than of the men. If we cannot serve other generations let us serve our own. Some

strain too much after distant objects, and overlook what is immediately before them. Some leave large sums when they die. They had better be their own executors, and see and enjoy the application of their own liberality. They had better convince the world that they act from choice; for at death they can retain nothing, but *must* part with all they possess. *By the will of God.* Nothing comes by chance in our affairs. The Lord determines the bounds of our habitations, appoints us our stations and offices, and assigns us our talents and opportunities. It was not only by God's providential will that David served his own generation, but also by His revealed will. This he made the rule of his conduct. "Lead me," said he, "in Thy truth, and guide me, for Thou art the God of my salvation, on Thee do I wait all the day"—like a servant, to receive and obey the orders of his master. We must not follow our own fancies, or do that which is most agreeable to our feelings, but what God requires of us.

Fell on sleep. When those who survive can declare with truth, after the death of an individual, that, although the days of his pilgrimage may have been few and evil, he had always fulfilled the will of God as far as his ability extended, they could not inscribe a more honorable epitaph on his tombstone, or pay a nobler tribute to his memory. *And was laid unto his fathers.* This form of expression appears to have arisen from the practice of the Hebrews in burying the dead. Their sepulchres were large caves, either natural or artificial, with spacious apartments. When a person died, and his body was laid in one of these receptacles of the dead, in which the corpses of his deceased kindred had before been deposited, he was said to be gathered unto his fathers, or ancestors. (See Gen. xxv. 8.) The expression was familiarly used to convey the thought of dying and being buried, with the additional thought, in many instances, of the departed soul going to join the souls of deceased ancestors in the invisible world. (See Gen. xlix. 29; Judges ii. 10.) *And saw corruption.* He also saw corruption in the body, like all except the One of whom all prophecy testified as the promised One.

37. But he, whom God braised again, saw no corruption.—^bChap. ii. 24.

That is, Jesus Christ, whom God the Father raised to life the third day, saw no corruption. Sin had no inheritance in Him, therefore death could have no more dominion over Him, but He overcame death in its own territory—the grave. Thus the Apostle draws the argument home, that the foregoing words could not be meant of David's person, but of the Messiah, whom David typified and represented.

38. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 39. And by him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

¹Dan. ix. 24; Luke xxiv. 47; 1 John ii. 12. ²Isa. liiii. 11; Hab. ii. 4; Rom. iii. 28, viii. 1.

Jesus had been shown to be the Messiah, and He is, *therefore*, the author of pardon and salvation to those who believe on Him. *Through this man the forgiveness of sins* (having been procured) *is announced unto you.* (Comp. x. 36; Luke xxiv. 47.) The next verse reaffirms and amplifies the proposition. *And by him all that believe are justified, &c.* All who really believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is both able and willing to cleanse them from their sins, to clothe them in His righteousness, to guide them by His Spirit, and afterward to receive them into glory, and who give themselves up freely and unreservedly to be governed by Him, as well as to be saved by Him, to belong to His obedient as well as His believing people—all such "are justified from all things," they stand now, acquitted before God, every sin which hitherto sullied their conscience, and distressed their mind, and grieved the Holy Spirit of God, if, indeed, deeply repented of, and brought to "the blood of sprinkling," is pardoned east into the depths of the sea, whence it shall never again rise to shame, or to condemn them. Blessed promise! yet not too good, not too great, to be strictly and undeniably true. *All that believe*, says the Apostle, *are justified from all things*: not future, or he would have said "*shall be justified*," not uncertain, or he would have said, "*justified from some things*," but, blessed be God, present, and certain, and unlimited: "*are justified from all things*," are acquitted, are more than acquitted, are considered holy through the imputed

righteousness of Christ, are abundantly pardoned, and received into God's love, and shall be abundantly blessed, and received into God's glory.

40. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets: "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."—*Isa. li. 18; Hab. i. 6.*

Lest that come upon you, &c. The quotation is from Hab. i. 5, according to the Septuagint, with some unimportant variations. God threatened Israel by the prophets with the desolation and destruction of their country; but they would not believe till they experienced the truth of the prophecies in all their horrors. Here their descendants are warned of impending ruin, the dreadful nature of which Paul does not pretend to describe; but intimates that nothing could prevent it if they believed not in Jesus as the Messiah. The prophecy primarily referred to the captivity, and was also verified in the destruction of Jerusalem. But the language here employed is applicable to all ages, and denounces the wrath of God upon unbelief and rebellion: "*I work a work in your days,*" namely, a work of judgment, "*a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you,*" even although warned of the judgment, you will be so hardened and insensible as not to believe in it: you will cling to delusive hopes of safety, even when danger is at the door. Well might Paul apply these words as a warning to those who rejected the Gospel.

42. ¶ And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. 43. Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas; who speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. 44. ¶ And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together, to hear the word of God. 45. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. 46. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. 47. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

In the week between, or, in the Sabbath between.—*Chap. xiv. 22; Heb. vi. 11, 12, xii. 15.* **Chap. xviii. 6.* †*Matt. x. 6; Luke xxiv. 47; Rom. i. 16.* ‡*Deut. xxxii. 21; Matt. xxi. 43; Rom. x. 19.* §*Isa. xlix. 6.*

When the congregation was broken up, &c. After this religious assembly had been dismissed in the customary manner, a considerable number of Jews and proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas to their abode,

and were again addressed, in a still more unconstrained and familiar manner. They were urged to adhere with constancy and fidelity to the grace of God, by which they had already been influenced. Would that it were more the custom in these our days, for those who have been impressed by the public ministry, or have been led by what they have there heard, to inquire further into these great and important subjects, to go at once to their ministers: how many doubts might be removed, how many mistakes corrected, how many impressions corroborated, how much of zeal, comfort, and strength, imparted to the first weak, tottering steps in the Christian life, if there were, as there most obviously ought to be, this free communication between every Christian minister and his people! *Came almost the whole city together, &c.* The crowd was probably increased by the instructions and appeals of Paul and Barnabas during the interval. *Blaspheming, joined here with contradicting,* seems to intimate that the Apostles were the objects of it; the word denotes here to revile, to report slanderously, to defame. *Seeing ye put it from you,* through their own prejudice, stubbornness, and sin. *Judge, or adjudge yourselves unworthy,* that is, their conduct furnished matter or occasion of their condemnation as unworthy, unsuitable persons, in their temper and conduct, of enjoying eternal life. (See Rom. ii. 27.)

First have been spoken to you. This was necessary according to the commission which Christ gave the Apostles, implying strongly that they were first, in all places, to address the Jews, which plan they adhered to on this and every future occasion, (Matt. x. 5; Luke xxiv. 47.) There was a Divine propriety in this plan, for the Jews were possessed of the Old Testament Scriptures, and valued them; they were peculiarly qualified to judge of the truth of the Gospel: and their reception of it was calculated to rouse the attention of the Gentiles to consider it. And as this people were scattered among all nations where the Apostles went, they became proper witnesses to appeal to in respect of the prophecies, the fulfillment of which the Gospel announced. They were therefore, through the good providence of God,

instrumental in introducing the Gospel into all nations, and God honored them as His chosen people, by selecting from among them almost all the first ministers of the Word. *Lo, we turn to the Gentiles.* Two things are suggested here: 1. A lamentable condition for a people. These unbelieving Jews are left—the Apostles turn from them—the Gospel is withdrawn. A greater calamity this to a people than if the sun went down and left their heavens in sackcloth. Mercy will not always continue with a people. “My Spirit shall not always strive with man.” 2. An obvious duty for a ministry. It was right for these Gospel laborers to leave a rocky, sterile and unproductive soil, and try elsewhere. Their field is the world. Ministers are not only justified, but often bound to leave their sphere of labor. That ministry which is unsuccessful in one sphere, is often gloriously prosperous in another. These Apostles wrought wonders amongst the Gentiles.

For so hath the Lord commanded us, &c. The Lord Jesus gave them directions to witness to Him in Jerusalem and Judea, first, and after that, *to the utmost part of the earth, to preach the Gospel to every creature, to disciple all nations.* This is according to what was foretold in the Old Testament. When the Messiah, in the prospect of the infidelity of the Jews, was ready to say, *I have labored in vain*, He was told, to His satisfaction, that though *Israel was not gathered yet He should be glorious*; that His blood should not be shed in vain, nor His purchase made in vain, nor His doctrine preached in vain, nor His Spirit sent in vain. *I have set thee, not only raised thee up, but established thee, to be a light of the Gentiles, not only a shining light for a time, but a standing light, set thee for a light, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.* Those of any nation should be welcome to Him, some of every nation have heard of Him (Rom. x. 18), and *all nations shall at length become his kingdom.*

43. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.
*Chap. ii. 47; Rom. viii. 30.

They were glad—to perceive that their accession to Christ was matter of Divine ar-

rangement as well as Apostolic effort. *And glorified the word of the Lord*—by a cordial reception of it. *And as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed*—a very remarkable statement, which cannot, without force, be interpreted of anything lower than this, that a Divine ordination to eternal life is the cause, not the effect, of any man's believing. Leighton says, “Who can conceive whence this should be, that any man should believe, unless it be given him of God? And if given him, then it was His purpose to give it him, and if so, then it is evident that He had a purpose to save him; and for that end He gives faith: not therefore purposes to save, because man shall believe.” (See Rom. viii. 29; Acts ii. 47.)

49. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

It is not stated how long Paul and Barnabas remained in Pisidian Antioch, but probably it was for some time, during which they would preach the Gospel in the neighborhood. Christianity would also be diffused throughout the region by the zeal of their converts.

50. ¶ But the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.—2 Tim. iii. 11.

The Jews, being filled with envy. (Verse 45.) The words *devout* and *honorable* are not to be taken in a spiritual, but in a conventional sense, they were “devout” in the sense of being proselytes, “honorable” in the sense of social rank. It was the object of the crafty Jews to gain the men through the influence of the women, and thus effect the expulsion of the Apostles from the city. By women God's kingdom is often greatly advanced or retarded. *Expelled*—but there was no legal expulsion, for they visited Antioch again on their return. (Chap. xiv. 21.) Paul alludes to this persecution in 2 Tim. iii. 11. The powerful and successful preaching of the Gospel usually stirs up violent persecution against preachers of the Gospel.

51. But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.
*Mark vi. 11; Luke ix. 5; chap. xviii. 6.

Shaking off the dust of the feet imported disapprobation and rejection. The act derived its significance from the idea that

those renounced in this way were so unworthy that the very dust of their land was defiling. In taking this course Paul followed the direction of Christ, given in Matt. x. 14. "The people of the world" says *Starke*, "need convincing evidence that the truth is communicated to them, not for the sake of private advantage, but solely for the purpose of enabling them to obtain salvation. If they will not accept of heaven, let them retain the earth and its dust." *Iconium*, an important town of Asia Minor, referred by Xenophon to Phrygia, by Strabo to Lycaonia, by Ammian to Pisidia, while Pliny seems to represent it as the seat of a distinct provincial government. It is still a place of some importance under the corrupted name of *Conieh* or *Koniyeh*.

52. And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.—Matt. v. 12; 1 Thes. i. 6.

The new disciples, won from among the Gentiles into the new Israel, were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost, through their faithful continuance in the mighty grace of God which had been poured out upon them. The little flock did not, as is too often the case, disperse, or become lukewarm, as soon as the agents by whom they were brought to a saving knowledge of the truth were taken from them. Here we learn that God's grace, and the Church's joy, may and do increase under the greatest opposition and persecution of men. Infinite wisdom and sovereign power know how to overrule the contradiction of sinners, for glory to Himself and good to His Church.

1. Who were in the Church at Antioch? 2. What did the Holy Ghost say as they ministered to the Lord and fasted? 3. What did they then do? 4. Where did Barnabas and Saul go? 5. What is said of a "certain sorcerer?" 6. What did Saul say to him? 7. What is said of Paul in the synagogue of Antioch? 8. State some of the particulars of his address. 9. What impression did it make? 10. What is said of the spirit and conduct of the Jews? 11. What did Paul and Barnabas say? 12. What effect had their statement upon the Gentiles? 13. How were Paul and Barnabas treated? 14. How did they receive their persecution? 15. What is said of the disciples?

CHAPTER XIV.

1 *Paul and Barnabas are persecuted from Iconium.* 8 *At Lystra Paul healeth a cripple, whereupon they are reputed as gods.* 19 *Paul is stoned.* 21 *They pass through divers churches, confirming the disciples in faith and patience.* 26 *Returning to Antioch, they report what God had done with them.*

AND it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude, both of the Jews and also of the Greeks, believed.

Iconium. (See on xiii. 51.) *Both together.* How happy is it for ministers of Christ to walk and work together in unity. *So.* With such success. Persecution had increased their power. The orator of this world would experience but little satisfaction, unless it could be said that he "so spake that a multitude" applauded, that an admiring audience hung upon his lips: the minister of Christ, on the contrary, is anxious "so to speak that a great multitude may believe." His great desire is, that instead of the power of eloquence and the

charms of oratory, the power of Divine truth and the charm of Divine love may pervade every sentence which he delivers; that he himself may be overlooked and forgotten in the wondrous message of mercy and condescension which he brings, and that by the power of the Holy Ghost, those whom he addresses may be led to yield themselves willing captives, not to the strength of his arguments, but to the sweet attractions of his Master's love. *Greeks*, when opposed to Jews, means Gentiles who follow the religion and manners of the people of Greece. (Comp. verse 5.) The original word is frequently used in this sense. (See chap. xviii. 4, xix. 10, xx. 21; Gal. iii. 28; Col. iii. 11.) It is different from that which is translated *Grecians*. (Acts vi. 1.)

2. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil-affected against the brethren.

Unbelieving. (xvii. 5, xix. 9; John iii. 36; Rom. ii. 8, x. 21, xi. 30, 31, xv. 31; Heb. iii 18, xi. 31; 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8, 3, 1, 20, iv. 17.) It is often rendered *disobey*, (xxvii. 19.) *Stirred up.* (xiii. 50.) Not elsewhere. *Made evil-affected.* (vii. 6, 19, xii. 1, xviii. 10; 1 Pet. iii. 13.) He who is not willing to obey the truth himself, is easily tempted to seduce others from it. *Against the brethren.* That is, not merely against the two missionaries, but also against the newly-converted Christians in the city. Luke here applies this endearing name of "brethren" to the Christians, because nothing was more hateful to the unbelieving Jews, than that believing Jews and believing Gentiles should constitute *one* holy brotherhood in Christ.

3. Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of His grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands. —Matt. xv. 20; Heb. ii. 4.

Long time. Not thinking that they should yield to violence. *Speaking boldly in* (rather, *upon*) the Lord, *i. e.*, in dependence upon Him. It was their reliance on Christ that inspired them with so much courage. That minister who is afraid to speak and plead for Christ now, will be ashamed to look Him in the face at the great day. *Which gave testimony.* The Lord by the testimony of miracles confirmed the word of grace. *Unto the word of His grace.* A noble definition of the Gospel. The end of the ministry is to build up, as well as to bring in, and this is done by our constancy in preaching, and exemplariness in holy living.

4. But the multitude of the city was divided; and part held with the Jews, and part with the Apostles. —Chap. xxviii. 24.

This has ever been, and, doubtless, will ever be, the effect of a faithful, uncompromising display of the word of truth, unless all who hear it are indifferent to its dictates and deaf to its calls, to newness of heart and life; or unless, by the power of Divine grace, all who hear it are convinced and converted, it cannot be otherwise. Until the Gospel was introduced into Iconium, doubtless the city was perfectly quiet, and to the mere casual observer its state was infinitely preferable before the name of Christ was heard within its walls. But how did that deceitful calm appear to the heart-searching eye of

God? He knew it to be not the repose of peace, but the apathy of death. He knew that the very division which worldly men might deplore, and ignorant men might misunderstand, was the natural effect of the sifting nature of the word of truth—dividing, it is true, but dividing only the wheat from the chaff, the sheep from the goats, the people of the Most High from the deluded followers of their eternal enemy. This effect of the dissemination of Divine truth, so continually apparent during the first ages of the Gospel, is by no means infrequent at the present day, wherever it is plainly and faithfully promulgated.

5. And when there was an assault made, both of the Gentiles and also of the Jews, with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them; 6. They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra, and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about: 7. And there they preached the Gospel. —Matt. x. 23.

An *assault*, *impulse*, inclination, as in James iii. 4. *With their rulers, i. e.*, those of both nations, viz.: the heathen magistrates, and the officers of the synagogue. *Stone them*, as blasphemers of the law of Moses. (Chap. vi. 13.) *Ware*, or aware. The original order of the next clause is, *to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe.* Lycaonia was an inland tract of Asia Minor, lying between Phrygia, Galatia, Capadocia, and Cilicia. Lystra was in the southern part of it, thirty miles south of Iconium. The site of Lystra is supposed to have been recently discovered. Derbe was east of Lystra and south-east of Iconium, mentioned by Cicero as the residence of his friend Antipater. Some travelers suppose both the site and name to be preserved in the modern *Divle*. *The region*, &c. This denotes the places in the vicinity of Lystra and Derbe, hence the adjacent parts of Lycaonia. *They . . . fled*, In this they acted in perfect consistency with the spirit of Christ's religion, which by no means obliges its professors to court unnecessary dangers. There certainly are occasions when our duty would require us to make the most important sacrifices, even life itself, for the cause. But this is a very different thing from that indiscreet zeal, which, without considering times and seasons for acting or suffering, is equally ready to encounter all. Our Lord Himself sometimes escaped, even by

miracle, out of the hands of His enemies yet when His hour came, the hour proper for Him to suffer, He yielded like a lamb to the slaughter. And the Apostle Paul, of whose flight we now read, showed on other occasions the most undaunted resolution, prudence without timidity, courage without rashness. In order, therefore, to form a right judgment of the act, we must consider the attending circumstances. In the present case these were such, that no advantage, but on the contrary much mischief, was likely to arise from a different conduct, for "the multitude of the city was divided." (Verse 4.) Thus the probable, or rather certain, consequence of another meeting had been a civil commotion, to prevent which no method could be so effectual as what was adopted. And it contains a lesson of wisdom and moderation, of great advantage on all such, and all other less trying occasions. Nothing can more obstruct the progress of religion, than the upholding of any dissensions or animosities on the subject: for its mild and gracious influence is lost upon hearts raging with contention, and distracted with furious passions. Better is it to wait a more favorable moment, or if none such can be hoped, to fly the contest, and prove our faith by our lives: an argument at once cogent and inoffensive, conciliating and impressive, without clamor, debate or violence, and above all others best fitted to subdue unreasonable prejudices and strong antipathies. *There they preached.* The storm of persecution only extends the blessed effects of the Gospel.

8. [¶] And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:—*Chap. iii. 2.*

Lystra. (See on verse 6.) *Sat.* Being unable to walk, it is probable he sat in some place suitable for attracting the notice of the people and exciting their sympathy, like the blind man in John ix. 8, who "sat and begged," or the lame man in Acts iii. 2, who was daily laid at one of the temple-gates in Jerusalem. "Impotent and a cripple from his mother's womb!" Who has not, in his own experience, realized the affecting picture? And how sad is the condition of those, who are even now as helpless as this lame man, as help-

less in spiritual things, as much in darkness and impotency as when they were born, and who, in this sense, never yet have walked, and are unable even now to "run the way of God's commandments," having never yet received, because they have never yet truly sought to receive, the aid from on high, so to do!

9. The same heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed:—10. *Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet.*—And he leaped and walked.

^cMatt. ix. 23, 29. ^dIsa. xxxv. 6.

The same heard, &c. Rather, was listening to Paul's preaching. *Steadfastly beholding.* It is the part of spiritual prudence to observe the emotions of the hearers, especially of the afflicted. *Faith to be healed.* This faith seems to signify either a general belief of the power of Barnabas and Paul, or rather of Jesus Christ, whose ministers they were, to heal infirmities and diseases, or a persuasion that a cure would be performed upon himself in particular. In the former case, his faith was founded on the account which he had heard of the character and miracles of Christ, and of the extraordinary gifts which He had bestowed on His followers; in the latter, it was the effect of a supernatural impression upon his mind. This faith Paul perceived by the power of discerning spirits, or the power with which the Apostles were occasionally endowed, of discovering the thoughts and dispositions of men. *Said with a loud voice, &c.* The cure immediately followed the command. The disorder in the man's joints was removed, his limbs recovered strength, and, with the fondness so natural to a man who has recently acquired a new power, which he had long and earnestly desired, but despaired of ever possessing, he tried it in every way, leaping and walking. That the miracles of the Gospel were real miracles is evident from this important fact, that they were not done in a corner, but in the chief places of concourse, in the streets of cities, in the midst of assembled multitudes, in the presence of enemies as well as of friends.

11. And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, the gods are come down to us, in the likeness of men. 12. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter: and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. 13. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.

^eChap. xxviii. 6. ^fDan. ii. 46.

The complete restoration of the helpless cripple to the use of his limbs, drew all eyes toward men who possessed more than mortal powers, and immediately a persuasion gained ground among the people, that the mysterious strangers were no other than gods, who had "descended in the likeness of men." It was the universal belief of the Greeks and Romans, that their deities frequently condescended to visit the world, disguised in human form. Innumerable passages in the works of the poets will occur to the classical reader, in which gods and goddesses are described as negotiating with men, and taking a most active interest in what is going on here below; and those incarnations are not to be considered as the wild invention of the poets—an ingenious machinery by which they carry on the different parts of their story, but as objects of the popular belief which the poets took as they found it, and merely applied it to embellish the creations of their genius. Moreover, it was a part of the fanciful theology of the heathens, that in such expeditions generally the deities traveled in pairs, and that Jupiter and Mercury were inseparable companions. Hence we may perceive the foundation of the opinion entertained by the Lycaonians, that the Apostles were Jupiter and Mercury. Not doubting that Paul, from the copiousness and persuasive power of his oratory, was the fabled god and patron of eloquence, they concluded from his always having the attendance of that little active deity, that the other grave and majestic stranger could be no other than Jupiter.

The whole city being in a state of excitement at the arrival of such unexpected visitors, it was proposed to honor them, according to the idolatrous customs of the place, by offering sacrifice, and in the brief notice given by the Evangelist of this strange expression of popular admiration, we meet with several of the peculiarities of heathen worship. The temples were usually built in the suburbs, and the images of the gods placed before the gates of the cities, and as the number or grandeur of the statues erected to the honor of the patron deity of the place was usually far greater than those of any other object of

their worship, the image of Jupiter, who was regarded as the tutelar deity of that town, would stand in stately majesty at the chief gate of the city. Thither, accordingly, the priest of that divinity directed the oxen to be driven, whose blood was to stream at the feet of the statue, in honor of the occasion, and whose brows, as well as those of the crowd who followed, were adorned with chaplets of flowers. These garlands were formed of a wreath of cypress, or pine leaves, or the blossom of any particular tree that might be consecrated to the god for whose honor the sacrifice was intended. No one appeared without the distinction of the flowery coronet, as that would have thrown dishonor on the festive occasion; whereas, every one decorating their brows with the appropriate garlands, was supposed by that token to take part in the sacrifice that was offered, and to render homage to the object of reverence, by strewing his altar, or the neck of his image, with sweet-scented flowers.

14. Which when the Apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, 15. And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: 16. Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

17. ¹Mat. xxvi. 65. ²Chap. x. 26; James v. 17; Rev. xix. 10. ³1 Sam. xii. 21. ⁴1 Kings xvi. 13; Jer. xiv. 22; John ii. 8; 1 Cor. viii. 4. ⁵1 Thes. i. 9. ⁶Gen. i. 1; Ps. xxxiii. 6, cxlv. 6; Rev. xiv. 7. ⁷Ps. lxxxi. 12; chap. xvii. 30.

When Barnabas and Paul noticed, from the preparations and the preparatory words of the priest, what the meaning was of this cry in the Lycaonian dialect, which was at first unintelligible to them, then they rent their clothes, being actually filled with horror at the heathen idolatry, and at finding themselves (poor fellow-sinners) in danger of being looked upon as gods, thus affording a palpable proof that they were mere flesh and blood, as other men, and throwing aside all godlike demeanor, and putting an end to the arrangements for the offering, they rushed out among the people, and cried out to them. *Like passions.* Obnoxious to the same common infirmities. This is also the meaning, James v. 17, and nothing could be more absurd, or injurious to the character of these holy men, than to imagine that it refers, in either of the places, to anything of ungoverned passion. Turn

from these vanities, that is, from these *idols*, and *false gods*. *Unto the living God*, &c. The Apostle thus spake to the ignorant barbarians among whom he was, in reference to the consideration of God as the glorious object of our worship. "Thus doth the word magnify Him above the inanimate, senseless deities of the pagan world, who were wont to worship stocks and stones and the works of their own hands, and bow down and pray to a god that could not save. And how should we magnify to ourselves the object of our worship, under this notion, and admire and bless God that He hath revealed Himself to us, so as we are not left altogether ignorant whom we are to worship, that we do not worship altogether we know not what. We know the object of our worship carries in it the reason of its own being worshiped, which renders it a rational worship. He is the living and so the true God whom we worship."—*Howe*. *Who*. An anticipation of an objection, lest the Lycaonians should suppose that, had these things been true they would have heard them from their parents. *Times*, literally, *generations*, *past*, departed, gone by. *Suffered*, permitted, or allowed, not approved, much less required, but did not hinder or prevent. *All nations*, *i. e.*, all but one to whom He granted an exclusive revelation. The multitude of those in error does not remove the error. *To walk in their own ways*. God bestowed on them neither the law nor the prophets. Yet left them without excuse in not acknowledging God. (Rom. i. 20, 21.) Though the law was silent, He gave them whence they might learn to know Him. "If we attend," says *Plotinus*, "to the voice of all created nature, it will loudly proclaim its origin from the deity, not from the Cretan Jupiter, or the Arcadian Mercury, but from the unknown God, whom Paul preached to the Athenians." To suffer either nation or person to walk without control or check, from word or rod, from ordinances or providences, in the ways of sin and wickedness, is a very dreadful and tremendous judgment. (See on next verse.)

17. *Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

*Rom. i. 20. *Job* v. 10; *Ps.* cxlviii. 8; *Matt.* v. 45.

Nevertheless, he left not himself, &c. Al-

though the Gentiles in past generations had no written revelation, yet they were not left in complete darkness; God left among them the witnesses of His existence and perfections in the works of creation, and in His benevolent dealings with them. (See Rom. i. 19, 20.) *In that he did good*, &c. With these words the Apostle would turn the attention of the Lystrians from the false gods they worshiped to the real Giver of every good. They were indebted for the blessings of life, which they ascribed to Jupiter and Mercury, to the living God. Jupiter was regarded as the giver of rain and fruitful seasons, and Mercury, as the god of merchandise, was looked upon as the dispenser of food. The mention of rain in particular, as one of the clearest manifestations of the Divine benignity, was in accordance with the old Jewish saying, that "there were three keys—of life, rain and resurrection—always kept in God's hand," not given to any delegate or proxy, as indicating a more direct or special act of power on the part of the Supreme. The apparent irregularity with which it falls, the difficulty of foretelling it, and its absolute necessity to the prolonged existence of either animate or vegetable creatures, single the rain out as worthy of emphasis in this brief record of Heaven's gifts to man. "The circuit of the waters," in their wonderful passage from the sea into the atmosphere by evaporation, their condensation into clouds and rain, their fall upon the earth into streams and mighty rivers, and their return to the great reservoir of the ocean from which they issued in an invisible form, is to every devout mind a perpetual miracle of celestial power and goodness. (*Jer.* v. 24.) "If we hearken to the voice of the world," says an ancient philosopher, "we shall hear it say nothing but God hath made me." It will be observed that Paul in this discourse, as well as in that at Athens (*Acts* xvii. 23-31), to which this bears a striking resemblance, dwells upon those truths which his hearers could appreciate, he builds upon the principles of natural religion, thus affording to all succeeding missionaries an example for imitation in their reasoning with the heathen. "In this appears the goodness of God; consid-

ering how hateful sin is to Him, and how powerful He is to punish it, how easy were it, if it pleased Him, in one moment to cut off all the ungodly, high and low, throughout the whole world! Yet He bears, and forbears to punish! Oh! what a world of sin is every day committed in nations, in cities, and villages, yea, in families, which he doth not strike with present judgments, and not only forbears to punish, but multiplies His common mercies on them, 'sun and rain and fruitful seasons.'—*Leighton*.

13. And with these sayings, scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

Scarce restrained they, &c. (See on x. 26.) In view of the conduct and language of the Apostles, as now stated, observe, 1. Their benevolence. Nothing could have been more truly benevolent than their ardent concern for the spiritual good of this people, their grief and distraction, for the perverse impiety which they were about to commit, and their strenuous endeavors to restrain them from the deed, by making known to them the true God, to whom alone religious homage is due. 2. Their humility. This appears in putting themselves upon the same level with those poor ignorant persons, who would have offered sacrifice to them; "We also are men of like passions with you!" Instead of feeling the least complacency in the honors designed them, they betray nothing but horror and shame, at having any part, however unwilling, in the profane attempt. 3. Their zeal for the honor of God. This is conspicuous through every part of the transaction. This, indeed, seems to have been the prime object in their thoughts, and chief cause of their violent emotion. To witness that adoration paid to the creature, which only belongs to the Creator, was shocking in their sight, as offering violence to the first principles of rational piety.

19. ¶ And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. 20. Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe, 42 Cor. xi. 25.

Antioch and Iconium, from both which places Paul and Barnabas had been expelled by the same influence. (See on verse 5, and chap. xiii. 50.) *Persuaded the people, &c.* The fickleness, as well as the

emptiness of human applause, is well illustrated by the history before us. The same multitude who could be satisfied with nothing short of paying Divine honors to Paul, and even worshipping him as a god, in a few short days treated him as the worst of malefactors, persecuted him, as they hoped and believed, even unto the death, "stoned him, and drew him out of the city, supposing him to have been dead." He had swooned away, and lay for a time senseless. "*Howbeit*," continues the Evangelist, "as the disciples (those converted at Lystra) stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city." Thus realizing, by his own repeated experience, the truth of the affecting description which he himself has bequeathed to us, "We are troubled on every side, but not distressed, we are perplexed, but not in despair, persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, but not destroyed." To this instance of stoning the Apostle refers in 2 Cor. xi. 25. The wounds inflicted on him at this time may have left some of those scars on his body to which he alludes in Gal. vi. 17, as proof that he was Christ's servant.

21. ¶ And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch. 22. Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. *¶* *Howbeit* made many disciples. *¶* Chap. xiii. 43. *¶* Rom. viii. 17; 2 Tim. iii. 12.

What fortitude, what patience, what magnanimity, appear in the Apostles on this occasion! How fit to be chosen the witnesses of Christ's resurrection! So far from being deterred by the violence they suffered, they venture, not only into other churches and places, but return again to the very Lystra where they had encountered such bitter and cruel hostility. *Confirming, &c.* The office of the Apostles was two-fold. To sow the seed of instruction in the mind—to regenerate men by the Divine word to a heavenly light—this was their first object. When this was done, they, secondly, endeavored to confirm their new converts—to lead them on—to corroborate and strengthen them—to teach them to bear the trials, and bring forth the fruits which it was the end and design of Christianity to produce. They confirmed the souls of the disciples during

this visit, by deepening the impressions of Divine truth, instructing them more fully in the way of God, guarding them against temptation, and fortifying them against the impression of fear. *Exhorting them, &c.* They persuaded them, by all possible arguments, to adhere to the doctrine of Christianity, to hold it fast, to cleave to it with persevering faith, to yield themselves up fully to its influence. Men may hold Christianity to be true, and yet never be under its proper influence, never continue in the faith. *And that we must through much tribulation, &c.* The Apostles guarded the disciples from being turned away from the profession and practice of Christianity by tribulation trials, various worldly discouragements and persecutions. It was a new thing to these converts to suffer for Christ: the Saviour had only just begun to put His cup into their hands. All Christians must suffer, though not in the same degree or under similar circumstances, with those of the first age. Through much tribulation they must enter the kingdom of God. There is a kingdom before them, and only one way to enter it, and that is by tribulation, and not by tribulation thinly scattered in the midst of flowery paths, but "much tribulation," thickly sown and continually returning.

23. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

When they had ordained them elders, literally, "chosen by show of hands." On this the *Rev. David Brown, D. D.*, observes: "But as that would imply that this was done by the Apostles' own hands, many render the word, as in our own version, 'ordained.' Still, as there is no evidence in the New Testament that the word had then lost its proper meaning, as this is beyond doubt its meaning in 2 Cor. viii. 19, and as there is indisputable evidence that the concurrence of the people was required in all elections to sacred office in the earliest ages of the Church, it is perhaps better to understand the words to mean, 'when they had made a choice of elders,' i.e., superintended such choice on the part of the disciples: *and had prayed with fasting*, literally, 'fastings;' thus set-

ting them solemnly apart. This last clause confirms our interpretation of the former. For if 'ordination' was by prayer and fasting (see chap. xiii. 3), why should it be said they first 'ordained elders,' and after that 'prayed with fasting?' Whereas, if the first clause refers to the *choice* and the second to the *ordination*, all is natural. *They commended* ('committed') *them, i. e.*, all those Churches, *to the Lord—Jesus."*

24. And after they had passed throughout Pisidia they came to Pamphylia. 25. And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia: 26. And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God, for the work which they fulfilled.

^aChap. xiii. 1, 3. ^bChap. xv. 40.

We have already indicated the sites and circumstances of Pisidia, Pamphylia and Perga. All these places, with the exception of Attalia, they had visited before on their way out. At Perga, however, they had only time to land on that occasion (see chap. xiii. 13); now in returning they "preached the word" there. *Attalia* was a city of Pamphylia, at the mouth of the river Catarrhactes, built by Attalus Philadelphus, king of Pergamus, and is still a seaport of considerable size and commerce, under a slightly altered name. *And thence sailed to Antioch.* Not, of course, the Antioch of verse 21, which was in Pisidia, but the city of this name in Syria (chap. xiii. 1.) They had been absent, according to the computations of some, about three years on this first Apostolic journey; during which time they had visited Salamis and Paphos, on the island of Cyprus, and Perga, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Attalia, and other places, in three of the provinces of Asia Minor, viz.: Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia. *From whence they had been recommended, &c.* Whence, having been committed to the favor of God, they were sent forth. (See xiii. 3.) *For the work of missions, which work they (now) fulfilled*, completed, brought to a conclusion, by returning to the point from which they had set out. Such honor attended Jesus, when He went to the Father: "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." (John xvii. 4.) And nothing but such a faithful performance of the work assigned to us, can bear honorable testimony in our behalf, when we depart from the world.

27. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed ^{all} that God had done with them, and how he had opened ^{the} door of faith unto the Gentiles.

^aChap. xv. 4; ¹1 Cor. xvi. 9; 2 Cor. ii. 12; Rev. iii. 8.

Rehearsed, &c. Having called the Church together, they declared the great things which God had done with them and by them, with the intention, no doubt, that the Church might join with them in their praises and thanksgivings, who had before assisted them with their prayers and supplications. They desired that God might have the entire praise and glory from them. We should not observe silence respecting the works and wonders which God has wrought, but, in sincere humility, proclaim them aloud, so that others, besides ourselves, may praise the goodness and almighty power of God. *And how he had opened the door of faith, i. e.,* had given them access to the Gospel, participation in its blessings, as well as to the Jews; not

that he had opened to the Apostles a door of access to the heathen. This metaphor is a favorite one with Paul (1 Cor. xvi. 9, 2 Cor. ii. 12, Col. iv. 3), and may have become familiar to Luke in his intercourse with him. God opens three doors, when any work that leads to the salvation of men is performed—the door of the teacher's mouth, the door of the hearer's ear, and that of his heart. Utterly insufficient are all external means, how excellent soever in themselves, to operate savingly upon men's minds, unless the Holy Spirit opens the understanding as well as the minister opens the Scriptures.

28. And there they abode long time with the disciples.

Long time, literally, not a little time. How long is uncertain, depending on the time occupied by the missionary journey, but probably two or three years (A. D. 49, 50).

1. What is said of the preaching in Iconium? 2. What course did the unbelieving Jews pursue? 3. What is said of "the multitude of the city?" 4. Describe the "certain man at Lystra." 5. What did Paul say to him? 6. Why did he say it? 7. What was the result? 8. What did the people say? 9. What did the Apostles do and say? 10. What is recorded of certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium? 11. What is said of Paul after being stoned? 12. Where did the Apostles then go? 13. To what places did they return? 14. For what purposes? 15. State the subsequent course of the Apostles. 16. Where did they abide long with the disciples?

CHAPTER XV.

1 *Great dissension ariseth touching circumcision.* 6 *The apostles consult about it.* 22 *and send their determination by letters to the churches.* 30 *Paul and Barnabas, thinking to visit the brethren together, fall at strife, and depart asunder.*

AND certain men which came down from Judea, taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.—Gal. ii. 12. ¹John vii. 22. ^cLev. xii. 3.

Some persons from Judea taught the brethren in Antioch, that "unless they were circumcised after the manner of Moses, they could not be saved." The law of Moses was virtually abolished by the death of Christ, in which its design was accomplished, but few among the Jewish believers were apprised of the expiration of its authority. The simple observance of its rites, however, was not yet unlawful, if it proceeded from a principle of conscience, mistaken, indeed, but re-

vering what was still supposed to be obligatory, or from a charitable intention to avoid giving offense to the weak. But those men taught, that obedience to the law of Moses was indispensably necessary to salvation, or that circumcision, and the other duties, ceremonial and moral, which it enjoined, were the express condition of our acceptance with God.

2. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem, unto the apostles and elders, about this question.—Gal. ii. 1.

As the doctrine these men taught was subversive of the Gospel, Paul and Barnabas opposed them, and much contention ensued. It was found impossible to settle the controversy, even by the authority of Paul, to whom the false teachers refused

to submit, and it was therefore determined to refer it to the Apostles and elders in Jerusalem. Besides, it was not a local controversy, arising from the peculiar circumstances of the place, but might be agitated in any other city or district where the Jews resided, and for this reason prudence required that it should be finally decided in a higher assembly than that of the rulers of Antioch, an assembly which would command the respect and obedience of all the churches in the world. There is no doubt that it might have been determined in Antioch, in which, besides Paul and Barnabas, both men of high rank in the Church, there were prophets and teachers competent to manage such affairs but the opposing party was refractory, and there was no hope of reducing them to silence except by the sentence of a court from which there was no appeal. *Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, &c.* Whether these were delegates from the other churches of Syria, and from those of Cilicia, in which this controversy was agitated does not appear. *About this question.* It is evident that, in this case, there was not merely a reference for advice, but submission to a sentence.

3. And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

¹ Rom. xv. 24; ² 1 Cor. xvi. 6, 11; ³ John 6. ⁴ Chap. xiv. 27. ⁵ Luke xv. 7, 10.

Being brought on their way, &c. When the Apostles traveled as ministers of Jesus, the Church helped them on their way. This help may refer to pecuniary aid (see Acts xviii. 3, xx. 34; 1 Cor. ix. 1-15; 2 Cor. xi. 9; Acts xxviii. 10), to the deputation of suitable companions (see 1 Cor. ix. 5; Acts xxviii. 25), and to the prayers of the Church (see 2 Thes. iii. 1; Acts xii. 5). *Passed through Phenice and Samaria.* (See on chap. xi. 19.) As Galilee is not mentioned, they traveled probably along the coast as far south as Ptolemais (xxi. 7), and then crossed the plain of Esdraelon into Samaria. *Declaring the conversion, &c.* The Gentiles had been in great darkness, but were turned round to the light of the Lord. (Eph. v. 8.) They had been slaves to sin and Satan, but had turned to God as their rightful governor. (1 Cor. viii. 5, 6.) And they had worshiped dumb idols, but

were turned round, and adored the only living and true God. In short, they turned to God in their hearts and lives, and became new creatures in Christ Jesus. (2 Cor. v. 17.) *Great joy* was caused by these reports *unto all the brethren* in the various towns on their way. Men of different nations, while they remain in a state of nature, are at enmity with each other, Christianity promotes a spirit of love to all mankind, and this spirit rejoices in the conversion of sinners wherever they are found. The enmity which nations have cherished against each other, has been productive of bloody and long-continued wars, in which myriads of the human race have perished by the sword. And while this diabolical principle is cherished there can be no settled peace; the nations will curse each other with bitterness, and rejoice in each other's calamity. But Christianity plants benevolent principles in the heart of man, and is calculated to unite all the nations of the earth. When our souls are opened to receive its healing influences, we become new men, our love is stretched out to every human being, and we rejoice in the happiness of every child of man.

4. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.—Chap. xxi. 19.

Were come to Jerusalem. This was Paul's third visit to Jerusalem after his conversion, and on this occasion took place what is related in Gal. ii. 1-10. *Were received, &c.,* evidently at a meeting formally convened for this purpose: the deputation being one so influential, and from a Church of such note. *They declared all, &c.* (See on chap. xiv. 27.)

5. ¶ But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. 6. And the apostles and elders came together, for to consider of this matter.

¹ Verse 1. ² Matt. xviii. 20.

But there rose up saying, &c. Some regard this as Luke's own statement of what happened at Jerusalem, after Paul and Barnabas had made their report. Others consider these as a part of the speech of Paul and Barnabas, in which they relate the cause of their coming to Jerusalem. (See verses 1, 2.) *That it was needful, &c.* (See on verse 1.) *And the Apostles and elders came together for to consider of*

this matter. To canvass the arguments on both sides, and to pass a final sentence. In the form of procedure, there was nothing different from what may be practiced, and often is practiced, in other assemblies. No person rose and pronounced the dictates of inspiration, by which the rest were overawed, but Apostles and elders consulted together on equal terms, and the decree was the result of their united deliberations. It was founded upon a well-known fact, corroborated by other facts, which were brought forward in the course of the inquiry, and upon an argument drawn from the Scriptures. It appears from the following verses, 12 and 22, that there were other persons present, besides the Apostles and elders, and the commissioners from Antioch, who are called "the multitude," and "the whole Church." Nothing, however, can be plainer, than that they were present to hear, not to deliberate and judge; for, besides that the reference was not made to them, Luke expressly affirms, that none came together to consider this matter but the "Apostles and elders." As the question, however, was of the greatest importance, affecting the interests of the Gentile believers, and prescribing the terms of their admission to the privileges of the Gospel, it could not but excite general attention.

7. ¶ And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel, and believe. 8. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; 9. And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. 10. Now, therefore, why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11. But we believe, that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

¹Matt. xvi. 18, 19; chap. x. 20. ²Chap. i. 24. ³Heb. ix. 13, 14; 1 Peter i. 22. ⁴Gal. v. 1. ⁵Rom. iii. 24; Eph. ii. 8; Titus iii. 4, 5.

Peter rose up, &c. How long the "much disputing" continued, and what was said before Peter arose, we are not told. True to his nature, he came first to the front. Nor could any of them indeed have stronger claims to the first speech on this occasion. He was probably the most aged, had been the most accustomed to public speaking, and was, as some think, the first to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. It is noteworthy that in speaking in this assembly there is no assumption of superiority on Peter's part. He does not take

upon himself to sum up the arguments or to pronounce a judgment. He speaks only as one of their number, strongly as he would speak, but with deference to the common judgment. In his speech he shows that Jewish ritualism was unnecessary, inexpedient, and contrary to his faith. *Made choice among us* (the Apostles) *that by my mouth, &c.* The meaning is not necessarily that no heathen had heard or embraced the Gospel till Peter preached it to them, but that it was he whom God appointed to convey the Gospel to them under circumstances which showed it to be manifestly His will that they should be admitted into the Church without circumcision. *Which knoweth the hearts*—who regards the heart, not the flesh. *Bare them witness, giving, &c.* He testified by giving them the Holy Spirit, that pleased him: (Gal. iii. 5.) *And put no difference, &c.* He accepts a Jew as well as a Gentile, and a Gentile as well as a Jew, without difference, makes no difference, purifying their hearts by faith. If they have such an operative faith as shall be accompanied and followed with heart purity, there shall be no difference that one was a Jew, and the other was a Gentile. The heart is the seat of purity. Faith, or obeying the truth, works this purity, but the Holy Ghost works that faith (verse 8.) *Tempt ye God, i. e.,* put Him to the proof, try His patience and forbearance, by requiring further evidence of what He has already made so plain. "The attempt of imposing anything upon the disciples but what was necessary," says *Howe*, "is judged a tempting of God, a bringing the matter to a trial of skill with Him, whether He could keep the Church quiet, when they took so direct a course to distemper and trouble it." *But we believe, &c.* The Apostle here presents still another consideration, namely, that to Jews, as well as to Gentiles, salvation could come only through the unmerited favor of Jesus Christ. No outward obedience of *Jews* could purchase for them salvation. *Jews*, as well as Gentiles, were wholly dependent on the grace of Christ. This is a precious summary of the Gospel, which Peter here gives. It comprehends the confession that Christ is the true God, for Christ can confer saving

grace only in case He is the Lord, to whom all power in heaven and in earth is given. "By grace alone"—this is the badge by which the children of the family recognize each other. Hence Melancthon says, that the doctrine of justification by grace, is "the highest and most important article in the Christian creed, the only key to the whole Bible, without which the troubled conscience can find no true, lasting, and sure consolation." *Even as they.* The fathers and prophets precede the triumphal chariot of Christ—we follow it. Their faith and our own, is the same; the objects of *their* faith belonged to the future—the same objects of *our* faith belong to the past.

12. Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.—Chap. xiv. 27.

All the multitude. (See on verse 6.) The speech of Peter had produced such a deep impression that there was a breathless "silence" when he sat down, and when Barnabas and Paul arose. Barnabas is mentioned first, for probably he spoke first, as being better known in Jerusalem than Paul. Their speeches are not recorded; only so much is said about them as to show that they were historic—a recitation of the leading events connected with their missionary tour to the Gentiles. They related "what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them." They did not parade these as their own achievements, but ascribed them all to God.

13. And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: 14. Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15. And to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written, 16. After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: 17. That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

1 Luke ii. 31, 32. 2 Amos ix. 11, 12.

James answered. It seems plain from this that the matter was first determined by any *authority* in Peter. It is very possible that James resided in Jerusalem more constantly than any other of the Twelve, and had special charge of the Church there, not however as an ordinary pastor, much less as a diocesan bishop, but as a resident Apostle. *Hearken unto me*, or simply *hear me*, *i. e.*, me too, or me also, hear what I, as well as they who have

already spoken, have to say upon the subject. This request is very far from favoring the notion that James spoke with superior authority. The discourse of James consists of three parts: *Exordium*, in a form of expression calculated to conciliate the good-will of his auditors (verse 13.) *Narration*, with its confirmation from the prophets; (verses 16, 17, and in verse 18, the *reason*); *Proposition*, which is, The Gentiles are not to be compelled to Judaism, but are only to abstain from certain things (verse 19), since Judaism cannot be entirely abolished all at once. (Verse 20). *Simeon hath declared*, &c.—a recapitulation of the speech of Peter. Simeon is a Hebrew variation of Simon, the Jewish and family name of Peter. *And to this agree the words of the prophets*, &c. There is a considerable difference between this and the original passage in Amos ix. 11, 12. Perhaps we may account for the difference, by saying that James intended to give the sense, not the exact words, of the prophecy, and in respect of the sense, the two passages perfectly harmonize. In both, God promises "to raise up the fallen tabernacle of David," or to raise his family, when sunk into obscurity, to greater glory than ever, by the birth of Jesus Christ, who should ascend the throne of that monarch, and enjoy everlasting dominion. What would be the consequence, or rather, what was the design of this dispensation? It is thus expressed by James, "That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called;" in which words, the conversion of the Gentiles is plainly foretold. It is thus expressed by the Prophet: "That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen which are called by my name;" that is, in consequence of its exaltation, the family of David shall "possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen;" an event which was accomplished when, in the words of the Psalmist, "the heathen were given to Christ for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession," and being converted to the faith, they were called by the name of the Lord. The passages, it will be perceived, differ only in sound.

18. Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world. 19. Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: 20. But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. 21. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him; being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day.

Num. xxiii. 19; Isa. xlv. 10. ^{v1} Thes. i. 9. ^{vEx. xx. 4, 5;} 1 Cor. viii. 1, &c., x. 24; Rev. iii. 14, 20, ix. 20. ^{v1} Cor. vi. 9, 18; Col. iii. 5; 1 Thes. iv. 3. ^{v1} Lev. xvii. 14; Deut. xii. 16, 20. ^{v1} Chap. xiii. 15, 27.

Known unto God, &c. The calling of the Gentiles is a certain truth founded on the omniscience of God. It is not an unexpected event: it is what He Himself had foretold. The whole train of events, from the creation to the general judgment, was present to the mind of God from eternity. In the shifting scenes of human affairs, He sees only the evolution of His own plan. *Wherefore my sentence is*, literally, *therefore, I judge*, "I give my opinion." *That we trouble not*, by imposing upon them circumcision and the ceremonies of the Mosaic law. *But that we write unto them*, enjoin by an epistle. James proposes, for the sake of peace, the abstinence from certain things on the part of the Gentiles, namely, from these four particulars: the pollution of idols, fornication, things strangled, and blood. *Pollutions*. The Gentiles, after the sacrifices were concluded, and a portion of the consecrated victim (the thing here intended) had been assigned to the priests, used to hold a sacrificial feast in honor of the god, either in the temple or in private houses, and then ate the residue of the flesh: or even from avarice or poverty, salted and laid up the remnant for future use, or even gave it to the butchers to sell in the shambles. *Fornication*. The Gentiles accounted fornication, or whoredom, as a thing lawful or indifferent. So *Terence*. They committed it in their temple, at their festivals, &c. Notorious are their Bacchanalia, Lupercalia, the rites of the Bona Dea, &c., in which the Gentiles indulged with impunity to the honor of Bacchus, the Bona Dea, &c. Comp. Num. xxv. 1, &c. *Things strangled*. The flesh of such animals as were killed in snares, and whose blood was not poured forth, was forbidden to the Israelites. Hence all strangled animals were regarded as unclean. *And from blood*. Nothing was more strictly prohibited to the Jews than blood; because in the blood was the life of the animal, and because it was the blood

that was consecrated to make an atonement. (Lev. xvii. 10-14.) The heathen were accustomed to drink the blood of the animals at their sacrifices. *For Moses of old time, &c.* This verse assigns a reason for the proposed restrictions, and that is, that the Jewish believers, being so accustomed to hear the things in question forbidden, were naturally sensitive in regard to them, and hence it was necessary, for the sake of peace and harmony, that the heathen converts should refrain from such practices. None will dispute that charity toward men, as well as love to God, will dispose believers to regard the precepts contained in this injunction, (which was sanctioned by the Holy Spirit, verse 28), when placed in circumstances any way similar to those in which the disciples were placed when it was first delivered. In regard to abstaining from fornication and pollutions of idols, there can be no dispute, for a fornicator or idolator, cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and as to the other prohibitions, they are confessedly, considered in themselves, distinct from Divine authority, of less importance. But there was a Divine propriety in prohibiting them all, for they were, in fact, as already stated, incorporated in that system of idolatry from which the Gentiles had been lately delivered. To renounce these practices, was, in effect, to renounce the whole system of idolatry, of which they made a conspicuous part; to adhere to any part of idolatry was equally inconsistent with the will of God, as it was opposed to Christian fellowship with the Jews, who held the whole system of idolatry in the utmost degree of abhorrence. And when they did so, they acted in perfect consistency with the spirit and sentiment of those Scriptures which were read in their synagogues every Sabbath day. (See on verse 29.)

22. ¶ Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barnabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren.—Chap. i. 23.

It pleased, or seemed good to. The apostles and elders, not as independent bodies, nor as one body separate from the Church itself, but acting in harmonious conjunction with the whole church, as there represented, not by human delegation but by

Divine appointment. *The whole church* cannot mean all the members of the Church in Jerusalem, for as we are certain that there were in that city many thousands who believed, it is utterly improbable that so great a multitude should have been permitted to meet in public, by a government ill-affected to them and their cause. *Chosen men*, men selected from among themselves, i. e., members of the mother Church and probably belonging to the number of its elders. *Judas surnamed Barsabas*—therefore not the Apostle “Judas the brother of James” (chap. i. 13), surnamed “Thaddeus” (Matt. x. 3); nor can it be shown that he was a brother of “Joseph called Barsabas.” (Chap. i. 23.) But nothing is known of him beyond what is here said. *And Silas*—the same as “Silvanus” in the Epistles. He became Paul’s companion on his second missionary journey. (Verse 40.) *Chief men among the brethren*—selected purposely as such, to express the honor in which they held the Church at Antioch and the deputies they had sent to the council, and as the matter affected all Gentile converts, to give weight to the written decision of this important assembly. (See on verse 32.)

23. And they wrote letters by them after this manner: The apostles, and elders, and brethren, send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia: 24. Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: 25. It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul 26. Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. 28. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: 29. That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well. 30. So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: 31. Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation. 32. And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them. 33. And after they had tarried there a space they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles. 34. Notwithstanding, it pleased Silas to abide there still. 35. Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

*Verse 1. ¹Gal. v. 12. ²Gal. v. 4. ³Gal. ii. 4. ⁴Chap. xiii. 50, xiv 19. ⁵Words. ⁶Rev. ii. 24. ⁷Verse 20. ⁸Cor. xi. 9. ⁹John i. 27. ¹⁰John v. 21; Jude xx. 21. ¹¹Chap. xiv. 23. ¹²Cor. xvi. 11; 2 John 10.

And they wrote letters by them. Greek: “having written.” It does not mean that they wrote more than one epistle. *Send greeting, &c.* The controversy rages principally in the places here mentioned,

though the letter was intended for all in similar circumstances. (See on chap. xvi. 4.) The substance of the letter we have already noticed in the speech of James. (See on verses 13–21.) This circular letter rehearsed the occasion of its promulgation, and directed its readers for further information as to its verbal statements to its bearers. *The apostles and elders and brethren* concurred in it. In it, 1. The persons (verse 1) who started this controversy are sharply reprov'd. 2. Paul and Barnabas, for their courage and constancy, are highly commended. 3. Judas and Silas (see on verse 22) are mentioned to testify that this decree was not forced or counterfeited. 4. It is stated that it would conduce much to their advantage to have this injunction duly observed. 5. The Divine authority of the decree is affirmed: *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, &c., i. e., it seemed good unto us, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, whose direction and dictation we have followed, not to impose unnecessary things upon you. Necessary things.* Two of them, viz., abstaining from fornication and from things offered to idols, were of a simple and absolute necessity; the other two, namely, abstaining from things strangled, and from blood, were of an accidental and temporary necessity, for the present time, and to avoid giving scandal to the weak Jews, till they should be better informed, and better understand their liberty in Christ. (See 1 Tim. iv. 4; Titus i. 15; also on verses 19 and 20.) *Ye shall do well, what is right and commendable.* (See x. 33; 3 John v. 6.) Even when they mention those few points which they deem necessary, they employ very moderate terms (“Ye shall do well”), as compared with the violent threats of the others (“Ye cannot be saved,” verse 1). How tenderly we should deal with the consciences of men! *Fare ye well, literally, be ye strong (or healthy),* corresponding to the Latin word *valete*. They could, with great propriety, say “Fare ye well,” to brethren who had found eternal life by faith in the Lord Jesus, and whose fraternal love was the rule of their conduct in all the affairs of this life. “Fare ye well,” be faithful to Jesus. *When they were dismissed . . . They therefore, being dismissed.* Probably there

was a solemn and formal dismissal, as when Paul and Barnabas were sent forth on their missionary journey. (Chap. xiii. 3.) *When they had gathered the multitude*—the whole mass or body of believers, called *the church*, in chap. xiv. 27. Paul and Barnabas, Barnabas and Silas, enter the assembly, and deliver the *letter*. This yielded "*consolation*." They approved of what had been done, they rejoiced at the prospect of so happy a termination of the dispute. *Barnabas and Silas* (see on verse 22), who were religious teachers, being the greater strangers, address the assembly. They instructed the brethren, both in Christian doctrine generally, and respecting the directions which they had brought from Jerusalem in regard to the law of Moses. The epistle from Jerusalem was brief, and there would be room for explanations. The opportunity was a favorable one, too, for confirming the brethren in their attachment to Christ, and in their mutual Christian affection. Such was the method of settling this first discussion in the Christian Church. How simple, wise and successful! Had the example been imitated in after times, how much persecution would have been avoided! how much disgrace would have been spared the Christian name! This ecclesiastical assembly at Jerusalem is a model for all times. It brought forth a spirit which frees from the yoke of the ritualist, the prejudices of the bigot, the arrogance of the self-righteous. *Let go in peace*, probably a reference to the form of dismissal. (See James ii. 16.) It would appear that both Judas and Silas returned to Jerusalem, to give in their report to the Church, but that Silas came back to Antioch. *Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch*. Critics are in general agreed that it was at this time that the dispute between Paul and Peter, mentioned in Gal. ii. 11-16, occurred. *With many others also*. There was a flourishing Church at Antioch. At this time it contained more Christians than any other city in the world except Jerusalem. We do not know who the other teachers were, but among them were Mark and Silas.

26. And some days after, Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. —Chap. xiii. 4, &c.

It was upon this occasion that one of those incidents occurred which even in the lives of the best and holiest of men, too plainly evidence that the old Adam still remains, partially uprooted, partially overcome, but still continually struggling for the pre-eminence, and sometimes, alas! obtaining it. *And visit our brethren*. Observe the manner in which Paul speaks of the persons referred to: "*our brethren*." He does not avail himself of his office, talents or success, to lord it over God's heritage. He exercised no dominion over their faith, but was a helper of their joy. Christians are new creatures, they are born again, but they are born of the same Spirit, redeemed by the same blood, justified by the same righteousness, heirs of the same glory, and while partaking of "the common salvation," a communion subsists between them, unaffected by any difference of opinion, or distinction of circumstances. *See how they do*. This was natural. The persons Paul now wished to see were known to him and Barnabas. They had been blessed under their former ministry. What wonder, then, that they should wish to water what they had planted, or, that having sown the seed, they wished to see the blade, the ear, and full corn in the ear. Besides, wherever the good seed was sown the enemy was sure to sow tares. It was, therefore, also necessary that Paul should be concerned to visit "every city" where he and Barnabas had labored, to know their estate, to refute any error in doctrine, to oppose any corruption in practice, to warn the unruly, to comfort the feeble-minded, to uphold the weak, and to help them much who had believed through grace. "Let us go again," &c. Paul was never weary in well-doing. He made the end of one good work the beginning of another, and considered nothing done while anything remained to be done. "Let us go," &c. He did not wish to go alone, but to take Barnabas with him as before. He knew that two were better than one. If one fell, the other would lift him up again. If one was tempted, the other could warn him. If one was distressed, the other could comfort him. If one was perplexed, the other could counsel him. Besides, he remembered that his Lord and Master in

the mission of the Seventy, had "sent them forth two by two," &c.

37. And Barnabas determined to take with them John whose surname was Mark.—Chap. xii. 12, 25.

John, whose surname, &c. (See on chap. xii. 12, 25.) Barnabas probably believed that in "departing from them from Pamphylia" (see on chap. xiii. 13), John Mark had withdrawn only for a time for the purpose of visiting his pious and widowed mother at Jerusalem, or, that if there was any blame, the second excursion would wipe off the disgrace of the first; but as Mark was "sister's son to Barnabas," it is not improbable that the feelings of relationship might a little influence the Apostle, and induce him to look with a more favorable eye upon the desertion of his nephew, than he would have done upon that of a stranger, or than could be expected from Paul.

38. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.—Chap. xiii. 13.

Paul was unwilling. (See on xiii. 13.) He reflected on our Lord's words, "No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." He felt a very different spirit in himself, and deemed it right to notice a misconduct which, if tolerated in a public character, might be injurious by example. Perhaps both these good men erred a little; the one being too partial, and the other too severe. There is here an instance of the imperfection of good men, which the word of God does not conceal.

39. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; 40. And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

1 Cor. xiv. 26, xx. 32.

Sharp contention, an angry dispute. It would appear that sharp words passed between them. *That they departed asunder, or, separated, one from the other.* Since they could not agree about Mark. And this separation was highly conducive to the progress of the Gospel. The Lord can make the wrath of man to praise Him. "The one stream of missionary labor thus became divided into two parts, and the more regions were in consequence supplied with the water of life." But although Barnabas and Paul separated, yet we are not to suppose that they did so in anger. Paul, in his epistles, speaks of Barnabas

with the greatest respect and affection. (1 Cor. ix. 6; Gal. ii. 9.) And he was afterward not only fully reconciled to Mark, but employed him as a companion in his labors. He recommends him to the favorable regard of the Church of Colosse (Col. iv. 10), mentions him among the number of his fellow-laborers (Phile. 24), and in the last epistle which he wrote directs Timothy to bring Mark with him, because he was profitable for the ministry. (2 Tim. iv. 11.) And doubtless also this dissension resulted in good to Mark himself; the severity of Paul would lead him to repentance and renewed activity, whilst the mildness of Barnabas would preserve him from despondency, and strengthen the good which was in him. There is no reason to doubt that this is the same Mark whose praise is now in all the Churches as the author of the second Gospel, and who has thus so nobly made amends for the fault committed in his youth. *So Barnabas took Mark, &c.* The breach between Paul and Barnabas did not take them off from their work, or relax their zeal in the noble cause to which they were pledged. Only it is observable, not only that they moved widely different from each other, but that each repaired to his native country, Barnabas sailing for Cyprus, and Paul traveling through Syria and Cilicia. Were they, in taking these directions, guided by the Holy Ghost, or did they follow their own prudence and inclination? The latter might not have been inconsistent with the former. The Spirit of inspiration often availed itself of common occurrences, and fell in with the natural views and feelings of the individual favored with it. Partial affections are not incompatible with general benevolence, but may be the very means of aiding it. A peculiar regard for a land in which we were born and trained up, among all the endearments of life, is natural and unavoidable, and deserving of encouragement; and it is certain that we cannot show our love to it in any way so nobly and importantly, as by endeavoring to promote the spread and success of the Gospel in it. *Being recommended, &c.*—being commended to the favor of God for providential protection, and for the aid of the Holy Spirit. Luke mentions only the

dismissal and recommendation of Paul, because it was *his* history he was engaged to write. But we have every reason to believe that they did the same for Barnabas when he left them, as they did for Paul. They would be alive to the excellences of both these men of God; they would be tender toward both, they would pray for both. Let us not fail to imitate the interest which the brethren in Antioch took in the Evangelical tours of Paul and Barnabas. Let us, in like manner, perpetually commend to the Divine favor the faithful missionaries who have gone forth from among us to the regions of spiritual death. (Comp. 3 John, verses 5-8.)

41. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.—a Chap. xvi. 5.

The disciples in Syria and Cilicia seem to have been disturbed by the doctrines of the Judaizers; to them the decree from the council at Jerusalem was specially directed (chap. xv. 23), and hence Paul's work would be to quiet these disturbances, and to establish the Gentile Christians in their freedom from Jewish observances. By these means he would confirm the Churches, and as formerly, at Antioch, the reading of the letter caused great joy among the brethren, the same would be the case in Syria and Cilicia.

How painful it is to find in tracing the history of these men of God, as well as that of Abraham, or Jacob, or David, or Peter, to find in each and all, the same remnants of the old and carnal nature raising its hydra heads through all the opposing influences of Divine grace, and proving that endowed as these good men unquestion-

ably were with the largest outpouring of the Spirit of God, they were still the same poor, fallible mortals as ourselves, still carrying about with them a body of sin and death, still having the same need of daily application to the atoning blood of Christ, still the same necessity for the daily renewing of His good Spirit. Let us, however far we may have advanced in the Christian life, lay this seriously to heart, that the greatest knowledge, the highest spirituality of thoughts and views, will not justify the smallest deviation from Christian conduct or Christian tempers. It was a serious blot in the character of these Apostles, it cannot be an unimportant one in our own, if hastiness or sullenness, if unkindness or uncharitableness, be permitted to get the better of us, and to expose not only ourselves, but the religion which we profess, to the animadversions of the ungodly or profane. Many who dwelt at Antioch, probably, had heard but little of the devotedness and piety of Paul and Barnabas, but *all*, we may well believe, heard of their dissension, their violence, and their separation. So will it be with us, while many, even of our nearest friends, will have little knowledge of the greater enlightening of our mind, the increased spirituality of our devotions, and of our more frequent and more profitable communion with God; all will know if we are less amiable, less kind, less charitable, in the hourly intercourse of life. It should, therefore, be our constant prayer that we may never be led by the allowance of any unholy temper, to injure the cause which we really desire to serve.

1. With whom had Paul and Barnabas discussion? 2. Who were sent to Jerusalem touching the question in dispute? 3. Through what places did the Apostles pass? 4. What did the Apostles and elders come together to consider? 5. What did Peter say on the occasion? 6. What is said of the multitude in reference to Barnabas and Paul? 7. What did James say? 8. Who were sent to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas? 9. Repeat what was said in the letters sent by them. 10. What proposition did Paul make to Barnabas? 11. Why did not Paul think it good to take Mark with them? 12. What was the result of this difference of opinion? 13. To what place did Barnabas and Mark go? 14. What is said of Paul and Silas?

CHAPTER XVI.

1 Paul having circumcised Timothy, 7 and being called by the Spirit from one country to another, 14 converteth Lydia, 16 casteth out a spirit of divination, 19 for which cause he and Silas are whipped and imprisoned. 26 The prison doors are opened. 31 The jailor is converted, 37 and they are delivered.

THEN came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: 2. Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

xiv. 6. b xix. 22; Rom. xvi. 21; 1 Cor. iv. 17. 2 Tim. i. 5. 6. 1 Titus v. 10; Heb. xi. 2.

Derbe and Lystra. (See on xiv. 6.) We have Derbe first, as lying nearest to the pass from Cilicia into Lycaonia and Capadocia. Paul probably traveled by the ordinary road through the "Cilician gates," a rent or fissure in the mountain chain of Taurus, extending from north to south through a distance of eighty miles. *Timotheus*, whose name is sometimes written in our Bible with an English termination, *Timothy*. He seems to have been a native of Lystra. Timotheus was already a *disciple*, when Paul, in the course of the present journey, came to this region; it may therefore be assumed that he had been converted during the first missionary journey, through the agency of Paul, who calls him his *son in the Lord* (1 Cor. iv. 17; 1 Tim. i. 2; 2 Tim. i. 2), perhaps in Antioch in Pisidia. (See 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11.) *Son of a certain woman, &c.* We learn elsewhere (2 Tim. i. 5) that his mother's name was Eunice, and his grandmother's name Lois, both eminent for faith. His father was a Greek and a heathen, for the word "*believed*" is not added to his name as it is to his wife's. Though it was contrary to the Jewish institution to contract matrimonial alliances with heathen nations (Ezra ix. 12), it was sometimes done, and was regarded as less heinous for females to marry Gentile husbands than for males to marry Gentile wives. *Which was well reported of, &c.* His reputation for Christian principle and for consistency was exalted and perhaps wide-spread. This testimony corresponds to his general character, as portrayed in both the epistles which Paul addressed to him (Philip ii. 19-23; 1 Cor. iv. 17, xvi. 10, 11; 1 Thes. iii. 1-6).

2. Him would Paul have to go forth with him, and took and circumcised him, because of the Jews (which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.—Gal. ii. 3-8, v. 1-3. 1 Cor. ix. 20.

*21

Him would Paul, &c. He purposed to employ him in the ministry. *Circumcised him.* Known, says an able commentator, to be of a Gentile father, and probably uncircumcised by that father's authority, Timothy would not have been admitted to the synagogues of the Jews as a religious teacher had he been uncircumcised, nor Paul as his companion. As by this act Paul conceded, not the necessity of circumcision to salvation, but only removed a bodily hindrance to Timothy's acceptance among the Jews in various localities, he transgressed no principle he ever asserted. Yet at Jerusalem, when the Judaists made the necessity of circumcision an absolute requisite in the Christian system, he refused to allow Titus to be circumcised. (Gal. ii. 3.) This circumcision of Timothy, and that demanded circumcision of Titus, involved two very different questions. So nice, and yet so accurate, a line did this wise Apostle draw between the closely connected right and wrong. For peace and acceptance he would yield up to the very hairbreadth that divided right from wrong; but not all the world could compel him of that hairbreadth to sacrifice one half. It is a very difficult point, one greatly needing the enlightening power of God's grace to determine it, when to conform to the prejudices of those around us, and when to oppose them, resisting, if it be needful, even "unto blood." If we pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, with a determination to follow it in all godly simplicity and sincerity, we will seldom be left in doubt upon any point affecting the welfare of our souls, or the glory of our God, we will never be left to mistake the dictates of a carnal, time-serving policy, for the inspirations of the Holy Ghost.

4. And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

*Chap. xv. 23, 29.

Delivered them the decrees for to keep. They indoctrinated them with the spirit of the letter entrusted to them. The sentence of the Council is called a *decree*, to signify that it was not merely an advice, or a simple declaration of their judgment, but an authoritative decision, to which the dis-

ciples were bound to submit, if they would remain in the fellowship of the Church. Although there was only one general decree embracing the several subjects of discussion, yet the historian speaks of it in the plural number, because it related to more points than one, declaring that circumcision and obedience to the law of Moses were not necessary to salvation, exempting the Gentiles from any obligation to observe it, and at the same time prescribing some limitation to the exercise of their liberty. As the decree was delivered to the Churches in other countries as well as to those of Syria and Cilicia, who had sent deputies to Jerusalem, the council which met there, must be considered as a general one, exercising jurisdiction over the catholic Church. (See on preceding verse, and on chap. xv. 23, &c.).

5. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.—Chap. xv. 41.

The result was two-fold: 1. Spiritual increase—"established in the faith." Their views became clearer, their principles struck a deeper root, their attachment to Christ attained a greater strength. Their religion passed from the region of theories and feelings into their heart and life. 2. Numerical increase—"increased in number daily." Let Christians improve in character, and converts will multiply daily. A spiritually improved Church will swell the number of converts. This confirmatory work, this work of improving the character of Christians, is pre-eminently the work of Christians in this age and land of ours.

6. Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia; 7. After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; but the Spirit suffered them not. 8. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.

¹Gal. i. 2; ¹1 Peter i. 1. ¹Amos viii. 11, 12; ¹1 Cor. xii. 11. ¹Rev. i. 4, 11. ²2 Cor. ii. 12; ²2 Tim. iv. 13.

Phrygia. (See on ii. 10.) To reach Phrygia from Iconium or Antioch, they would direct their way to the north-east. *Galatia* was bounded on the north by Paphlagonia and Bithynia, on the east by Pontus and Cappadocia (separated from them by the river Halys), on the south by Cappadocia and Phrygia, and on the west by Phrygia and Bithynia. Among the principal cities were Ancyra, made the metropolis by Augustus, and Pessinus. *And were forbidden*

of the Holy Ghost, &c. The Spirit spoke to them either through one of the prophets, or by an internal impression. By *Asia* here, is meant, *proconsular Asia*, a province in Asia Minor. (See on chap. ii. 9.) A similar prohibition was given by the Holy Spirit concerning *Bithynia*. (Verse 7.) The reason of this we cannot positively ascertain. It was perhaps, the design of Providence, that while the Churches in the neighboring provinces of Asia Minor might sound out the word into these regions, Paul and his companions might hasten to Europe—to the very center of heathenism. By this means the Gospel would in a given time be more widely spread than, other things being equal, it would have been, had they taken in all the adjacent places in their way. It is, however, certain, that in those places, now seemingly overlooked, the Gospel was afterward preached with success. (1 Peter i. 1.) Nor ought we to forget that the word of truth visits every country at the precise time and in the manner which Jehovah prescribes according to His good pleasure, who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. The Sun of Righteousness shall illuminate every part of the world the moment determined by the Supreme Lord of all. *Mysia*, the north-west province of Asia Minor. *Assayed*, endeavored, tried. *Bithynia*, a province on the northern coast of Asia Minor, to the east of Mysia. *But the Spirit suffered them not.* (See on verse 6.) *Came down to Troas*—a city on the north-east coast of the Ægean Sea, the boundary of Asia Minor on the west, the region of which was the scene of the Trojan war.

9. ¹And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

¹Chap. x. 30.

And a vision, &c. The expression does not necessarily suppose that the revelation was imparted to Paul in a dream, for if so, it would have been more definitely stated. (Matt. ii. 22.) *A man of Macedonia.* We are not to suppose anything real, but merely a representation to the mind. Paul recognized his country from the words of the vision. *A man*, not Lydia nor the Philippian gaoler, but a representative man—"help us." *Macedonia*, a large region of

Europe, north of ancient Greece. Macedonia was the original kingdom of Philip, and of Alexander the Great, his son. It became universally distinguished by the victories of Alexander. In process of time, the country fell into the power of the Romans, and in the time of the Apostles it was a part of the Roman empire. *Prayed*, earnestly entreated him. *Come over unto Macedonia*. A glance at the map shows that from Troas, Paul would have to *pass over*, or cross the Ægean Sea, to enter Macedonia. *Help us*. The Macedonian spirit once, as a proud conqueror, crossed the Hellespont, and filled Asia with his glory, but now he stands as a suppliant before a man who has no other weapon than the sword of the Spirit. This, it has been well remarked, was a cry not of conscious *desire* for the Gospel, but of deep *need* of it and unconscious *preparedness* to receive it, not only in that region, but, we may well say, throughout all that western empire which Macedonia might be said to represent. It was a virtual confession that the highest splendor of heathendom, which we must recognize in the arts of Greece and in the polity and imperial power of Rome, had arrived at the end of all its resources. God had left the Gentile world to walk in their own ways. (Chap. xiv. 2.) They had sought to gain salvation for themselves, but those who had carried it furthest along the paths of natural development were now pervaded by the feeling that all had indeed been vanity.

10. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them.—2 Cor. ii. 13.

He had seen—Paul alone saw it: yet all are guided thereby. *We endeavored*—Having sought out a ship. Here the language begins in the first person, plural number. From this some suppose Luke was present. *Assuredly gathering*—They were as certain from this vision as was necessary for undertaking the journey. *Called us*, literally, *called to us*. *To preach the Gospel unto them*, literally, *to evangelize them*. “Never,” says an eminent English minister, “in this world was there a ship equal to that in which these men sailed to Macedonia! One of our distinguished

writers, *Thomas Carlyle*, refers to the little ship *Mayflower*, which sailed from Southampton in 1620, having on board the Pilgrim Fathers—men of strong hearts, with religious faith in them, having an intense love of liberty, and determined to go where they could have freedom to worship God. In that little ship were the seeds and elements of the intelligence, civilization, literature, religion, which were one day to be developed in a new national life beyond the sea. But was there ever a *Mayflower* like this? When these men went down to the quay to look for a vessel, how little the world thought, how little those who saw them thought, how little they themselves knew, what history they were making! What effects were to flow from this movement of theirs! What an influence it was to have on the future character of dominant races! And yet in appearance, it was one of the most ordinary things that could possibly take place. These four men go on board a vessel—Paul, with his fervent soul and strong intellect; Silas, with his zeal and his prophetic gifts; Luke, with his scholarly culture and professional accomplishments, and Timothy, with his youthful earnestness, and as yet undeveloped powers for work. These four men, guided by the Divine Spirit, *came to Europe*, and that ship in which they sailed has in it the seeds of all that is to be developed in the religion and learning, the philosophy, legislation, art, science, and everything else that has given European nations the prominent place they occupy among the nations of the world.”

11. Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis; 12. And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony. And we were in that city abiding certain days.
•Phil. i. 1. Or, the first.

We came with (or by) a straight course: a nautical expression, referring to the favorable nature of the voyage—“we sailed before the wind.” Two days were occupied in sailing from Troas to Neapolis; whereas five days were consumed in sailing in a contrary direction from Neapolis to Troas (Acts xx. 6). *Samothracia*. A small island, eight miles long, and six broad, in the Ægean Sea, so-called because it lay off the coast of Thrace, and to distinguish it from the island of Samos, off the coast of Ionia

(Acts xx. 15). In ancient times it was celebrated for its religious mysteries—a mixture of Grecian and Oriental mythology. Its modern name is Samotraki. *Neapolis*, a seaport of Thrace, situated on the Strymonic gulf, the modern name of which is Kavalla. As they were aware that duty called them to Macedonia, they continued their journey without delay, until they reached the Macedonian city of *Philippi*. This city, built by Philip, the father of Alexander, was on a steep acclivity of the Thracian Hermus, where this range slopes toward the sea, on a small stream called Gangas, or Gangitas. It was at some distance east of the Strymon, and not on that river, as some have said. The adjacent plains are memorable in Roman history as the places where Julius Cæsar vanquished Pompey, and the battle was fought between the Republicans under Brutus, and the followers of Antony and Augustus. "*Chief*" designates it as one of the first places there, and "*colony*" explains the ground of the epithet. Augustus had sent a colony thither, which had conferred upon it new importance. The church at Philippi was the first church in Europe which the Apostle established. *Certain days* denotes apparently the few days which they spent there before the arrival of the Sabbath.

13. And on the sabbath, we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made: and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.—Sabbath day. xxi. 5.

The Sabbath—the first after their arrival, as the words imply. The Sabbath is peculiarly "the accepted time, and the day of salvation." It is commonly the day in which the sinner is awakened, and brought to "seek those things that are above," and the people of God, by "waiting upon Him," have "their strength renewed." A river side, viz., the Gangas. (See on verse 12.) *Where prayer was wont to be made.* The Jews, besides their synagogues, had small houses in retired situations, where, free from noise and disturbance, they could enjoy occasional devotion, either alone, or with any of their connections. Because of the use to which they were appropriated, they were called *Proseuchæ*, or places of prayer. Nothing renders a people dear to God but their conformity to Him, and nothing

makes a place of worship sacred but the Divine Presence.

"Where'er we seek Him He is found,
And every place is hallowed ground."

The women which resorted thither. It appears that the whole company assembled for the hallowed purpose of prayer were women. Thus, even from the earliest ages of the Church of Christ, has the weaker sex put to shame the stronger. In the days of Christ Himself they were the last who left His cross, they were the first who sought His tomb. In the times of the greatest spiritual deadness, when an almost universal worldliness has overspread the Church of Christ, religion, true, vital religion, has been found still lingering in the female bosom, and in the times of the greatest spiritual revival, it has always been observed that women have been foremost in the holy cause.

14. ¶ And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.
*Luke xxiv. 45.

Lydia was a common female name among the Greeks and Romans. *A seller of purple.* The guild of *dyers* at Thyatira have left inscriptions, still existing, showing the accuracy of our narrative. The celebrity of the purple dyeing of the neighborhood is as old as Homer. Thyatira was a city of the province of Asia. Thus, although forbidden to preach the word in *Asia*, their first convert at Philippi is an *Asiatic*. *Which worshipped God, i. e.,* was a proselyte to the Jewish faith, and as such present at this meeting. She was a moral but not a changed character, piously inclined, but not a possessor of piety, she worshiped God according to the light she had, and was thereby ready for further discoveries of Christ and salvation. *Heard us.* "Faith cometh by hearing." It is a privilege to have the sound of salvation in the ear, but a far greater one to experience the power of salvation in the heart. Lydia heard with attention, and no doubt with prayer, we are quite sure she heard with pleasure, because she heard with profit. "Whose heart the Lord opened." What does this imply, but that her heart was shut?—shut, as ice shuts up the water that it cannot flow—shut, as the miser shuts up his bowels of compassion from

the poor—shut, as a door is shut to keep the house from the entrance of the owner. This is our Saviour's own image: "Behold, I stand at the door," &c. (Rev. iii. 20.) "The Lord opened." The work is ascribed to Him whose power enables, and whose pity constrains Him to do it. Ministers may open their Divine commission, but they cannot open the hearts of their hearers to receive it. We could as easily create a world as convert a soul. "Whose heart," &c. Grace opens the heart. This gives us a delightful and interesting view of conversion. Its seat is the heart—and its extent is intimated by the opening of the heart. *That she attended*, &c. If some are called without the direct and obvious instrumentality of the Word of God, they always evince the divinity of their calling by their attraction and attention.

15. And when she was baptized, and her household she brought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.—Heb. xiii. 2.

She was baptized, &c. A profession of religion, without the reality is nothing, but we are not only to *be* Christians, but to *appear* such. "With the heart," indeed, "man believeth unto righteousness," but "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Lydia, by her submission to the ordinance of baptism, proclaimed herself a Christian. And, let it be observed, she did this *immediately*, without consulting with flesh and blood, and also without reserve *relatively*, as well as *personally*, devoting her whole family to the sacred rite. In view of the many instances of household baptism following forth with upon the faith of the householder (see x. 2, 44–48, xvi. 15, 30–33, xviii. 8; 1 Cor. i. 16, xvi. 15), it is not easy to doubt that it was just such a consequence in the family as circumcision would have been in case of an induction into Judaism. Even admitting however that no inference for infant baptism is hence deducible, it should be remembered that the practice does not rest on inference, but on the continuity and identity of the covenant of grace to Jew and Christian, the sign only of admission being altered. The Apostles, as Jews, would have proposed to administer baptism to the children, and Jewish or proselyte converts would, as matter of course, have acceded to the pro-

posal, and that the practice thus by universal consent, tacitly (because at first unquestioned) pervaded the universal Church, can hardly with any reason be doubted. *She brought us*, &c.—as an expression of her desire to gain more spiritual improvement from them, and of her liberality. She was willing to "minister to the necessities of the saints," and "given to hospitality."

16. And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain: by sooth-saying:—*v*l Sam. xxviii. 7. *xix. 24.

Never does our spiritual enemy rage more fiercely than when we are going to prayer. *A certain damsel*—girl, young woman. *A spirit of divination*—a *Pythonic* spirit. Python was the serpent that guarded Delphi, which was slain by Apollo, and hence that god was called Pythias. In the temple of Apollo the organ of the oracle was always a woman, said to be inspired by the god. The heathen inhabitants of Philippi accordingly regarded this woman as inspired by Apollo, and Luke here uses the term in accommodation to their views. *Brought*, yielded or afforded. *Masters*, joint-owners or employers. *Gain*. Fraud supports such gain: true religion does away with it. *Sooth-saying*, divining, telling fortunes, by the aid of the spirit which possessed her. Thus advantage was taken of the public credulity and superstition.

17. The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

*Gen. xiv. 18, 22. †Chap. xviii. 26; 1leb. x. 20.

These men are, &c. It is unnecessary to suppose that she merely uttered what she had heard spoken by others, but the case is similar to the testimonies of evil spirits in favor of Christ recorded in the Gospels, however such testimonies are to be explained. (Matt. viii. 29; Mark iii. 11; Luke viii. 28.) Either the evil spirits were constrained, against their will, to bear this testimony to Christ and His disciples, or they wished to make it appear that they were confederate with them.

48. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And she came out the same hour.

*Mark. i. 25, 34. *Matt. xvi. 17.

Many days. She persevered in this, pursuing them wherever they went. *Paul*,

being grieved, &c. The Apostle felt wounded, as the woman often repeated the act, because he could not accept of any recommendation and support, or any honor from a spirit which was not of God. Hence, he suddenly turned to the woman who was following him, and, *in the name of Jesus Christ*, by His authority, and as His representative, commanded the spirit to come out of her, withdraw the preternatural control now exercised. *The same hour*, or, as the same phrase is rendered elsewhere (Luke ii. 38), *that instant*. All that is intended is, that the miraculous effect, as usual, was instantaneous.

19. † And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the market place, unto the rulers. 20. And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city: 21. And teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. lxxix. 24-27. †Or, court. †Matt. x. 18. †1 Kings xviii. 17.

Gains, &c. An irremediable change had taken place in the girl, showing both power in the Apostle and a previous involuntary condition in her. So impressed was the Apostolic superiority over the infernal or the pagan that we wonder not that a *Church* of intense faith arose in Philippi, as we shall find to have been the fact by reading Paul's most rich and loving EPISTLE to the Philippians. But, alas for these traders in oracles! they are unable to conjure another response from their pythoness. *Trouble our city*. Behold another instance of that accusation, which from the days of Christ Himself to the present hour has been put, by our spiritual enemy, into the mouth of the opponents of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; the Apostles troubled the city! Yes, they did trouble it, but it was, as the angel troubled the pool of Bethesda, that he who entered in, might be healed. Blessed is that city, or that family, or that heart, which is so troubled; godly trouble is the first forerunner of that "peace of God which passeth all understanding." *Teach customs, &c.* This second charge evidently pointed to the Gospel which Paul preached, and it was manifestly made to render his punishment certain and condign, as in the eye of the Roman law, there could scarcely be a greater crime, than to make any innovations on the established religion of the empire.

22. And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.

The *multitude* probably cried out tumultuously, as on other occasions (see Luke xxiii. 18; chap. xix. 28, 34, xxi. 30, xxii. 22, 23), and the *magistrates*, without giving the Christians a trial (verse 37), rent off their clothes, viz.: by the lictors, whose distinguishing badge of office was a bundle of small rods tied together, which they carried as the warrant of their authority, and with which they kept themselves in readiness to execute the commands of their superior.

23. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely: 24. Who having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.—2 Cor. vi. 5, xi. 24, 25; 1 Thes. ii. 2.

After the scourging they were consigned to the care of the jailer. That functionary, supposing from the particular nature of his instructions that the two men were no ordinary criminals, put them in the *inner prison*. This was the farthest interior of the building, in which those accused of heinous crimes were kept for greater security. It was a dark and loathsome dungeon, where the feet often sank in mud—where the entrance, like that of a pit, was so small that the prisoner required to be thrust through the narrow openings in the wall that led into it, and where there was not an object to relieve the awful solitude. *In the stocks*. In the original only *the wood*. This was an instrument for torture as well as confinement. It was a heavy piece of wood with holes into which the feet were put, so far apart as to distend the limbs in the most painful manner. *Eusebius* mentions, speaking of the martyrs in Gaul, that their feet were stretched to the *fifth hole in the wood*.

25. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. †Isa. v. 13. †Ps. xxxiv. 1.

At midnight, kind nature's season for sleep, they were sleepless. They could not sleep—their bleeding wounds drove sleep away. Yet, instead of spending those midnight hours of physical torture in bitter imprecations on their enemies, or rebellious murmurings against heaven, they *prayed* and *sang*. Those old prison walls, which were accustomed to echo groans and sighs, resounded now with unearthly strains of joy and praise. There

was midnight without, but sunshine within; their bodies were in chains, but their souls were free. Their religion bore them aloft to regions of unrestricted liberty and unclouded light. "The limb feels nothing in the stocks," says *Tertullian*, "when the mind is in heaven." In what situation can we ever be placed, with such an example as this before us, in which we can consider prayer as hopeless, or praise as inappropriate? How does it condemn many, who, placed in the midst of prosperity and happiness, hardly know what it is from the heart to praise God! Let us be more in praise, as well as prayer, for a thankless Christian is one of the most disgraceful characters upon which the all-seeing eye of God can ever fall. *Prisoners heard them*—God meant this midnight song not only for the sufferers' joy, but for the prisoners' hearing. Let men know how Jesus is glorified in the exaltation of His martyrs.

26. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

iv. 31. *Isa.* xlii. 7; chap. v. 19, xii. 7, 10.

Suddenly—before the last accents of their praises had died upon the ear, before the last sentence of their petitions had fallen from their lips, the cry for deliverance was heard and answered. *A great earthquake*—which, of course, was preternatural. Its effects were moderated by the power of God, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, but it was not thrown down. When the doors were opened and all bonds were loosened, the other prisoners felt the power of God, and, deeply impressed by the miracle, remained motionless in their cells.

27. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

Roused from his slumbers by the crash of the earthquake, and seeing the prison doors thrown wide open, overwhelmed with terror, the keeper of the prison attempts to destroy himself. The sword was at hand. Probably he wore it at his side. The law was, that if a prisoner escaped, the keeper was liable to the intended punishment of the fugitive. Self-destruction was considered by the Romans as not only lawful, but a duty or a virtue

under certain circumstances. Cato's suicide was celebrated as a heroic act; and by a singular historical coincidence, that very city of Philippi, or its neighborhood, had been signalized within a hundred years, not only by the great defeat of Brutus and Cassius, but by the suicide of both, and by a sort of wholesale self-destruction on the part of their adherents, who had been proscribed by Octavius and Anthony. What an awful and impious deed is suicide! How can he expect a welcome in the other world, who rushes into it stained with his own blood? Will the Father and Fountain of Life show mercy to those who indignantly throw His own gift in His face? The self-murderer, intent only upon escaping from his present agony, listens to none of these considerations. His furious spirit breaks from its confinement, and leaps into eternity.

28. But *Paul* cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

^k*Prov.* xxiv. 11, 12; ^l*1 Thes.* v. 15.

^m*Ecc.* vii. 15—17.

But Paul. Master of the situation here as ever. Perceiving in a moment how matters stood, he uttered the noble entreaty here recorded. What kindness did it exhibit on the part of the Apostle toward his cruel keeper! Good men ever have been, and are, men of tender and compassionate dispositions, not so solicitous for their own liberties, as for others' lives. The Apostles might have held their peace, and suffered the jailer to slay himself, and thereby made their own escape, but they preferred the jailer's eternal salvation before their own temporal liberation and happiness. Christianity says, *Do thyself no harm*, to every man who is ruining himself by sin, whether in health, in estate, in body, in intellect, in soul. All sinners are suicides, cruel to themselves, relentless upon their own natures.

29. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas: 30. And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?—*Jer.* v. 22 ⁿ*ii.* 37, *ix.* 6.

A light, rather, *lights*, the original word is plural, not singular. *Sprang in*, &c. His conscience is roused, he enters the place where Paul and Silas are confined, he sees them with the chains stricken off, and notwithstanding the uproar of nature and marks of suffering that were on their persons, standing with calm dignity, and

beginning to tremble, he falls down at their feet, then leads them forth from the "inner" to the "outer" prison, which was no doubt a more spacious, light and airy place. *And said:* how has the lion become a lamb! *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* "Tell me of that God to whom your prayers and praises were addressed, and who has wrought for you this wonderful deliverance, tell me of that Being whose name you bear—how can I propitiate His anger, secure His favor, deliver my soul?" How often are the afflictions of God's people productive of good! How soon can the Spirit of God reach the heart, and enter the conscience like a conqueror at the head of an army! The jailer's question expresses, 1. *Conviction.* This is the work of the Holy Spirit on the mind of a sinner, whereby he is convinced that he is a sinner, and is properly affected with it. 2. *Fear.* It is the language of terror and consternation. And have not sinners much to fear? Is it not "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." 3. *Desire.* The awakened soul has new desires, or, rather, all its desires are brought into one, and that one is salvation. 4. *Hope.* The poor jailer, though a heathen, did not say, "There is no mercy for me, I am such a sinner I never can be saved." But his question seems to say, as the repenting Ninevites said, on the preaching of Jonah, "Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" (Jonah iii. 9.) 5. *A confession of ignorance.* The man wanted to be saved, but he knew not *how*, nor can any man know this aright until he is taught of God. 6. *Legality.* By this is meant, cleaving to the law, or "going about to establish our own righteousness" by the deeds of the law, or our good works. The jailer thought it must be by *doing* something that we must obtain the pardon of our sins and eternal life. 7. *Submission.* Poor man! His heart was humbled for sin, he saw nothing but eternal destruction before him, and would give all the world to avoid it. As if he had said, "Show me my duty, and let it be ever so difficult, I am ready to do it."

31. And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

^aHab. ii. 4; John iii. 16, 36, vi. 47; chap. xiii. 39, xiv. 22.

They overlook his injurious treatment of them. They do not take advantage of his present distress to insult him, as the council did Judas, when he cast down the pieces of silver. (Matt. xxvii. 4.) How brief, simple, direct, blessed and soul-satisfying a reply! All that the most despairing sinner could need, all that the most weary and heavy laden sinner could require, all that the most ignorant sinner could ask, is contained in these few but comprehensive words: *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, &c.* Enough at that moment for the jailer to have his faith directed simply to the Saviour, with the assurance that this would bring his soul the needed and sought salvation—the *how* being a matter for after teaching. Awakened souls are to be led immediately to Christ. "Why should I wait? I want a mediator between me and God, but I do not want a mediator between me and Christ. I *must* come to Him as I am. And I *may* come, with entire confidence of being saved, if I simply and entirely rely upon the finished work of the salvation which Jesus wrought out, and receive Him in the whole of His Mediatorial character into a penitent and renewed heart." *And thy house, or household.* This does not mean that they were to be saved by his faith, but by faith in the same Saviour. The children of believers enjoy great advantages from the prayers, the instructions, and the example of their parents, which are often followed, through the blessing of God, with happy effects.

32. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. 33. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. 34. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

^aRom. i. 14, 16. ^bLuke v. 29. ^cRom. v. 11.

And they spake, &c. They begin at once to proclaim succinctly to him and to all who belong to him, the word concerning Jesus Christ. *The same hour of the night—*unseasonable as it may have seemed *Washed their stripes.* How meek, merciful and compassionate is he now! The grace of God softens the hardest hearts, sweetens the sourest natures, and changes the most barbarous and bloody dispositions. *And was baptized, &c.* This took place during the same night. The rite would appear to have been administered in the court

within the inclosure of the prison. And from verse 33 we may infer that the jailer's baptism occurred in immediate connection with his own act of washing the bloody marks made by the rods on the persons of Paul and Silas. Paul's message to the magistrates (verse 37) clearly implies that he had not left the prison. Here is the first mention of a Christian *household*. Whether it included children, also in that case baptized, is not explicitly stated, but the presumption, as in other cases of households baptized, certainly is that it did. Yet the question of infant baptism must mainly be determined on other grounds, and such incidental allusions form only one part of the historical materials for ascertaining the practice of the Church. *He set meat before them*. Here is another evidence of the entire change as to his religious character the jailer had undergone. *And rejoiced, believing* (i. e., as the expression implies, "rejoiced because he believed") *in God*—as a converted heathen, for the faith of a *Jew* would not be so expressed. That he believed also in Jesus is implied. *With all his house*—the wondrous change on himself and the whole house filling his soul with joy. (See on verse 33.)

35. And when it was day, the magistrates sent the sergeants, saying, Let those men go. 36. And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul. The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace. 37. But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison, and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay, verily, but let them come themselves, and fetch us out. 38. And the sergeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans. 39. And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city. 40. And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

(xxii. 5. *Dan. vi. 18, 19: Matt. x. 16. *Ex. xi. 8: Rev. iii. 9. *Matt. viii. 34. *Verse 14.

And when it was day. On the next morning, the duumviri, who had, after further reflection, during the interval, perceived that they had acted with too much precipitation, and who had probably received tidings of the occurrences in the prison during the night, were willing to dispose of the whole matter at once, by dismissing the prisoners. They accordingly sent an order by the lictors to the jailer, directing him to dismiss those people—an order expressed in haughty and contemptuous terms. *Go in peace*. The jailer was, doubtless, happy at receiving the magistrates'

message, and rejoiced that the storm of persecution had passed away. Presuming that Paul and Silas would at once embrace the opportunity of being set at large, he addressed them with affectionate desires for their prosperity, as if he had said, Go and prosper, peace be with you. His language to them seems to have implied a suggestion from the magistrates, that they would depart from the city.

They have beaten us openly uncondemned, &c. "Openly" and "privily" are opposed: the *injury* had been *public*: the *reparation* must be *public also*. *Being Romans*. By the Valerian Law, passed in the year of Rome 254, and the Porcian Law in the year of Rome 506, Roman citizens were exempted from stripes and tortures: by the former, till an appeal to the people was decided, by the latter, absolutely. Another irregularity had been committed by the magistrates, in scourging them *uncondemned*. *Let them come themselves, &c.* "Let these magistrates come themselves, and fetch us out, and this will be a practical confession that they were wrong, and a practical vindication of our conduct as citizens." A great soul will repudiate favors offered on mean, unjust, or unworthy grounds. A good man will refuse liberty, social influence, wealth, unless they can be honorably and righteously obtained. *They feared and came and besought them, &c.* A wholesome fright is thus administered to them as to the want of foresight they have shown in their injustice, and they actually so far humbled themselves, that they come, and now with good words seek to appease these ill-used Roman citizens: they, in fact, personally *brought them out*, and beseech these now free persons, that, for the prevention of further disorder, they will of their own accord leave the city.

From Paul's behavior on this occasion, we may learn that Christian humility is not always to abase itself externally, and to be all-forbearing on every occasion, as the world itself only reckons it as hypocrisy. Any one whom God has put in possession of civil and social rights should mention them, and make use of them, in case of need, for the service of God's kingdom. Certainly only for the service of

God's kingdom, not for his own private benefit. It is perfectly clear that Paul did not desire any vindication of his honor for his own sake. It is also here evident that the Apostle was far from putting a fanatical or rigorous interpretation on our Saviour's principle of non-resistance (Matt. v. 39; Luke vi. 29), which, like many other precepts in the same discourse, teaches us what we should be willing to endure in an extreme case, but without abolishing our right and duty to determine when that case occurs. Thus Paul obeyed it, both in letter and in spirit, by submitting to maltreatment and by afterward resenting it, as either of those courses seemed most likely to do good to men and honor to God.

Entered into the house of Lydia. Her dwelling seems to have been their home while they were at Philippi. (See on verse 15.) Happy Lydia, to be honored and favored with such guests as Paul and Silas! But how short, how interrupted were these delightful visits, as brief as they were blessed! We must not expect on earth the joys of heaven. *The brethren*—the companions of their journey, or

those recently converted. *They comforted them, better, exhorted them*, that they should not be offended at adversity. "This assembling of believers in the house of Lydia," says *Baumgarten*, "was the first Church that had been founded in Europe." *And departed.* They wisely complied with the request of the magistrates, that they might not seem to express any degree of obstinacy or revenge, or give suspicion of any design to stir up any kind of sedition. Their course, be it observed, was not a *backward* one, but farther on into Macedonia. How it fared with the other prisoners, and how many of them were subsequently baptized, the narrative, which only follows the chief points in the history, omits to state: it also tells us nothing as to further gathering in of Christian brethren after this remarkable beginning. It is perhaps more than probable that the prisoners remained quiet in the gaol, and that no further disturbance of the usual order of things took place, for miracles sent in favor of the Gospel were not to be misused to effect a carnal liberty, nor was the arrangement of worldly matters to be interfered with more than was right.

1. What is said of Timotheus? 2. What did Paul do to him? 3. Why did he circumcise him? 4. What "decrees" are referred to? 5. What is said of the Churches? 6. Why were Paul and Timotheus forbidden to preach the word in Asia? 7. What vision appeared to Paul? 8. What is said of Philippi? 9. What is said of the river side? 10. Who was Lydia? 11. What is said of her? 12. What is said of a "certain damsel"? 13. What did her masters do when they saw the hope of their gains was gone? 14. What did the magistrates do to Paul and his colleagues? 15. What occurred at midnight? 16. Describe the scene. 17. What did Paul say to the jailer? 18. What did the jailer do? 19. What did Paul and Silas answer to his question? 20. What followed? 21. What did the magistrates order? 22. How were Paul and Silas brought out of prison? 23. Where did they go?

CHAPTER XVII.

1 *Paul preacheth at Thessalonica,* 4 *where some believe, and others persecute him.* 10 *He is sent to Berea, and preacheth there.* 13 *Bring persecuted at Thessalonica,* 15 *he cometh to Athens, and disputeth, and preacheth the living God to them unknown,* 34 *whereby many are converted unto Christ.*

NOW when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

The place which next invited the labors of Paul and Silas, accompanied by Timotheus, was Thessalonica, about a hundred

miles south-west of Philippi. They traveled thither on the great military road which led from Byzantium to Dyrrachium or Aulona, opposite to Brundisium in Italy. It was the Macedonian extension of the Appian way. They could accomplish the journey in three or four days.

On leaving Philippi, they came first to Amphipolis. This was the chief town in the southern region of Macedonia, and it

was situated on the river Strymon, at no great distance from its entrance into the Ægean Sea. It derived its name, which signified *around the city*, from the circumstance of the river flowing around it, and forming a peninsula, or, as others say, an island. It was originally a colony of the Athenians, and occasioned many difficulties between that nation and the Spartans. In the middle ages it was styled *Chrysopolis*, or the Golden City. A town still exists upon the ancient site, under the name of *Empoli*, or *Yumboli*. *Apollonia*, their next station, was about thirty miles south-west of Amphipolis, but the exact site is not known. *Thessalonica*. No city on the great Egnatian Way surpassed Thessalonica in importance. Under its ancient name of *Therma* it was the passage way of the great army of Xerxes in his invasion of Greece. It received its new name, *Thessalonica*, from a sister of Alexander the Great, on being rebuilt by her husband, and this name it still retains in the abbreviated form of *Saloniki*. The Apostle found it the most populous city of Macedonia, and until the founding of Constantinople it was virtually the capital of northern, if not of entire Greece. This city was, on several accounts, a proper theater on which to display the light of the glorious Gospel. It was the metropolis of all those countries comprehended in the Roman province of Macedonia. Here the proconsul and questor resided, which rendered it the seat of government. Hence it would be the place of resort for all those in the province distinguished for their knowledge of philosophy and the polite arts, and these would not probably, from its vicinity to Greece, be few in number. Many of the inhabitants were therefore well qualified to judge of the evidences adduced by Paul of the truth of the Gospel. It was situated at the bottom of the Thermaic Gulf, and a place of considerable commerce, and, by consequence, admirably fitted for the spread of Divine knowledge. (See 1 Thes. i. 8, 9). The Jews must have established themselves, in large numbers, in this city, their synagogue appears to have been the only one that existed in northern Macedonia.

2. And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the

Scriptures, 3. Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. *Luke iv. 13, chap. ix. 20, xiii. 5, 14. *Luke xxiv. 26, 46; chap. xviii. 28; Gal. iii. 1. *Or, whom, said he, I preach.

As his manner (custom) was, of preaching the Gospel first of all in a synagogue, wherever he found one. *Three Sabbath days*. This implies a stay there of at least two weeks, but without forbidding the supposition of a much longer one, which some prefer, as more in keeping with the statements and allusions in the two epistles to the Thessalonians. The word *reasoned* denotes to carry on a discussion in the form of a dialogue. *Out of the Scriptures*, drawing his arguments, not from literature and philosophy, but from the Jewish Scriptures, for on these Scriptures the Jews built their hopes of the Messiah's coming. The right of private judgment in relation to the Scriptures is sacred and inviolable. (1 Thes. v. 21; 1 John iv. 1; 1 Cor. x. 15; 2 Cor. i. 24). *Opening and alleging*, laying open and setting before them, that Christ must needs have suffered. "Let me," says Chalmers, "compare Scriptural things with Scriptural, which is in fact comparing spiritual things with spiritual. Thence I shall gather that there was not only a 'need be' for the sufferings of Christ, in that it was so foretold in Scripture—and all its sayings must be fulfilled—but a 'need be' for an atonement in the deep-laid necessities of heaven's jurisprudence, and of the Divine character." *And risen again from the dead*. This, too, had been foretold in the Old Testament, and it was extremely important to convince the Jews on this point from their own Scriptures, that they might correctly understand the nature of the Messiah's office, and be led to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah. *This Jesus is Christ*, this Jesus is the Messiah.

4. And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas, and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. *xxviii. 24. *2 Cor. viii. 5; 1 Thes. i. 5, 8.

Consorted with, i. e., adhered to. The *devout Greeks* were those who renounced heathenism, had become proselytes to the Jewish religion, and worshipped at the synagogue. They were called by the Jews "proselytes of the gate." The *chief women* were females of influence, members of

families of high rank. The converts were, 1. Numerous: "a great multitude." 2. Influential: "chief women." 3. Thoroughly united: they "consorted with Paul and Silas." Common beliefs awaken common sympathies. Christ gathers men of different types of character and grades of life together

5. ¶ But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. 6. And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also: 7. Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. 8. And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. 9. And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

¶ Rom. xvi. 21. ¶ Luke xxiii. 5: chap. xvi. 20. ¶ Luke xxiii. 2 John xix. 12. ¶ Matt. ii. 3; John xi. 48.

Moved with envy—at the numerous conversions which followed Paul's preaching. This passion has been the inspiration of all persecutions. *Lewd fellows*, idle loungers, the low rabble of the market, were gathered together to constitute a mob, and to create a riot. *Jason*, with whom (verse 7) Paul and Silas lodged. *To the people*—more probably, to the *demus*, public assembly, or town meeting. Thus does the Almighty sometimes overrule the hatred of Satan, by obliging him to make use of such instruments as shall, to the mind of every unprejudiced inquirer into Divine truth, convey an antidote with the poison, for what reflecting man can be for a moment misled by the arguments of those opponents to the truth of God's Word, who have so obvious a motive as an unholy life supplies, for desiring to find the tremendous revelations of the Gospel, its day of righteous judgment, and its eternity of wo to the unrepentant sinner, a "cunningly devised fable?"

Found them not. Paul and his companions, anticipating the mob, had probably withdrawn to some other house. *Certain brethren*. Some disciples or believers, converts to Christianity since Paul's arrival. *Rulers of the city*, in Greek one compound word, *politarchs*, the proper designation of the elective magistrates of this free city, as distinguished from the prætors or duumviri of a Roman colony. *Crying shouting, bawling, vociferating*. *These that have turned the world upside down, &c.* The complaint was, that the Apostles, by

their doctrine, had caused disturbance and disorder wherever it was preached, and would produce the same effects if they were permitted to remain in Thessalonica. In a certain sense it was true that the Apostles "did turn the world upside down." The Gospel professed an intention to change the face of human affairs, to overthrow all the religions which existed in the earth, to abolish idolatry, and withdraw the worshippers of the gods from the temples, to put an end to barbarous shows and licentious festivals, to make the slaves of vice sober, chaste, just and merciful, to call off the thoughts and affections of men from the vanities of time, and to raise them to eternal and invisible objects. This is the grand revolution which it proposes to accomplish, and which it did actually effect in many regions of the earth. Instead of shrinking from a similar accusation to that preferred against the Apostles, most earnestly do all true ministers desire and labor that the love of the world, and the fear of the world, and the ways of the world, may be so completely eradicated from the hearts of their hearers, that their enemies might again declare with truth, "These men have turned the world upside down," have emptied the assemblies of the worldly, the haunts of the profligate, the dens of the drunkard, the theaters of the ungodly, as their predecessors did the temples of the devil, until the love of God in Christ Jesus, and the delights of His service, and the blessedness of a close and intimate companionship with Him, shall, in the heart of every true believer, take the place of that system of idolatry and alienation from God, which is sealing up the world for the day of its final and irrevocable judgments.

These all. Not merely Jason and his guests, but the whole sect or party which they represent. *Do contrary*. They covered their envy under the garb of patriotism. It is one of the falsest, and yet one of the commonest prejudices that the world has always entertained against true religion, that it is an enemy to civil power and government. *Saying that there is another king, one Jesus*. This false charge seems to have been founded on Paul's preaching much at Thessalonica

concerning the triumphant coming and kingdom of Christ. This appears again and again in his two epistles. (See 1 Thes. i. 10, ii. 19, iii. 13, iv. 13-18, v. 1, 2; 2 Thes. i. 5, 7-10, ii. 1-12), and particularly 2 Thes. ii. 5, where he refers to having often told them of *these things*, viz.: the course and destruction of Antichrist, by whom these Jews might perhaps misrepresent Paul as designating Caesar.) *Had taken security of Jason and of the other* ("the others")—probably making them deposit a money-pledge that the preachers should not again endanger the public peace. What a warm friend the Gospel had won for Paul in Jason, in the course of a few days! It is a noble act to become surety for persecuted Christians, for the whole world is ashamed of them.

10. † And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither, went into the synagogue of the Jews.—*ix.* 25: verse 14.

Those who had received the Gospel at Thessalonica, acted now as one man, and were zealous in their efforts to rescue the lives of the Apostles from the perils that threatened them. *Berea*, now *Verria*, was about forty-five miles south-west of Thessalonica, on the *Astræus*, a small tributary of the *Haliæmon*. The modern town has six thousand inhabitants, of whom two hundred are Jews, ten to fifteen hundred Turks, and the rest Greeks. *Went into the synagogue*, &c. Persecution had not cooled their zeal nor weakened their determination. The flight of a servant of God, is merely a change of place, but not of his work, of his mind, of his zeal, or of his love for the cross.

11. *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica*, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

‡ Ps. cxix. 99, 100. † James i. 21; † 1 Peter ii. 2. ‡ Isa. xxiv. 16; Luke xvi. 29; xxiv 44; John v. 39.

More noble—of nobler disposition—stirred up, not to envy, but to inquiry. *Received the word with all readiness of mind*. Heard it, not only without prejudice, but with eager interest. (See Luke viii. 15; John vii. 17.) *Searched the Scriptures*, in order to ascertain whether the claims of Jesus, so zealously alleged and enforced by His Apostle, were well founded or not. They compared the prophecy with the event, the figure with the reality, the anticipation with the history and the fact.

Note, 1. We must search the *Scriptures*. Talk of Reason as a sufficient guide to the race! She has no just claim to any such character, and the individual who should venture to follow her direction, would be like a man carrying a little glimmering taper in his hand at noonday, with his back turned to the sun, as though his taper gave more light than that glorious luminary.

"Dim as the borrowed beams of moon and stars
To lonely, weary, wandering travelers,
Is Reason to the soul; and as on high
Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
Nor light us here; so Reason's glimmering ray
Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
But guide us upward to a better day,
And as those nightly tapers disappear,
When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere,
So, pale grows Reason, at Religion's sight,
So dies, and so dissolves, in supernatural light.

2. We must *search* the Scriptures. The Bible is so constituted as to develop constantly something new. It cannot be disposed of at one reading. It demands a vigorous and persevering exercise of the understanding.

3. We should search the Scriptures *with a teachable mind*. The state of the heart has the chief influence in the search after truth: humility, contrition, simplicity, sanctity, these are the handmaids of the understanding in the investigation of religion.

4. We should read the Scriptures *frequently*. A portion of every day should be set apart for this important work, and no business be allowed to interfere with the appointed duty, connected, as it is, with an interest vast as eternity. And we must read, not merely to *learn* the Divine will, but to *obey* it. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

5. We must examine the Scriptures for *ourselves*. The Bereans were not swayed by the authority of others. They took the old Scriptures in their own hands, unrolled the parchment, and sought the meaning. This is what all should do. There is much talk about the *right* of private judgment, we want more about the *duty*. It is the duty of *every man* to search the Scriptures, and none can neglect to do so, or be prevented from doing so, without fearful guilt. Every man has an understanding to be informed, a heart to be sanctified, a conscience to be quickened, and a soul to be saved, and therefore all

should peruse God's blessed word for themselves. (See Luke xix. 22, 23.)

12. Therefore many of them believed: also of honourable women, which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

They bowed to the force of evidence. It is childish to believe without evidence. It is wicked to resist evidence. It is *noble* to surrender to its force. 1. Their faith was *intelligent*. It came as the result of investigation. It was not a blind prejudice, a traditional idea, it was a living conviction. 2. Their faith was *general*: "Many believed." Influential women and men not a few. It may be that the women are mentioned before the men, because, as it frequently occurs, they were the first who received the faith, and the men were influenced by them. The growth of the kingdom of God depends, indeed, on the house and family, in which woman, unquestionably, finds an appropriate sphere.

13. ¶ But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people. 14. And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea; but Silas and Timotheus abode there still. 15. And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus prior to come to him with all speed, they departed.

^aLuke xii. 51. ^bMatt. x. 23. ^cChap. xviii. 5.

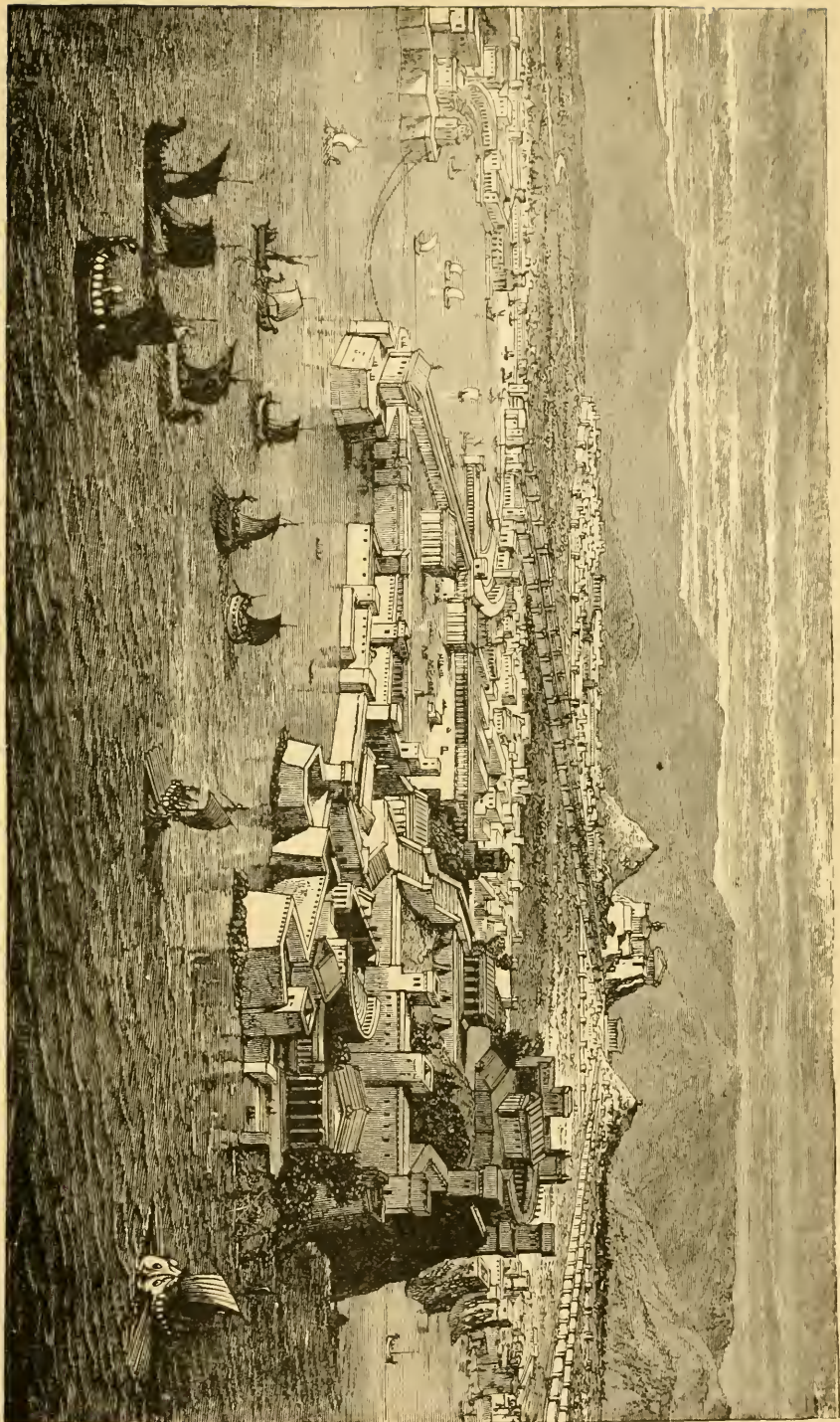
They came thither also. "As Christ sends all His ministers," says an old commentator, "so the devil sends his messengers from place to place, and as the ministers of Christ are never weary of His service for the good of souls, so persecutors are restless; they will compass sea and land to harass and drive the faithful ambassadors of Christ from city to city, and, if it were in their power, to banish them out of the world. Lord! help all thy faithful ministers to execute this piece of holy revenge upon Satan, that we may be even with him for all his malice and spite against us. O, let us endeavor to do all the possible service, and the utmost good we can, wherever we come." *To go as it were*, &c. These words do not mean that they pretended to go the sea, but that they went actually in the direction of the sea. Pydna was the nearest seaport running up from the Ægean Sea. That Paul actually went by sea, although not absolutely certain, is made highly probable, not only by its being easier and usually shorter than the land route, but also by Luke's silence

as to any of the places through which he must have passed if he had gone by land. *Silas and Timotheus abode there still*—"to build it up in its holy faith, to be a comfort and support in its trials and persecutions, and to give it such organization as might be necessary."

Athens, the chief city of ancient Greece, and so named in honor of the heathen deity Minerva, whose name, in Greek, was *Athene*. *They departed*. Paul, on his arrival at Athens, sends (by his conductors, who returned) this message to Silas and Timotheus, to come to him as soon as possible.

16. ¶ Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, this spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.—4Ps. cxix. 136; 2 Peter ii. 8.

Athens was the chief seat of heathen art and wisdom, and the very center of the glories of idolatry. Not content with the deities which the native superstition had established, the ancient Athenians opened their ports with boundless hospitality to the gods and goddesses of foreign countries, although by the law of the land no new object of worship could be admitted. The number of deities who had a local habitation and a name in Athens, increased in process of time to so prodigious an extent, that it became one of the distinguishing features of the city, and the progress of the inhabitants in demon worship was frequently made a subject for the sarcastic wit and satire of the poets and orators of classical antiquity. One writer, for instance, says that it was easier to find a god than a man in it. Another complains that the city was but "one immense altar," and the name by which it came afterward to be proverbially known was "the country and shop of the gods." *His spirit was stirred*, &c. He was thrown into an agony of grief at what he beheld. He had a standard of character unknown to any Athenian sage. He looked upon humanity with a new eye—an eye that peered through all its surroundings into its moral heart. Paul was not dead to the *æsthetic*, but he was intensely alive to the *moral*, and he felt that the *æsthetic* glory of Greece was but a gorgeous covering which genius had woven and spread over a vast cemetery of



ATHENS.

moral corruption. Whilst he could admire the skill that chiseled the marble into such exquisite forms, and piled it into magnificent superstructures, and the ingenuity of intellect, and the adroitness of logic, that propounded and discussed philosophical hypotheses, he felt that all this power was *perverted*, since it was all on the side of idolatry, and this "*stirred*" his spirit. Genius and intellect *wasted*, nay, worse than that, employed for immoral and impious ends, and immortal interests in danger of being wrecked and ruined. As a cultured and earnest friend of temperance gazes without one thrill of admiration on the æsthetic magnificence of some gin-palace, and feels only the most poignant distress at the thought to what the building is devoted, aye, and the greater the display of genius in the architecture, the greater his agony of soul on account of the immoral purposes for which it is employed, so Paul looked at Athens now. There is nothing in mere material civilization, even in its highest forms, to delight a truly enlightened soul.

17. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them, that met with him. 18. Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? Othersome, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection. 19. And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine wherof thou speakest, *ist* 20. For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. 21. (For all the Athenians, and strangers which were there, spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing.)
*viii, 2. *Col. ii. 8. *John xiii. 31; 1 John ii. 7, 8. *Hos. viii. 12.

Therefore, i. e., being aroused by the sight of so much idolatry. The spectacle around him urges him to commence preaching simultaneously to Jews and Greeks. The *market-place* was a place of public resort. *Met with him*, not that there was any formal meeting or previous appointment; the phrase denotes such as happened to be there. The *Epicureans*, or the disciples of Epicurus, who was born at Athens, about A. M. 3603, B. C. 341, were in reality atheists. Although in words they acknowledged God, yet they denied His Providence, and His active superintendence over the world. The soul, according to their notions, was material, and annihilated at death. Pleasure was regarded as the chief good, and although it

is said that their founder meant only that pleasure was the inseparable attendant of virtue, yet his disciples in the days of the Apostle, made sensual pleasure the great end of their existence. The *Stoics* were another sect of Grecian philosophers, who derived their name from *stoa*, "a porch," because Zeno their founder in the fourth century before Christ, and succeeding leaders, as Cleanthes and Chrysippus, used to teach in the painted porch or colonnade at Athens. In their physical doctrines they maintained two first principles, the active and the passive; the passive was matter; the active was God, who was one, though called by many names. Of Him they pantheistically believed that all souls were emanations. They held the entire independence of man, the truly-wise being sufficient in himself, but subject equally with the Deity to inexorable fate. Each person was to live according to the nature of things in general; while as to a future life their notions varied. Some held that all souls were re-absorbed into the Deity; others held the separate existence of all, or of only the good, till the general conflagration. The humbling doctrines of the cross, the preaching of Jesus and the resurrection would, it is clear, be distasteful to such philosophers. Epictetus and the emperor Marcus Aurelius were Stoics.

What. The pride of self-satisfied and scornful reason. *Babbler.* They treated him as a contemptible prating fool, who would speak while he was completely ignorant and destitute of common sense. *Sett forth.* This word Paul retorts upon them, verse 23. *Strange.* Which the Athenians heretofore had not had. *The resurrection*, not only of Christ, but of all the dead, by Christ. Those philosophers thought, doubtless, that some such a hero, or inferior god (as they expressed by *daimones*, or *daimonia*, sometimes distinguished as the *dei minores*), was preached by Paul, when they heard him teaching that Jesus was the Son of God, the Saviour of men, who had been a mighty benefactor to the human race, and after death had been received up into heaven.

Brought him. Conducted him. *Areopagus.* A court consisting of the greatest and most accomplished men of Athens, which

was held on the Hill of Mars, an insulated rock in the midst of the city, and whose peculiar province it was to take cognizance of all matters of religion, such as the introduction of new gods, and the dedication of altars. *New doctrine.* The word signifies *newer*: the new imagination, or system, of the preceding year, month or week, soon became, like an almanac, out of date; it was the taste of the age and place to discard and antiquate every hypothesis as soon as it became vulgar, and to substitute some *newer* scheme in its place, and lively, ingenious students, especially in metaphysics, commonly run into this humor. If Paul, therefore, could start some *newer* speculation than the *newest* fashion of philosophy among them, his doctrine would at least gratify and amuse them. *All the Athenians spent their time but to tell or hear some new thing*, literally, "newer thing," as if what was new, becoming presently stale, they craved something still more new. This lively description of the Athenian character is abundantly attested by their own writers.

22. ¶ Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. 23. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. 24. God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands: 25. Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things: 26. And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation: 27. That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: 28. For in him we live, and move, and have our being: as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. 29. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the God-head is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. 30. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now he commandeth all men everywhere to repent: 31. Because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

¶ *For the court of the Aropanites.* Jer. i. 38. "Or gods that ye worship." Gal. iv. 8. xiv. 15. Matt. xi. 25. 4vii. 48. Ps. i. 8. Joh. xii. 10; Zech. xii. 1. Rom. xi. 36. Mal. ii. 10. Ps. xxxi. 15. xlv. 21. xiv. 17. Col. i. 17. Titus i. 12. Isa. xl. 18, &c. Rom. iii. 25. Luke xxiv. 47. Titus ii. 11, 12. Rom. ii. 16.

In these few words does Paul instruct the ignorance and refute the errors of these heathens.

Ye men of Athens. A style in which Demosthenes and their great orators used to address them. "Men of Athens," not to mere human beings, but to *men*. I speak not to men indiscriminately, but to

"*you men of Athens,*" men of the most exalted city in the world. He is appreciative. He does not parade their evils; he recognizes their excellencies, and gives them full credit for the good he had seen.

I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. The Apostle referred to this familiar inscription as a text, from which to discourse to them on the being and character of the true and living God. It was a dexterous accommodation to a Christian purpose, of one of the favorite customs of that heathen people, for we are not to suppose that by the Deity described as the unknown god, the Athenians meant the pure and spiritual Being whom the Apostle proclaimed. "It was a custom," says Dr. Ellis, "among the ancients, to engrave on the altar the name of the god to whom it was dedicated, which, at Athens, in particular, was necessary to distinguish them amidst a conflux of the most remote and strange ones from all parts of the world."

Was the world made, or has it existed forever? This was one of the questions of the Athenians. *God made the world, and all things therein.* How is He to be worshipped? Will He inhabit the temples built in His honor? Will His favor be conciliated by the precious gifts which are offered at His altar? *He dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, and giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.* "They who worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Does it concern men that there is a God? Are they bound to reverence Him, to consult His will? This the Epicureans denied. He has made men for this very purpose, and determined the bounds of their habitation that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him. Does He notice men's conduct? Are their ways seen by Him, and regarded by Him? *He is not far from every one of us.* Your own writers acknowledge this, for they say, *We are his offspring.* If, then, we are His offspring, he is not like unto gold or stone; He is a living God: *and in him we live, and move, and have our being.* These words must have made a deep impression upon

his hearers. The most splendid images of the gods stood before them—the masterpieces of ancient sculpture—and in sight of them Paul asserts the contrast which there must be between them and God. It is true that the thinkers among the Greeks had risen above such a degraded view of the gods as to suppose that they resembled their images, but anthropomorphism was very prevalent among the people, and in all probability Paul's audience was not entirely composed of philosophers.

Thus does the Apostle lay the foundation. He sweeps away the errors, that he may establish the truth. And then he proceeds to the more immediate subject of his ministry. *And the times of this ignorance God winked at.* The Apostle speaks of the Divine forbearance toward the heathen during the preceding ages, neither cutting them off, nor yet applying the effectual remedy. (Comp. xiv. 16, 17.) God had not seen fit to interpose, and make Himself manifest to those who “did not like to retain Him in their knowledge,” who gave no sign that they were really seeking after Him, and desiring to find Him. Now, however, the time of ignorance was past. *God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.* They are no longer to walk after their own desires; they are no longer to make to themselves gods which are no gods; or think by an outward formal worship to pay that reverence which the Divine majesty requires. Genuine repentance includes the conviction of the conscience, the contrition of the heart, the confession of the mouth, and the conversion of the life. *Because, &c.* Here is a motive presented to the Athenians, suited, if rightly apprehended, to lead them to renounce their unworthy opinions and their sinful practices. Repentance is, of course, indispensable to a preparation for the judgment day. *Appointed a day.* The period is fixed. That day who shall describe? No mortal can. The Judge Himself alone can describe it. He has done so. (See Matt. xxv. 31–46.) Who knows when the day will dawn? No one. It will come, perhaps, as the flood came—whilst men are eating and drinking, &c.; or as Christ came—in the deep hush of darkness, when men were

all asleep. We know not *when*, but we know it is *fixed*. It is registered in His unfulfilled plans. His providence is getting nearer to it every hour. It is “appointed,” it *must* come. *By that man, &c., i. e., the Lord Jesus.* The Father, and Spirit, and His authority, are all one, for they are all one God and one Judge, but judgment shall be particularly exercised and pronounced by our Saviour, God-man, *Jesus Christ.* By that eternal Word, by whom all things were made, all shall be judged, and so, He shall be *THE WORD* in that last act of time, as in the first. The powers of the world and of hell are combined against His throne, therefore, they shall be His foot-stool sitting on that throne. (Comp. Matt. xxv. 31, &c.; John v. 22, 27; Acts x. 42; 2 Cor. v. 10.) *Ordained*—“designated,” pointed out, as well as chosen and appointed. *The world.* Such language, taken in connection with the expression “a day,” beyond doubt teaches that the judgment will, in its essence, be a solemn judicial assize held upon all mankind *at once.* *In righteousness,* not merely righteously or justly, as an epithet of quality or manner, but in the actual and active exercise of righteousness or justice as a moral attribute or trait of character. The judgment here predicted will not only be a just one, but a grand display of God's essential justice. (Comp. Rom. i. 17, iii. 25.) *Hath given assurance,* sure evidence. Though Christ was put to death by the Jews, and thus became a victim for sin, yet God raised Him from the dead. By raising Him from the dead, God has set His seal to the doctrines He has taught; one of these doctrines is, that *He shall judge the world.* (See Matt. xxv. 31, &c.; John v. 25.) His resurrection established by the most incontrovertible evidence is therefore proof, an incontestible proof, that He will judge the world, according to His own declaration. It must be an exceeding joy and comfort to all that have believed on Jesus, that their Redeemer shall be their Judge. He who was judged for them, shall judge them, and pass sentence according to that covenant of grace which holds in Him, pronouncing them free from the wrath which He Himself endured for them, and heirs of that life

which he bought with His dearest blood. And it gives no less accession to the misery of the wicked, that the same Jesus whom they opposed and despised, so many of them as heard anything of Him, shall sit upon their final judgment, and pronounce sentence against them, not partially avenging His own quarrel on them, but most justly returning them the reward of their ungodliness and unbelief.

32. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. 33. So Paul departed from among them. 34. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

*xxvi. 8. *Luke xiv. 18; chap. xxiv. 25.

The idea of existence beyond this present world was not altogether strange to the heathens. Vague notions floated amongst them that the soul might survive and continue to live in some new and different state. But what Paul meant by *the resurrection of the dead*, the resurrection of the whole man, with a body restored to him, with a consciousness of the same being which had lived, and thought, and felt, and acted, in this present world: this was entirely new to them, and when they heard of it, *some mocked*, and thought, no doubt, that it was enough to ask, "How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come? And yet, had they inquired, instead of mocking, they might have found reason to see that it was not incredible that God should raise the dead. If man has been once formed—formed by the hand of a Creator—he may be formed again. God, who gave the first body, can restore "to every man his own body." But the seed fell by the wayside, and "the fowls of the air devoured it." In other cases, when the seed is sown, the surface is less hard, but the event is still the same. So it proved with another class of these

Athenian hearers. *Others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.* It was not so with the Ethiopian, who exclaimed, "Sir, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" It was not so with the gaoler at Philippi, who saw death on the one side and life on the other, and "at the same hour of the night was baptized, he and all his household, straightway." These Athenians put off the subject to a distance. *We will hear thee again of this matter.* Thou hast told an interesting tale. "When we have a convenient season, we will send for thee," and attend to it again. Nay, "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." The voice which, if ye had listened to it, might have been life from the dead; if ye now prove deaf to its summons, ye may hear no more forever.

Notwithstanding the rejection of the Gospel by the multitude at Athens, some received it in its saving power. They joined themselves to the Apostle for further instruction, and so they "believed." Among these was *Dionysius*, one eminent man, and one *woman* sufficiently notable to be named, with a few others nameless. Of any further labors of the Apostle at Athens, and how long he staid, we are not informed. Certainly he was not driven away. But "it is a serious and instructive fact that the mercantile population of Thessalonica and Corinth received the message of God with greater readiness than the highly educated and polished Athenians. Two letters to the Thessalonians, and two to the Corinthians, remain to attest the flourishing state of those Churches. But we possess no letter written by Paul to the Athenians, and we do not read that he was ever in Athens again."

1. What is said of Paul at Thessalonica? 2. What was the effect of his reasoning out of the Scriptures? 3. What did the unbelieving Jews do? 4. What charge did they bring against Jason and certain brethren? 5. To what place were Paul and Silas sent? 6. What is said of the Bereans? 7. What course did the Jews of Thessalonica pursue? 8. To what city was Paul conducted? 9. What effect had the idolatry of Athens upon Paul? 10. What philosophers encountered him? 11. What request was made of him? 12. From what place did he address the men of Athens? 13. Repeat his address. 14. What does God now command all men everywhere to do? 15. What is repentance? 16. What is said of the final judgment? 17. What was said of Paul after he preached the resurrection of the dead? 18. What did he do? 19. Who are mentioned among those that "clave unto him?"

CHAPTER XVIII.

3 Paul laboureth with his hands, and preacheth at Corinth to the Gentiles. 9 The Lord encourageth him in a vision. 12 He is accused before Gallio the deputy, but is dismissed. 18. Afterwards passing from city to city he strengtheneth the disciples. 21 Apollos, being more perfectly instructed by Aquila and Priscilla, 28 preacheth Christ with great efficacy.

AFTER these things, Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth:

The wealthy commercial city of Corinth, situated on the isthmus between the waters of the Ionian and Ægean seas, was at that time also the political capital of Greece, inasmuch as it was the residence of the Roman proconsul. It was celebrated for its wealth and magnificence, as well as for the external refinement of its inhabitants. Cicero calls it "the light of all Greece," and Florus "the glory of Greece." It was populous, and noted for literature. It was, however, infamous for its licentiousness: Venus, the goddess of licentiousness, was worshiped publicly in the city, and a thousand prostitutes were devoted to her service. The inhabitants were addicted to the practice of every vice. "To live like a Corinthian," was a proverbial expression designating a dissipated, profligate life. Corinth is now a miserable village, still bearing the ancient name.

2. And found a certain Jew named ^aAquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla: (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome,) and came unto them.

^aRom. xvi. 3.

Aquila—A Roman name assumed according to custom, signifying eagle, in fact, both *aquila* and *eagle* are different shapes of the same primitive word. *Pontus*—the north-eastern province of Asia Minor. *Priscilla*—Also a Roman name, which was strictly *Prisca* (2 Tim. iv. 19), signifying *antique*. As in our day it is the fancy to use in feminine names the pet termination *ie* (as Lizzie for Elizabeth, and Carrie for Caroline), the Romans used the more euphonious termination *illa*. So Terentia, Prima, Prisca, became Terentilla, Primilla, Priscilla. *Italy*, the country of which Rome was the capital. *Because that Claudius*, &c. The Roman emperor had by an edict expelled all the Jews from the imperial city. Of this Claudius Suetonius, the biographer, narrates the fact, and thus furnishes a strong incidental proof of the

veracity and fidelity of Luke as the chronicler of the events of the Apostolic history. Probably Aquila and his wife thought hard of the Imperial decree that had banished them. But in consequence of this trial they became acquainted with Paul, and had him for their guest, their friend, and companion. And what a companion must a man of his talents and grace have been! And what an advantage must they have derived from his morning and evening devotions, and his example, and his constant conversations! Surely, they would acknowledge, It is good for us that we have been afflicted. *Came unto them, i. e.*, to their house or dwelling, for he had already found them or become acquainted with them. His coming to them seems to imply that they were Christians, although some take *Jew* and *Jews* in the distinctive sense, and suppose that Aquila and Priscilla were among Paul's converts.

3. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tent-makers.—xxx. 34.

Same craft—trade. *Wrought*. The Jews, whatever the rank or circumstances of their family, uniformly bred up their children to the knowledge and practice of some trade, not so much as a source of employment to secure them from the evils of idleness, as to put them in the way of obtaining a livelihood, should they ever be reduced by misfortune to the necessity of laboring for the day passing over them. Paul was really poor. Mark his disinterestedness! (See xx. 34; 1 Cor. ix. 12; 2 Cor. vii. 2; 1 Thes. ii. 9; 2 Thes. iii. 8.) It was suspected by many that the holy men entrusted with the first promulgation of the Gospel, were seeking their own advantage and promotion. How could Paul remove such an unhappy and unfounded construction of his measures and motives? Here was reason and room for betaking himself to a secular vocation for a livelihood. The general opinion now is that he was a maker of tents from the "Cilicium" or hair-cloth of Cilician goods. The Church owes her ministers a competent support. This is not a gratuity—but a *debt*. (See 1 Cor. ix. 4, &c.) This Paul well understood. But he waived his right

to remuneration for his services, lest, *through the peculiarity of the people among whom he labored, and the age in which he lived*, the Word of God might not have free course. As God's people, we must not be so strenuous and rigid in the maintenance even of our rights, as to imperil the cause of our Redeemer, or to bring discredit upon our holy profession, or exhibit even "the appearance of evil." *Tent-makers*—a business which, owing to tents being in great requisition by all classes in the hot season, was generally a lucrative one.

From Paul at tent-making, we learn, 1. That holy men may to all outward eyes, appear exactly like other people. 2. That true holiness is not made up of extraordinary acts. 3. That a busy life is not incompatible with a life of devotion. We need not turn our backs on the world to save our souls:

"We need not bid, for cloister'd cell,
Our neighbor and our work farewell,
The trivial round, the common task,
May furnish all we ought to ask,
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us, daily, nearer God."

4. And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. 5. And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. 6. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook *this* raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads, I am clear: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. ^aChap. xvii. 2. ^bChap. xvii. 14, 15. ^cOr, *is the Christ*. ^dTim. ii. 25. ^eNeh. v. 13. ^fEzek. xxxiii. 4.

Reasoned in the synagogue. (See on chap. xvii. 2). When Silas and Timotheus. They were left at Berea, and directed to follow Paul (chap. xvii. 14, 15) and Timothy joined him at Athens, and thence was sent back to Thessalonica (1 Thes. iii. 2, 5, 6), he now appears to have returned with Silas from Macedonia. *Pressed in the spirit.* The tidings brought by them of the great proficiency and piety of the Macedonian Churches (1 Thes. iii. 6) appears to have incited Paul, and made him more earnest to gain the Jews at Corinth. *When they opposed*—systematically opposed, put themselves in warlike order against him, so the word implies. *And blasphemed.* "This," says Dr. A. Clark, "is precisely the way in which they still act. They have no argument against Jesus being the Messiah, but, having made a covenant with unbelief, as soon as they are pressed on this point, they rail and

blaspheme." *He shook his raiment.* He shook the dust out of his garments, as (chap. xiii. 51) he shook off the dust of his feet. This was an expressive act of shaking off the guilt of their condemnation, and indicating that he would have nothing more to do with them. *Your blood, &c.* The guilt of your destruction is your own, an allusion perhaps to Ezek. iii. 4-9. *I will go unto the Gentiles.* This does not mean an entire renunciation of the Jews, but only that he would no longer preach to the Jews of that place. Thus he avowed his intention to the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia (chap. xiii. 46), yet in the next adjoining city of Iconium he entered into the synagogue, and preached. (Chap. xiii. 51, xiv. 1.) Such Divine severity on the part of Paul, was due, not only to the dignity of the preached Gospel, but also to these obstinate souls themselves; it might possibly make a salutary impression on them. But a carnal zeal cannot justify itself by this example. Let him who desires to say with a clear conviction, like the Apostle, that he is not stained with the blood of the lost, previously examine whether he has performed all that the Apostle did in the case of these hardened men.

7. And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. 8. And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord, with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized. ^a1 Cor. i. 14.

Justus is called a worshiper of God, that is, a Jewish proselyte, to intimate that he was a Gentile by birth. Paul entered his house, and it joined hard to the synagogue. The nearer the church, the proverb is, the farther from God. This is founded on the observation, that what men can easily reach, and enjoy, they often neglect. It was a trial of principle in this man to open his house to Paul. It would create him inconvenience, trouble, and expense, and it would draw upon him anger and reproach, as it was an open avowal of his adherence to the cause, and he knew that the sect was everywhere spoken against. How many professors of religion, yielding to their selfish and dastardly reasonings, would have refused. *Bunyan*, with as much truth as genius, places all the pil-

grims under the conduct of Mr. Great-Heart. It is to intimate that we shall need courage every step of the way to the Shining City. Let us not consult with flesh and blood, but only with conviction, and go forth to the Saviour without the camp, bearing His reproach. *The chief ruler, &c.* The definite form of the expression may merely designate him as a person of some note, "Crispus, the (well-known) ruler of the synagogue," just as we say, "the Apostle Paul," "the Prophet Daniel," although there were many other prophets and apostles. *Believed on the Lord, &c.* There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. But here a man of some rank and influence, believes—nor is this all, his *house* too is added to the Lord, yea, and many of the Corinthians *hearing* of Crispus' conversion, and Paul's word, *believed, and were baptized.* "Rulers and great men (says one) are looking-glasses, in the places where they live, by which many dress themselves."

9. Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: 10. For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee, to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. 11. And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

¶ Matt. xviii. 20

Be not afraid. The Apostle was not a timid man. Of a firm and ardent temper, he engaged with earnestness in any enterprise, and was prepared to abide by his purpose, in the face of opposition. But the most courageous are but men, who may experience moments of weakness, and disappoint the expectations of others by a cowardly flight from danger. Jesus Christ, therefore, appeared to His faithful servant, to assure him of His assistance and protection. There were other trials awaiting him, besides those which he had already undergone. *Speak, and hold not thy peace.* The policy of worldly men seeks by flattery to gain the heart, and thus to make sure of the object of its arts, who will suffer himself to be led in the chains of vanity and self love, a captive at its pleasure. What is agreeable and soothing is readily told, but if anything would wound the pride of others, or offend their prejudices, the salutary truth is buried in silence. The Apostles of Jesus Christ renounced the artifices of dishonesty. Their

aim was not the praise of men, but their salvation, not their own private interests, but the honor of their Master, and to accomplish these important ends they did not "hold their peace," although they foresaw that their words should excite the ridicule or the indignation of their audience. In the present case, Paul was assured, not that his doctrine should be applauded, and his person held in admiration, nor that he should escape without reproach, and suffer no sort of molestation, but solely that *no man should set on him, to hurt him.* He might be persecuted, but he should not be destroyed. *For I have much people in this city.* This expression takes in all who should, according to the gracious purpose of Christ, be converted to Christianity. "Here are many souls whom I design effectually to call and bring home by thy ministry." What encouragement to Paul to go forth among them as the minister of reconciliation—what encouragement for every Christian minister as regards the people among whom he labors! *Continued, &c.* Continued prayer, much patience, great confidence in God, fervent zeal—are the means by which the interests of the cause of God are promoted.

12. ¶ And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment-seat. 13. Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. 14. And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, I reason would that I should hear with you: 15. But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it, for I will be no judge of such matters. 16. And he drave them from the judgment-seat. 17. Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment-seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.

¶ James ii. 6. ¶ Rom. xiii. 3. ¶ John xviii. 31; chap. xxii. 29; xxv. 11, 19. ¶ 1 Cor. i. 1.

Gallio. His original name was Marcus Annæus Novatus; but, having been adopted into the family of the rhetorician Lucius Junius Gallio, he took the name of Junius Annæus Gallio. He was brother of Lucius Annæus Seneca, the philosopher. *Deputy.* Here is disclosed another instance of Luke's minute accuracy. Gallio was deputed by the Senate during the reign of Claudius, and was, therefore, a proconsul, as Luke says. But under the preceding reigns the ruler was sent by the emperor, and so was not a *proconsul*, but a *legatus*. There is historical evidence that Gallio was in Achaia about the time of

Paul's visit, and he appears to have resigned his office on account of ill health, proclaiming that it was "a disease not of the body, but of the climate." *Made insurrection*, or, rose up against. The *judgment seat* is mentioned three times in the course of this narrative. (See verses 16, 17.) It was of two kinds: (1.) fixed in some public and open place; (2.) movable, and taken by the Roman magistrates to be placed wherever they might sit in a judicial character. Probably here as in the case of Pilate (John xix. 13), the former kind of seat is intended.

Saying, This fellow. Fellow is not expressed in Greek, it is supplied by our translators. *Contrary to the law*, not the Jewish, but the Roman law, for Gallio, as a Roman magistrate, would concern himself only with the latter. *Matter of wrong*, literally, an injustice. *Or wicked lewdness*—reckless immorality, as distinguished from a legal act. *Reason would that I should bear with you.* A Roman magistrate could take cognizance of injustice and gross immorality. *Words.* So far as the doctrines were concerned, Gallio would consider them only as so many words. *Names*—of persons, as *Moses* and *Jesus*, which probably occurred in the statement of the prosecutors, and which Gallio would consider as mere names. *I will be no judge*, &c. It was out of his province to take cognizance of such questions. The Roman laws allowed the Jews to regulate their religious affairs in their own way. The magistrate who dares to interfere with the religious opinions of the people, incurs an amount of responsibility too great for any man to bear. He who dares to legislate for conscience, not only insults his Maker, but perpetrates an injury upon himself. Religion is not to be settled in courts of law but in courts of conscience.

"Let Cesar's due be ever paid,
To Cesar and his throne;
But consciences and souls were made
To be the Lord's alone."

And he drave them from the judgment seat, he dispersed them. The verb shows that they left reluctantly, but not that any violence was used. A peremptory refusal, a decisive manner would be sufficient for the purpose. *Then all the Greeks*, &c. The meaning seems to be, that when the pro-

consul so cavalierly sent them off, the Greeks who had been looking on expressed their indignation, and gave vent to their long cherished hatred of the Jews, by beating their official representative. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Society often gives back to a man what he has given it. The persecutor is often persecuted. *Sosthenes, the chief ruler*, &c. It is not necessary to assume that Sosthenes was the successor of Crispus, or the ruler of another synagogue, as the office probably was not elective, and was held by a plurality of persons. *And beat him*, &c. Probably just as Sosthenes came out of the court, the mob laid hold of him, in a riotous manner, and beat him, probably with their fists.

And Gallio cared for none of those things. This means something more than *magisterial* unconcernedness to the religious disputes which the Jews now brought under his notice. There is reference, we think, to his *personal* indifference concerning religious questions themselves. As an educated, moral and high-minded Roman, he regarded the religion of Paul as *beneath his notice*. Gibbon tells us that the various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world, "were all considered by the people as equally true, by the philosophers as equally false, and by the magistrates as equally useful." Gallio, therefore, we take as a type of this prevailing *religious indifference*. This is one of the greatest and most prevalent evils of this age too, and it is infidelity in its worst form. Mere theoretical infidelity can be put down by argument. But *this* is beyond the reach of all logic. When ministers endeavor to convince the ignorant, or to rouse the unthinking, they feel some hope, but as for those who have heard the Gospel from their infancy, or who have sat under it long enough to learn distinctly and familiarly all the truths it contains, and rest satisfied, regardless of the influence of these things in their hearts and lives, *these* are the most likely to drive ministers to despair, and to be summoned to meet God, unprepared for the solemn interview.

18. † And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila, having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

19. And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. 20. When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not: 21. But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus. 22. And when he had landed at Cesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch. 23. And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples. 24. And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord: and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. 26. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. 27. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: 28. For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

† Num. vi. 18; chap. xxi. 24. † Rom. xvi. 1. † xvii. 2. † xix. 21, xx. 16. † 1 Cor. iv. 19; James iv. 15. † Gal. i. 2. † xiv. 22, xv. 32, 41. † 1 Cor. i. 12, iii. 5, 6; Titus iii. 13. † Rom. xii. 11; James v. 16. † xix. 3. † 1leb. vi. 1; 2 Peter iii. 18. † 1 Cor. iii. 6. † Eph. ii. 8. † John v. 39. † Or, is the Christ, verse 5.

The brethren. The converts who composed the infant Church. *Sailed thence, for Antioch, in Syria.* Having shorn his head in Cenchrea, the eastern port of Corinth, distant about ten miles. A Church had been gathered here. (Rom. xvi. 1.) The modern name is Kirkries, a little south of Kalamaki, and under the traveler's eye, therefore, who crosses the isthmus. *For he (Paul) had a vow.* That it was the Nazarite vow (Num. vi.) is not likely. It was probably one made in one of his seasons of difficulty or danger, in prosecution of which he cuts off his hair and hastens to Jerusalem to offer the requisite sacrifice within the prescribed thirty days. (*Josephus, Jewish War*, ii. 15, 1.) This explains the haste with which he leaves Ephesus (verse 21), and the subsequent observance, on the recommendation of the brethren, of a similar vow. (Chap. xxi. 24.) This one at Corinth was voluntary, and shows that even in heathen countries he systematically studied the prejudices of his Jewish brethren. *Ephesus* was the ancient capital of Ionia, and at this time, of the Roman proconsular province of Asia, on the Cayster, near the coast, between Smyrna and Miletus. It was famed for its commerce, but even more for its magnificent temple of Artemis (Diana). See xix. 24, 27, and notes. *I must by all means keep this feast.* It must have been one of the principal feasts, which Paul was so anxious to keep at Jerusalem, in all probability the Passover or Pentecost. In either case we dis-

cover here that the Apostle made the journey in the spring of the year.

Landed at Cesarea. This city was formerly called Strato's Tower. It is situated on the coast of the Mediterranean, at the mouth of a small river, and has a fine harbor. It is 36 miles south of Acre, about 62 miles north-west of Jerusalem, and about the same distance north-east of Azotus. This city is supposed by some to be the Ilazor mentioned in Joshua xi. 1. It was rebuilt by Herod the Great, and named Cesarea in honor of Augustus Cæsar. The city was dedicated to him. The seaport was called Sebaste, the Greek word for Augustus. It was adorned with most splendid houses, and the temple of Cæsar was erected by Herod over against the mouth of the haven, in which was placed the statue of the Roman emperor. It became the seat of the Roman governor while Judea was a Roman province.

And gone up, i. e., to Jerusalem. And saluted the church, i. e., the mother-Church there, the only one that would be absolutely so-called, he went down (from Jerusalem again) *to Antioch*, thus returning to his point of departure, as he did at the close of his first mission. (See on chap. xiv. 23.) Here observe, 1. No hostile hatred restrains Paul, where the Lord sends him (verse 19). 2. No brotherly love retains him when the Lord calls him away (verse 20.) 3. No place is too distant to him; he hastens when the Spirit draws him thither (verse 21). 4. No place is too pleasant to him; he takes his leave when the Lord cannot use him there (verse 22).

After he had spent some time, &c. This was the commencement of Paul's third missionary journey. It is probable that his residence at Antioch at this time was short, and that he left it in the year A. D. 54 or 55. He visited those churches in Galatia and Phrygia which he had already established. *Strengthening all the disciples*, confirming them in the faith of the Gospel. The direction the Apostle now took was the reverse of his former journey: then, "he went through Phrygia and the region of Galatia" (Acts xvi. 6), but now he goes first to Galatia, and then to Phrygia, and the reason was, because he

had proconsular Asia, adjoining to Phrygia, and especially Ephesus, in view. "Lord," says *Burkitt*, "what a pattern is here of ministerial diligence and faithfulness! What pains did Paul take! What hazards did he run, in planting and propagating the Gospel of Christ! In labors more abundant, in sufferings above measure! Well might he say, *I am able to do all things through Christ that strengthens me*. And, blessed be God, the same power that assisted him, stands ready to succor us, and if ever He calls us to extraordinary service, He will come in with more than extraordinary strength."

And a certain Jew, &c. The historian here breaks away for a moment from the narrative of the third missionary tour of the Apostle to introduce the name, character, and doings of a celebrated Jew, named "Apollonius," which is contracted for Apollonios, as Artemas for Artemonius. This episode is so interesting and instructive, that we have reason to be thankful for the momentary interruption of the narrative concerning Paul. *Born at Alexandria.* A distinguished city in the north of Egypt, on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. It was founded by Alexander the Great, three hundred and thirty years before Christ, and became the center of commercial intercourse between the eastern and the western world. It was an exceedingly prosperous city, and numbered, at one time, six hundred thousand inhabitants. In the year of our Lord 26, it fell into the power of the Romans. Large numbers of Jews had their abode there. *Neander* thinks that Apollonius, as a native of Alexandria, had received probably the Jewish-Grecian education, peculiar to the learned among the Jews of that city, and had acquired also great facility in the use of the Greek language. *Eloquent, or learned.* The first sense is the best, because "mighty in the Scriptures" ascribes to him then a different talent, and because his superior faculty as a speaker appears to have been the reason why some of the Corinthians preferred him to Paul. (See 1 Cor. i. 12, ii. 4; 2 Cor. x. 10.) Eloquence is a noble gift of God, when it is properly employed, whether in ecclesiastical or in secular

affairs, but when it is abused, it is like a sword in the hand of a madman.

Mighty in the Scriptures. He possessed an intimate and accurate knowledge of the Old Testament, and an extraordinary ability to explain and apply it. *Ephesus.* (See on verse 19.) It is not the mere knowledge of the literal sense of the Scriptures, but a blessed experience of the power of Divine truth in the heart, by which a teacher becomes mighty in the Scriptures.

This man was instructed. With regard to the Christian knowledge of Apollonius, Luke describes him as a man acquainted, to a certain extent, *with the way of the Lord*, that is, with the Divine plan of salvation, or the Divine purpose to enlighten and redeem Israel, and, indeed, all mankind, through the Messiah. Still, he needed more precise explanations and instructions respecting the way of God. (Verse 26.) *Being fervent in the spirit*, literally means boiling, and is a phrase used by the Apostle in another place. (Rom. xii. 11.) *Diligently.* This is not the meaning of the Greek word, but accurately, exactly, or correctly. *Knowing only the baptism of John.* He was instructed, probably, by some disciple of the Baptist, in the whole circle of John's teaching concerning Jesus, but no more: he had yet to learn the new light which the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost had thrown upon the Redeemer's death and resurrection, as appears from chap. xix. 2, 3. It is well to see a man using the light he has. It shows that he is sincere and in earnest.

Began. Opened his ministry in Ephesus after he came. *Had heard.* They discerned what he needed. *Expounded.* By private instruction. *More perfectly*, rather, *more accurately.* *Into Achaia*, of which Corinth was the capital. *The brethren wrote, &c.* Gave him letters of recommendation. *Helped them, &c.* He contributed greatly by his prayers, preaching, and example, to the spiritual benefit of those who, through the grace or favor of God, had become Christians. *Mightily convinced.* "Confuted the Jews." *Publicly.* Preaching in the synagogues and elsewhere, in public controversies. *Shewing by the Scrip-*

tures. Proving from the predictions of the Old Testament: *that Jesus was Christ*—that the Messiah was Jesus, none other than He. (Comp. verse 5.)

1. To what place did Paul go from Athens? 2. What is said of Aquila and Priscilla? 3. What is recorded of Paul in relation to the synagogue? 4. What did he do to them that opposed themselves and blasphemed? 5. What is said of Justus? 6. What of Crispus? 7. What did the Lord say to Paul by a vision? 8. When did the Jews make insurrection against Paul? 9. What did Gallio say to the Jews? 10. What did he do? 11. What was done to Sosthenes? 12. Where did Paul next go? 13. Why was his head shorn? 14. What did he do at Ephesus? 15. What is said of Apollos? 16. What did Aquila and Priscilla do to him? 17. What is said of him when he was disposed to pass into Achaia?

CHAPTER XIX.

6 *The Holy Ghost is given by Paul's hands.* 9 *The Jews blaspheme his doctrine, which is confirmed by miracles.* 13 *The Jewish exorcists are beaten by the devil.* 19 *Conjuring books are burnt.* 24 *Demetrius, for love of gain, raiseth an uproar against Paul,* 35 *which is appeased by the town-clerk.*

AND it came to pass, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, 2. He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.—1 Cor. iii. 5, 6. viii. 16; 1 Sam. iii. 7.

While Apollos was at Corinth. This notice apprises us that Paul did not arrive at Ephesus till after the departure of Apollos. *The upper coasts* here may refer to Phrygia and Galatia, or the country between them and Ephesus. *Ephesus.* (See on xviii. 19). The certain disciples whom Paul found at Ephesus, seem to have been disciples of John, who, having acquired some knowledge of Jesus, and of the evidences of His Divine mission, believed in Him as the Messiah whose approach their Master had proclaimed. But, from circumstances of which we are not informed, the distance, perhaps, at which they lived from Judea, or the want of an opportunity to hear the Apostles, or to converse with any of the Christians, they entertained a very imperfect idea of the nature and privileges of the new dispensation, for when Paul asked them whether they had received the Holy Ghost, they answered, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." In the New Testament, this name sometimes signifies the operations of the Spirit, and in several passages, not His sanctifying, but His miraculous

influences. In the latter sense it must, at present, be understood, for Paul did not inquire whether those disciples had been regenerated, but whether the extraordinary gifts, which were then common, had been communicated to them. When they did receive the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands, we read, that "they spake with tongues, and prophesied." (Verse 6).

We have not so much as heard, &c. They were not apprised of the miraculous dispensation which had commenced on the day of Pentecost. They had not heard that the Holy Ghost was restored to Israel, who, according to the saying of the Rabbis, departed from it, after the death of Zechariah and Malachi. In like manner, it is said, on a certain occasion, of Samuel, who had been trained up in the fear of God from his infancy, and was then ministering in the tabernacle, that "he did not yet know the Lord," that is, as we learn from the words which immediately follow, that he had not yet been favored with any vision, or revelation.

3. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6. And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them: and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. 7. And all the men were about twelve. cxviii. 25. Matt. iii. 11. John i. 15, 27, 30. viii. 16; 1 Cor. i. 13. viii. 17. ii. 4, x. 46. 1 Cor. xiv. 1, &c.

Paul was surprised at their answer, and said unto them, *Unto what then were ye baptized?* From their answer it is evident that they had been baptized by John him-

self, or by his disciples, and had received no other baptism. Although they believed in Christ, therefore they were not properly members of the visible Church, into which converts were received by that sacred rite. *John verily baptized with the baptism of (water unto) repentance.* (See on Matt. iii. 11). John baptized his disciples into the faith of the Messiah *as to come*, we are baptized into the faith of Him *as actually come*. The baptism of John was evidently designed to serve a temporary purpose, in common with all the other parts of his ministry; the baptism of Christ is to continue to the end of the world. The one did not properly belong to the Christian dispensation, but was preparatory to it, the other is an ordinance given by our Saviour to His Church, to supply the place of circumcision. Christian baptism is administered in the name of the persons of the Trinity, whereas we have no evidence that the Divine Persons were explicitly recognized in the baptism of John. From these considerations it appears that the two ordinances differ so much in their form, in their design, and in their relation to the present dispensation, that they may be regarded as perfectly distinct, and consequently, that a person who had been baptized by John might have been baptized again by an Apostle.

Laid his hands, &c. (See on viii. 17.) *The Holy Ghost came on them.* They received the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. (See on verse 2). *Spake with tongues, and prophesied*—they spake with other, and to them, strange and foreign tongues, and sustained the character of prophets and inspired teachers. *About.* It was unnecessary to state the precise number. The expression may have been intended to preclude the false impression, that all the brethren in Ephesus were in this infantile state of ignorance and backwardness. *All* may then be understood to mean *all told*, or at the most.

8. ¶ And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing, and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. 9. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. 10. And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwell in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. 11. And God wrought special

miracles by the hands of Paul. 12. So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. 13. ¶ Rom. xi. 7; Heb. iii. 13. 14. ¶ xviii. 19. 15. ¶ xxviii. 23. 16. ¶ Tim. i. 15; 2 Peter ii. 22; Jude 10. 17. ¶ Verse 23. 18. ¶ Tim. vi. 3. 19. ¶ xx. 31. 20. ¶ Matt. xvi. 20. 21. ¶ Verse 15.

Synagogue Spake boldly three months. We have often remarked that Paul, in every place, made his first offers of salvation to the *Jews*, and it was only when they rejected it that he turned to the *Gentiles*. (See xviii. 6). *Disputing, and persuading*, holding conversations with them, in order to convince them of the truth of the doctrine of Christ. He gave them reasons to sustain his propositions. He plied them with motives. *When divers were hardened, &c.* The same sun that softens the wax, hardens the clay: the same doctrine of the Gospel becomes the savour of death unto death unto some, which is the savour of life unto others. Woe be to that people, who by their habitual hardness, through their actual resisting the impressions of God's Word, provoke the Almighty to superadd judicial hardness of heart to them, making their sin to become their punishment. *School of one Tyrannus*—Ephesus was a Greek city; literature, philosophy, poetry, and rhetoric flourished here. Driven from the synagogue, therefore, the Apostle took to the *school*; doubtless a school of a Greek rhetorician. Here he found a roomy apartment and full congregations.

This continued, &c., i.e., this lecture room was open to Paul, not only on the Sabbath, but also at other times, and was used by him for two years (A. D. 55-57); this period is undoubtedly to be understood as exclusive of the three months mentioned in verse 8. *All, &c.* The meaning is that the Gospel spread far and wide through Asia Minor. It is probable that at this time the seven Churches addressed in the Book of Revelation were planted. During these two years and three months likewise it is supposed Paul wrote his epistle to the Galatians and the first to the Corinthians. It should be observed that the preaching of Paul and the other Apostles was not in secret and obscure places, but in the greatest cities of the known world, abounding with learning, talents, and philosophy—such as Antioch, Corinth, Athens, Ephesus, Rome. And it was not

merely to the ignorant multitude they addressed themselves in those places, but to all indiscriminately, rich and poor, great and small, learned and illiterate: that while they instructed every one, they might not seem to shrink from the most sagacious and even malicious inquiry. We have seen what stay Paul made at some of the cities now mentioned. An immense number of people resorted to Ephesus, which was the capital and emporium of Asia Minor, on all kinds of business, religious, political, and commercial. No scene therefore could have been more fit for this active Apostle.

Special (no ordinary) miracles. Paul's supernatural ministry was, 1. *Derived.* Unlike Christ he had not the power of working miracles natural in himself. *God wrought them by his hands.* 2. *Beneficent.* It was put forth, not to wound or to injure men, but to heal and to bless them. 3. *Strikingly manifest.* The mere handkerchiefs or aprons which touched his body carried with them virtue to heal the diseased and to expel the devil from the possessed. "The rationalists, and semi-rationalists," says an eminent commentator, "are much troubled to clear the fact related, that such handkerchiefs and aprons were instrumental in working the cures, from participation in what they are pleased to call a popular notion founded in superstition and error. But in this and similar narratives (see verse 15 note) Christian faith finds no difficulty whatever. All miraculous working is an exertion of the direct power of the All-powerful; a suspension by Him of His ordinary laws, and whether he will use any instrument in doing this, or what instrument, must depend altogether on His own purpose in the miracle—the effect to be produced on the recipients, beholders, or hearers. Without His special selection and enabling, all instruments were vain, with these, all are capable. In the present case, as before (in verse 15), it was His purpose to exalt His Apostle as the Herald of His Gospel, and to lay in Ephesus the strong foundation of His Church. And He therefore endues him with this extraordinary power. But to argue by analogy from such a case—to suppose that our Lord was able, and Peter, and Paul, and in Old Testament

times Elisha, were enabled to exert this peculiar power, therefore the same will be possessed by the body or relics of every real or supposed saint, is the height of folly and fanaticism. The true analogy tends directly the other way. In no cases but these do we find the power, even in the Apostolic days: and the general cessation of all extraordinary gifts of the Spirit would lead us to the inference that *à fortiori* these, which were even then the rarest, have ceased also."

13. ¶ Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, we adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth.
*Matt. ix. 38. *Josh. vi. 26. *Luke ix. 49.

It was a righteous judgment of God, that the people to whose care the true Word of God had been previously intrusted, should now, when they forsook the truth, addict themselves to the most degrading magic arts. There were many impostors who attempted to imitate the Apostles. But what was their aim? Not to teach the truth, nor to aid in the work of converting men; such a thought never occurred to them. They attempted to imitate the miracles and deeds which had raised the Apostles to so high an eminence, and thus acquire similar distinction. False teachers still adopt the same course. It is not their object to impart a knowledge of the truth to others, and lead them in the way of salvation, but rather to gain power and influence; hence they adopt the color and plumes of the true servants of God.

14. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. 15. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye? 16. And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17. And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus, and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18. And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.
*Luke viii. 29. *Luke i. 65. chap. ii. 43. *Matt. iii. 6. v. 5, 11; Rom. x. 10.

Seven. On this very number the exorcists seem to have relied. In our day superstition ascribes a power to cure diseases to seven sons, or a seventh son. Nothing is known of this *Sceva* but what is mentioned here. It is possible that the designation of him here has reference to the worship of Diana, and that he was a renegade or apostate Jew. This is the less improbable because the Greek word here rendered "chief of the priests" was not

only in general use among the heathen, but occurs repeatedly on coins and in other inscriptions relating to the worship of Diana at Ephesus. *The evil spirit answered*—speaking from within the man and using his organs. *The Jesus* (whom you invoke) *I know, i. e.,* His authority and power, and *the Paul* (whom you name) *I know well* as the servant, messenger of God. (Comp. xvi. 17). The question—*Who are ye?* is expressive both of indignation and contempt, in which sense it is familiar to the dialect of common life. It is here equivalent to saying, What right have you to use this venerable name, at which the very devils tremble? (See James ii. 19.)

And the man in whom the evil spirit was. Mark the clear line of demarcation here between "*the evil spirit* which answered and said," and "*the man in whom the evil spirit was.*" The reality of such possessions could not be more clearly expressed. *Leaped on them so that they fled naked and wounded.* This was so appalling a testimony at once against those profane impostors and in favor of Paul and the Master whom he preached, that we wonder not it spread to "all the Jews and Greeks at Ephesus, that *fear fell on them all, and that the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.*" Heaven employs evil to punish evil. The evil spirit, by the Divine permission, acts the office of justice and wreaks vengeance on the heads of these religious pretenders. As a rule, God punishes wickedness by wickedness. The sinner is the tormentor of the sinner here and everywhere, now and forever. Providence, the Divine handmaid of truth, often permits, and often creates, events in a community that startle them like the blast of a thousand trumpets, and force them into new strains of thought. Sometimes, as in the case before us, the abominations of a spurious Christianity have so broken forth upon the public mind as to startle it from its slumbers, and to excite it into earnest inquiry after truth. *Their deeds,* the evil deeds in which they had been engaged before they became believers. They became more deeply impressed with the necessity of an ample confession of their former evil courses of life, and of an honest avowal of a deter-

mination to forsake such practices. The defeat of the sons of Sceva, and the evidence of the invincible power of Jesus, quickened the consciences of some who had professed to believe, but who had, perhaps, retained some secret evil practices.

19. Many of them also which used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20. So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.—xii. 24.

Many—Even magicians may be converted. (viii. 13.) *Curious arts*—magic arts, in great variety. *Brought . . . together*—with great unanimity. Here is a remarkable illustration of the force of conscience. The events struck the moral chords of the soul into thunder. Conscience rose from serfdom to sovereignty. There is no better evidence of the truth of a person's conversion, than cheerfully to part with a very profitable and pleasing lust. *Their books*—True religion abolishes bad books. Ephesus burned up curious and bad books as accursed, when the Word of the Lord began to prevail. Burning such books was better than to sell them, even though the money had been spent upon the poor. *Fifty thousand* (literally, *five myriads*) of silver, but of what denomination is not mentioned, although commonly supposed to be the Attic drachma, varying in value from fifteen to seventeen cents of our money, making a total of at least seven or eight thousand dollars. Like these magicians, we, if our repentance of sin be genuine, will not be able to rest till we have not merely confessed and deplored, but *put away* from us the accursed thing, till we have relinquished every unholy profit, and given up every unlawful or questionable enjoyment. *This* may fairly be assumed, indeed, as a test by which to determine the strength with which the Gospel of Christ has been brought to bear upon ourselves. Has it ever influenced us thus? Has it operated thus powerfully to the pulling down of the strongholds of sin, even though the sacrifice be costly and self-denying? Has everything displeasing to God been relinquished—everything contrary to His will and His commands been given up? Or, if this be saying too much, have we at least good reason to hope that there is no profit, and no plea-

sure, and no pursuit, which we are not anxious to sacrifice to the will and the honor of our God? Happy are they whose religion abounds in such unquestionable fruits as these; they proclaim at once the tree of the Lord's planting, whose leaf shall not wither, whose root is imbedded deep in the Rock of Ages, and whose head has risen above the mists and damps of this world of sin, and is bearing much fruit in the perpetual sunshine which lies beyond them. *Grew the word.* As all these dark superstitions flowed from the one great Ephesian idolatry, so their exposure disgraced the system, and wrought a sense in men's minds of the true Divinity of Christianity. "This one word 'So,'" remarks a distinguished scholar, "is truly a Divine *Amen*, a testimony coming from heaven: This is my beloved congregation in which I am well pleased." Lord! Grant Thy grace, so that Thou mayest hear such testimony in favor of every congregation which confesses Thy name, and that the earnest efforts of Thy people to free themselves even from the most secret cursed thing (Dent. vii. 26) may be made manifest, so that the world may have no other reproach to make except this—that they zealously follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. (1 Heb. xii. 14).

21. ¶ After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.

Gal. ii. 1. Rom. xv. 23, 28.

These things, the occurrences of verses 19, 20. In the Spirit, that is, in mind, an expression mostly used by Paul (see Rom. i. 9, viii. 16, xii. 11; 1 Cor. ii. 4, v. 3, 4, xiv. 14, and other places). He proposed to visit again Macedonia and Achaia, through which provinces he had passed on his former tour. (xvi. 10, xvii. 15, xviii. 1). *I must also see Rome.* Jerusalem and Rome, the two metropolitan cities, the one ecclesiastically, the other politically. The same purpose is expressed in his epistle to the Romans, xv. 28, 29. The perfect and unstudied agreement of these passages with that before us, is one of the incidental evidences in favor of the genuineness of the inspired record. Paul's object in seeing Rome, was not mainly, if indeed at all, in order to gratify curiosity, study the in-

stitutions and habits of a wonderful people, enrich his experience of life, and increase his acquaintance with men and things—but to carry the Gospel into the heart of the imperial city. And his purpose to visit Rome indicates his *belief* in three things: 1. That Christianity could stand the scrutiny of the most enlightened people. 2. That no intellectual or social advancement can supersede the necessity of the Gospel. 3. That the work of evangelization should have a special regard to the most influential centers of population.

22. So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

Rom. xvi. 23; 2 Tim. iv. 20.

He sent into Macedonia, i. e., probably to Thessalonica and Philippi. *That ministered to him*, both as personal attendants and as fellow-laborers in the Gospel. *Erastus* may be the person of that name in 2 Tim. iv. 20, but as he traveled with Paul, the best critics distinguish him from the Erastus in Rom. xvi. 23. The office of the latter as "treasurer of the city" would demand his more constant presence at Corinth. Timothy and Erastus were probably sent before to set on foot the collections mentioned in 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 10. *But he himself, &c.* In the first epistle to the Corinthians, written shortly after he had sent away Timothy, the Apostle writes, "I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost." (1 Cor. xvi. 8). He remained in Ephesus, the capital of Asia, some time, for the good of Asia.

23. And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. 24. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, whom no small gain unto the craftsmen; 25. Whom he called together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. 26. Moreover, ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods which are made with hands: 27. so that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought, but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia, and the world worshippeth. 28. And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians! 29. And the whole city was filled with confusion; and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theater. 30. And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

2 Cor. i. 8, vi. 9. Chap. xvi. 16, 19. Rev. xviii. 11; Ps. cxv. 1; Isa. xlv. 10-20. Zeph. ii. 11. 1 John v. 19. Rev. xiii. 8. Jer. i. 23. Rom. xvi. 23; 1 Cor. i. 14. Col. iv. 10.

That way is Christianity. Christianity is a way to a certain kind of thinking, believing, loving and living. The cause of the stir about that way is revealed below.

Demetrius, the author of the disturbance, was a worker in silver, and, without doubt, the proprietor of a large manufacturing establishment, devoted to the preparation of articles of only one kind, namely silver temples of Artemis, that is, small models of the renowned temple of Diana, together with the statue. Diana was one of the twelve superior divinities, of which the Roman poet Ennius gave a list in the following couplet :—

"Juno, Vesta, Minerva, Ceres, Diana, Venus, Mars,
Mercurius, Jovis, Neptunus, Vulcanus, Apollo."

She was adored as Luna, or the moon in heaven, Diana on the earth, and Hecate or Proserpine in Hades. She was the goddess of hunting, of traveling, of chastity, of childbirth, of enchantment, &c., and was worshipped in different countries under different names, and different qualities were ascribed to her. But, at Ephesus, she was represented with a great number of breasts, and regarded as Nature, the mother of mankind. Thus, one of the inscriptions on an image of Diana was "Nature, full of varied creatures, and mother of all things." Now, the temple of this goddess was so vast and beautiful as to be ranked among the seven wonders of the world. "*Pliny* tells us that it was 425 feet long and 220 in breadth, and that it was adorned with 100 columns each 60 feet high, 27 of which were curiously carved, and the rest polished. It occupied 220 years in building. All Asia contributed to its erection, and 127 magnificent columns were bestowed on it by as many kings. Its altar was furnished by the famous Praxiteles, and Apelles contributed a portrait of Alexander the Great. Little silver models of the temple, with a goddess enshrined in them, were made for sale, and sold in such quantity as to afford profitable work for many hands.

A correspondent of the *London Times*, at Smyrna, under date of January 27th, 1872, says:

"Most people have heard of those famous Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, who, taking refuge from the persecutions of Diocletian at the close of the third century, fell asleep there and woke up two centuries afterward to find a new world and a Christian empire. Scarcely less romantic have been the fortunes of the famous temple of Diana

of Ephesus, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Destroyed by an earthquake, and plundered by the Goths in the third century of the Christian era, it served as a quarry for the architects of the Byzantine city built at Ephesus, probably in the time of Justinian, till the appetite for plunder being exhausted, the remnant of its ruins was allowed to sit up silently, under the slow but sure action of alluvial deposit. Thus the very site of the world-famous temple was obliterated, till British enterprise, piercing through 22' feet of alluvial deposit, came suddenly on the marble pavement, still strewn with broken columns, capitals and fragments of sculpture. This discovery, one of the happiest efforts of archæology in our time, is due to the persevering energy and sagacity of Mr. Wood, who, after having searched for the site of the temple since 1863, first at his own expense, and subsequently with funds supplied by the trustees of the British Museum, has been rewarded, after long years of toil, by the discovery of the site, which was finally ascertained about this time last year. During the last twelvemonth a large area of the temple has been cleared to the pavement, and various architectural marbles have been found, more or less mutilated, lying as they had been left by the barbarous despoilers in Byzantine times. The diameter of these columns of the temple being six feet, the scale of the architecture is, of course, colossal, exceeding, it is believed, in proportions the celebrated Temple of Jupiter Olympus, at Athens, the temple at Branchidæ and all extant examples of Greek architecture.

"The great weight of the marbles discovered rendered it necessary for Mr. Wood to apply for naval aid, which was supplied by the British government with that alacrity which has distinguished the admiralty in the history of our recent archæological expeditions, and which can alone insure the complete success of such arduous enterprises. Her Majesty's ship *Caledonia*, a grand old iron-clad three-decker, was at once sent to Mr. Wood's assistance, and has been engaged since the beginning of this month at Ephesus and Smyrna in hauling, packing and shipping the marbles of the temple selected by Mr. Wood for the

British Museum. I have been favored with a sight of these huge masses before they were packed. The largest, weighing upward of eleven tons, is part of a drum of one of the *calate columnæ* mentioned by Pliny—i. e., columns with figures sculptured on them, of which the temple had thirty-six. Of this bold, striking innovation in Greek architecture there exists, it is believed, no other example except at Ephesus. The relief on this drum appears to represent an assemblage of deities, of whom the only one who can be positively identified is Mercury, the rest being draped female figures. On a stone from a pilaster, corresponding in dimensions to the sculptured drum, is a relief representing Hercules struggling with a draped female figure, and on another fragment of a drum are the lower halves of some seated and standing female figures. This sculpture is very bold and effective in decoration, but wants the ineffable charm and freshness of the frieze of the Parthenon, while in masterly vigor of execution and dramatic force it falls far short of the frieze of the Mausoleum. It is careless and inexact in execution, and has the characteristics which we might expect to find in the Greek sculpture of the Macedonian period, when work was executed rapidly to gratify the vanity of kings, and when an Oriental love for mere mass rather than beauty of design had begun to affect both sculpture and architecture. Allowing for this first disappointment, I own that I gazed with a peculiar interest on these relics of those famous columns on which St. Paul must have gazed when he preached against them, but which local fanaticism, aided by local vested interests, preserved in all their splendor for three centuries after his coming.

"The architecture of the Temple of Diana is Ionic. Mr. Wood has very properly selected such fragments as will show what the base, the capital, and the order generally were like. Once housed in the British Museum, they will furnish materials out of which, not, perhaps, a complete restoration of the temple, but a new chapter in the history of Greek architecture can be constructed, just as out of the fossil bones of the *Megatherium* an Owen re-

constructs lost types in the animal kingdom."

Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. As they all derived profit from the established religion, they would the more readily concur in any measure for supporting it. *Moreover, ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, &c.* Such was, indeed, the doctrine of Paul, who publicly taught that there was but one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, that the gods of the Gentiles existed only in the imagination of their worshippers, or were dead men and women, or unclean spirits, and that their images, in which they were supposed to be present, were alike unworthy of Divine honors, as gold and silver, wood and stone, in the rudest and most unshapely forms. If this doctrine should prevail, as there was reason to fear, from the great number who had already embraced it, those craftsmen would starve for want of employment. The Ephesians would no longer purchase models of a temple which they considered as profane, and images of a goddess, whom they had learned to despise.

They heard full of wrath. The oratory of Demetrius takes full effect. Having a common interest, these pagan brethren have a common wrath, and their wrath has a common object. *Great is Diana of the Ephesians.* This is not a mere doxology or panegyric, but an assertion of their grand religious tenet, namely that the goddess whom they worshiped was, in the strictest and the highest sense, entitled to be called THE GREAT. *Gaius* is the Greek form of the Latin *Caius*, one of the most common names among the Romans. This *Gaius*, otherwise unknown to us, is distinguished, by his being a Macedonian, from three persons of the same name mentioned in Scripture. (See Acts xx. 4: 1 Cor. i. 14 and Rom. xvi. 23; 3 John 1.) *Aristarchus*, on the other hand, is elsewhere mentioned in Scripture. He accompanied Paul on his memorable journey to Jerusalem (Acts xx. 4), and sailed with him, either as a fellow-prisoner or a volunteer, from Cesarea to Rome. (Acts xxvii. 2). In one of his epistles, Paul speaks of him as his "fellow-prisoner" (Col. iv. 10), and in another as his "fellow-worker." (Phile. 24.)

One accord into the theater. As the ancient theater was a place not merely of dramatic gatherings, but for public assemblies of all sorts, especially for city affairs, this mob spontaneously, without very well knowing what it is about, moves to the theater. This was all the more readily done, as the temple where the first assemblage seems to have taken place and the theater were in sight of each other. "Of the site of the theater, the scene of the tumult raised by Demetrius," says *Fellows*, "there can be no doubt, its ruins being a wreck of immense grandeur. I think it must have been larger than the one at Miletus, and that exceeds any I have elsewhere seen. . . . Its form alone can now be spoken of, for every seat is removed, and the proscenium is a heap of ruins."

On the above narrative let the following things be observed: 1. Demetrius is a type of all those dishonest religious zealots, who pretend that they are governed by zeal for sound doctrine, the honor of God, and the preservation of truth and order, while their real object is solely to retain their income, ease and honors. 2. The Gospel of Jesus Christ cannot possibly maintain peace with the dead idols which the people of the world worship, and it rebukes the sinful lusts and evil works which give pleasure to them. Is it a wonder that such preaching should arouse the hatred, envy and jealousy of men who will not abandon their gods? 3. There are certain sins peculiar to trade and business in general, which long hinder the conversion of persons who are so occupied. Many tradesmen adopt it as a principle that usury, fraud, and unrighteous gains, are, as it were, allowable in their business. It is by the influence of this delusion that Satan retains such men in his service. A wise teacher will regard it as his duty to endeavor to expose and destroy all hidden snares of this character.

31. And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theater. 32. Some wherefore cried one thing, and some another, for the assembly was confused: and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. 33. And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defense unto the people. 34. But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice, about the space of two hours, cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians!

[Chap. xxi. 12. = Chap. xxi. 34. 31 Tim. i. 20. 2 Tim. iv. 14.]

The chief of Asia. These were the Asiarchs, "men of noble birth and an affluent fortune. These patrician superintendents of the temples, of whom there were ten, were chosen annually by the cities of Asia, in common, and so great honor was attached to the office, that those who held it were universally looked up to as "the chief of Asia." These high functionaries were then occupied in the duties of their office, and some of them, who were friendly to the Apostle, sent a secret message apprising him of the perilous consequences that might result from his venturing into the theater. And perilous they would have been, for, among the most popular of the games which the Asiarchs had to provide for the public entertainment were combats with wild beasts, to which mortal encounters were generally appointed only the lowest criminals. But, in the fearfully excited state of the citizens, if the populace had insisted on Paul being consigned to the arena, not all the authority and influence of the Asiarchs might have been sufficient to protect him. It is thought to have been with a view to throw them to the wild beasts that were usually kept there, that the mob dragged Gaius and Aristarchus (verse 29), who owed their rescue from that dreadful fate only to the fierce and discordant views that distracted the meeting. *Alexander* (who is, without any valid reason, supposed by some interpreters to be the person mentioned in 1 Tim. i. 20, 2 Tim. iv. 14) was thrust forward by the Jews, while others of the multitude made room for him in order that he might come forward and address the people. He seems to have been an unconverted Jew. It may be that the Jews wished Alexander, who was perhaps an experienced public orator, to speak in their behalf, and thus transfer the blame from themselves to the Christians. But when he attempted to speak, the people observed that he was a Jew, and would not permit him to utter a word; on the contrary, the fanaticism which was now aroused, burst forth in the united and incessant outcry which the workmen of Demetrius had already commenced.

35. And when the town-clerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there

that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?—Eph. ii. 12.

The speech of the *town-clerk*, whose calm and prudent behavior on this occasion merits the highest praise, is marked by *conciliation, conscience, counsel, and caution*. At the start it refers to two things universally known. 1. *The city of the Ephesians, &c.* The word translated “worshiper” signifies properly an attendant who took charge of a temple, but it came afterward to be applied to those cities in which there were situated any magnificent or celebrated temples of a deity, whose worship was the source of their grandeur, and the object of their pride. The inhabitants, proud of the distinction, considered themselves as attendants or guardians of the temple, and the honor of their patron deity, and hence the Ephesians, who were the first to assume this vain-glorious title, although their example met with general imitation, are called worshipers of the great goddess Diana. 2. *The image which fell down from Jupiter.* So it was fabled of several other idols; and among the first idols we read of are the black stones which, falling from heaven, (aerolites) were naturally venerated, and supposed to have inherent divinity. Perhaps some had a rude likeness to an image. In countries where such falsehoods are likely to be believed (not, at present, in others), parts, at least, of the Romish Church show pictures of the Virgin, which they tell the people *came down from heaven!*

36. Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. —Prov. xiv. 29.

Cannot be spoken against, &c. Like a truly legal man, he urges that such was notoriously the constitution and fixed character of the city, with which its very existence was all but bound up. Did they suppose that all this was going to be overturned by a set of itinerant orators? Ridiculous! What did they mean, then, by raising such a stir?

37. For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. —Chap. xxv. 8.

Ye have brought. Hastily into the theater, as if to a tribunal, or to punishment. *These.* (Verse 29.) *Neither.* That is, they have neither by deed injured the temple,

nor by word injured Diana. *Nor yet blasphemers of.* The Apostles did not collect many of the absurdities from their mythology, but propounded God’s truth, and the vanity of idols in general. (Verse 26.) They who believed, afterward of themselves rejected false gods.

38. Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another. 39. But if ye inquire anything concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly. ⁴⁰Or, ordinary.

“If Demetrius, &c., have suffered in their property, and have a charge of any private injury to offer *against any one*, the civil courts are held in which they may have justice done them; or if they have any crime relating to the State to allege against any, the law directs them how they should proceed, and there are the Roman proconsuls to whom they may apply, who are the proper judges in such cases. *Let them*, then, bring their actions, and *implead one another*, and traverse their suit in a legal manner in either of these judicatories. *But if* the cause be not properly civil or criminal, and *you are inquiring anything concerning other matters*, relating to our common utility, or to religion, which may seem of a special nature, there is no room to doubt but *it shall be determined* to the general satisfaction, *in a lawful assembly* of the Asiatic States, who will inquire into it impartially, and with a diligence proportioned to its importance.” The regular periods of assembly (called *kuria*, from their regularity) in those Greek cities which exercised, under the Roman empire, a qualified self-government, were three or four times a month, though there were extraordinary ones.

40. For we are in danger to be called in question for this day’s uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.

We are in danger, &c. The Romans, although they granted freedom to many of the Greek cities, yet were very jealous of their popular assemblies. There was a Roman law which made it capital to raise a riot. *There being no cause, &c.,* such fire, sudden invasion, or some similar emergency, which might justify a concourse of the people.

41. And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.—2 Cor. i. 8-10.

Dismissed, or dissolved, the assembly, and the people quietly dispersed. An important and remarkable effect, but not at all incredible, considering the proverbial mobility from which the mob derives its name, and also the extraordinary force and skill with which the appeal was made to their religious feelings, local pride, municipal usages, and selfish fears. Their wrath, which had been so quickly enkindled, was as quickly extinguished. "Thus," as one has said, "the tumult was suppressed by the wisdom and eloquence of the town-clerk, whom the grace of God

employed as an instrument for delivering His servants from danger, and defeating the enemies of the Gospel." But the roots of such enmity cannot be destroyed except by the silent power of the Divine word and by the winning language of the Holy Ghost, who is the true defender of the people of God. O Lord Jesus, whom the winds and the sea obey, assuage Thou the raging of the nations, and of our own flesh and blood against Thee, calm our hearts, and teach them to obey Thy truth, and to enjoy the blessed peace of Thy life!

1. Who were the "certain disciples" whom Paul found at Ephesus? 2. What did he say to them? 3. State their reply. 4. What did Paul answer? 5. In whose name were they then baptized? 6. What resulted when Paul laid his hands upon them? 7. How long did Paul speak boldly in the synagogue? 8. What is said of the school of Tyrannus? 9. What special miracles did God work by the hands of Paul? 10. What is said of the exorcists? 11. What of them which used curious arts? 12. What reference is made to the Word of God? 13. Whom did Paul send into Macedonia? 14. State what is said of Demetrius. 15. What effect was produced by his appeal? 16. What did the town-clerk say, after he had appeased the people?

CHAPTER XX.

1 *Paul goeth to Macedonia. 7 He celebrateth the Lord's supper, and preacheth. 9 Eutychus having fallen down dead, 10 is raised to life. 17 At Miletum he calleth the elders together, telleth them what shall befall to himself, 28 committeth God's flock to them, 29 warneth them of false teachers, 32 commendeth them to God, 35 prayeth with them, and goeth his way.*

AND after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

^axix. 40. ^b1 Cor. xvi. 5; 1 Tim. i. 13.

The clause, *after the uproar was ceased*, shows that Paul left Ephesus soon after the disturbance, but furnishes no evidence, says *Neander*, that his departure was hastened by it. He saluted the disciples with parting expressions of kindness. *Macedonia*. As he promised to the Corinthians. (1 Cor. xvi. 5.)

2. And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece. 3. And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia. 4. And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and of Asia, Trophimus. 5. These going before tarried for us at Troas. 6. And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

^c1 Thes. ii. 3, 11. ^dxxiii. 12; ^exxv. 3; 2 Cor. xi. 26. ^fexix. 29. ^gxvi. 1. ^hEph. vi. 21; Col. iv. 7; 2 Tim. iv. 12; Titus iii. 12. ⁱxxi. 29; 2 Tim. iv. 20. ^jEx. xxiii. 15. ^k2 Tim. iv. 13.

Those parts. The cities and districts in Macedonia. *Greece.* The country south of Macedonia. It is the same as is elsewhere called *Achaia*. (xviii. 12, 27; xix. 21.)

Paul always exhibits the same characteristic features. In prisons, in tumults, among the disciples, in the world, in journeys—in short, under all circumstances, he remained a servant of God, and never forgot, even when he walked in paths that were painful, to exhort, to comfort, and to strengthen believers, wherever they could be found.

The *three months* spent here preceded the summer of this year. (See verse 36.) The stay was thus brief because the Apostle was anxious to return to Jerusalem (verse 16.) The Jewish plot was contemporaneous with his leaving, but did not occasion it. It was just before his departure from Corinth, that Paul wrote the epistle to the

Romans. *Laid wait*, &c. What was the nature or occasion of the plot here mentioned, we have no means of determining. As the Apostle was about to embark for Syria, with the intention of going directly to Jerusalem (see chap. xix. 21), the effect of the conspiracy was to change his route, but not to cause him to depart prematurely. *He purposed*, or, it became his purpose, *to return through Macedonia*. How his journeying by land rather than by sea would enable him to escape the machinations of the Jews is not perfectly clear. It is possible that they intended to assault him on his way to the ship, or else to follow and capture him after having put to sea. Learn hence, that it is high presumption, and a bold tempting of God, to run headlong upon evident and imminent dangers, and not to improve all lawful means we can to prevent and decline them. To trust to means, is to neglect God, but to neglect the means for our own preservation, is to tempt God.

There accompanied him, rather, *there followed with him*, an expression which implies both association and subordination. *Asia*. Not strictly into Asia, but, as the original states, *as far as to Asia*. *Sopater*, the same as Sosipater, and probably the same as Paul's kinsman of that name mentioned in Rom. xvi. 21, who was with him at Corinth. *Berea*, a city of Macedonia. *And of the Thessalonians*, *Aristarchus and Secundus*. Aristarchus was already mentioned as a Macedonian (chap. xix. 29, on which see notes), with which his being a native of Thessalonica agrees. *Secundus*, is nowhere again mentioned. *And Gaius of Derbe*. This Gaius was a different person from Gaius the Macedonian formerly mentioned (chap. xix. 29, on which see notes), as Derbe was a city of Lycaonia. *And Timotheus*. Timothy was most probably a native of Lystra. (See xvi. 1.) No local epithet is attached to Timothy, perhaps because his residence was supposed to be well known. *And of Asia*, *Tychicus and Trophimus*. Both are elsewhere alluded to in Scripture. Tychicus was the bearer of the epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians (Col. iv. 7, 8; Eph. vi. 21, 22.) Paul there calls him "a beloved brother and faithful minister of the Lord." In the

epistle to Titus he mentions his intention of sending him to Crete (Titus iii. 12), and in his last epistle he tells Timothy that he had sent Tychicus to Ephesus. (2 Tim. iv. 12.) Trophimus appears on this occasion to have accompanied the Apostle not only to Asia, but to Jerusalem, for his being in Paul's company in that city was the occasion of the Apostle's apprehension. (Chap. xxi. 29.) He is again mentioned in Paul's last epistle. "Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick." (2 Tim. iv. 20.) From the mention of the places to which each of these companions belonged, and still more the order in which they occur, we are led to conclude that they were deputies from their respective Churches, charged with taking up and bringing on the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, first at Berea, next at Thessalonica, then at Philippi, where we gather that *our historian himself* rejoined the party (from the resumption at verse 5 of the "*we*" dropt at xvi. 17), by whom the Philippian collection would naturally be brought on.

These going before—Perhaps to announce and prepare for the Apostle's coming. *At Troas*—the name of the region and town. *After the days of unleavened bread*, i. e., the week following the Passover. This expression may be regarded as a mere date or chronological specification, like Christmas and Easter in modern parlance, when employed to designate the season, without reference to religious observance. The journey was accomplished in *five days*. Paul, when he crossed it on a former occasion, did it in ten days. (Chap. xvi. 11, 12). The navigation, however, of the *Ægean Sea* being uncertain, they were hindered, probably, by contrary winds. *Abode seven days*, better "passed" or "spent." These minute chronological specifications are in perfect keeping with the previous intimation that the writer had again rejoined Paul. (See v. 5, and on v. 4.)

7 ¶ And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.
^{kj} 1 Cor. xvi. 6; Rev. i. 10. ^{hij} 42, 46, 1 Cor. x. 16, xi. 20-31.

Upon the first day of the week, which was observed by the Apostles instead of the Jews' Sabbath. (1 Cor. xvi. 2. Rev. i. 10.) *Came together*. This allusion to the observ-

ance of the day here shows that its observance had become customary. It is not said that the disciples were *called together*, as on a special occasion, but that they came together, as it seems, according to their general practice of assembling on the first day of the week for religious purposes, which began immediately after the Resurrection. The Roman philosopher Pliny, in a letter to the Emperor Trajan, from the near province of Bithynia, about fifty years after this period, says: "They (the Christians) are accustomed to meet together *on a stated day (stato die)* before it was light, and sing among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ as God, and bind themselves by an oath (*sacramento*) not to the commission of any wickedness, but, on the contrary, not to be guilty of theft, or robbery, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor to deny a pledge committed to them." *To break bread*. This does not show that, as some maintain, the weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper was a stated part of the worship of the church, and that there is the same evidence for the weekly celebration of it as for the observance of the Christian Sabbath. We acknowledge that the words, "came together to break bread," imply that it was the main purpose, but for this very reason it is evident that it was not the *usual* design of coming together. The Scripture neither says nor insinuates that the Lord's Supper is so much to be preferred to prayer, and praise, and the preaching of the word, as to be the principal cause of holding religious assemblies. Since, then, it is agreed that "to break bread" was the chief intention of the meeting at Troas, we conclude that the intention was special, not common, because it cannot be proved from Scripture or history or the nature of the ordinance, that to eat the Lord's Supper ever was, or ever ought to be, at all times, the principal reason for assembling on the Sabbath. The disciples at Troas probably embraced the opportunity of commemorating the death of Christ while they enjoyed the presence and ministrations of Paul, and hence this ordinance is represented to have been, because it really was, the design of this meeting. (See on chap. ii. 42). *Paul preached*. The preaching of the Gospel ought to accom-

pany the sacraments. What does the seal signify without a writing? The Apostle, in this farewell sermon, had a great deal to say, and knew not that he should ever have another opportunity of preaching to them. We know some that would have reproached Paul for this sermon as a long-winded preacher that tired his hearers, but they were willing to hear him; he saw them so, and therefore *continued his speech until midnight* to the assembly, which perhaps met in the evening for privacy. At the same time it should be remembered that those who would make as long sermons, &c., as Paul here, to the general benefit of a promiscuous congregation on occasions *similar* to this unique case of Paul's, must be such preachers as Paul was, and come as well prepared. In a Christian community, the cases where such a protracted meeting is necessary will be very few.

8. And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.—*vi. 13.*

Lights—lamps. The wick was merely a few twisted threads, drawn through a hole in the upper part of the oil vessel, and there was no glass to give steadiness to the flame; such are still in use around the Mediterranean. Some suppose that the fact that there were many lights is noticed, to show that the fall of the young man could be well observed, others, because many lights are apt to increase drowsiness at such times, and others still, in order that all suspicion might be removed from the assembly.

9. And there sat in the window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

In a window. It will be recollected that there were no windows of glass, and the window here mentioned was a lattice of joinery, or a door, which on this occasion was set open on account of the heat from the many lights and the number of persons in the room. *Fell down*, &c. The window projected (according to the side of the room where it was situated) either over the street, or over the interior court, so that in either case he fell from the third story upon the hard earth or pavement below. *And was taken up dead*. This direct assertion concerning the man's state

cannot be evaded by explaining it, "*was taken up for dead*," or by saying that it expresses the judgment of those who took him up. An accident which occurs during the performance of a lawful and holy act, is no evidence of Divine displeasure. If this sleep at midnight exposed the young man to such danger, how can those be excused who sleep during the sermon in the daytime? And if bodily sleep exposes to danger, what is the situation of him whose soul is asleep in spiritual security, or how can those be excused who never sleep in Church, because they never enter it?

10. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him, said, "Trouble not yourselves, for his life is in him."—1 Kings xvii. 21, 2 Kings iv. 34. Matt. ix. 24.

Embracing him. Compare, in 1 Kings xvii. 21, the account of the prophet Elijah's restoring to life the son of the widow of Zarephath, and in 2 Kings iv. 34, 35, of Elisha's restoring the son of the Shunamite. *Trouble not yourselves.* "Loud demonstrations" says Rieger "should always be avoided, when tokens of the presence of God are observed; this principle specially applies to cases in which a death occurs. We should, at such times, direct the attention of those who are present to the invisible world and to the ministry of the angels, as far as the Scriptures enable us to form conjectures on such subjects." *His life is in him*, is returned to him. For the young man is said to have been taken up dead.

11. When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

Up again,—to the room in the third story. *Eaten.* "Most interpreters," says Dr. J. A. Alexander "identify this breaking of bread with that mentioned in verse 7, and which had been deferred by Paul's protracted conversation or discourse. It is possible, however, that the love-feast and the eucharist had been observed as soon as they had assembled, and that the eating here described was what we call an early breakfast, preceding the departure of these honored guests." *Talked.* More familiarly after the solemn address spoken of in verse 9. *Break of day*, about five o'clock A. M., at that season. *So.* Without the intervention of any repose. *Departed*, went forth on his journey.

12. And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

They brought, &c. Literally, *They led the lad alive*, that is, not they brought him home, but they led him into the assembly. *Not a little comforted*, by the fact that he was alive, and also by the evidence which such a wonderful miracle as the restoration to life imparted to the Gospel. God can speak to us through the dead, as well as through those who live.

13. † And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go aloot. 14. And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene. 15. And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios; and the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next day we came to Miletus. 16. For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia; for he hastied, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

† Chap. xviii. 21, xxiv. 17. † Chap. ii. 1, 1 Cor. xvi. 8.

Assos, Trogyllium, and Miletus were cities of Asia, on the sea-coast. *Mitylene* was a city in the isle of Lesbos, which, with *Chios* and *Samos*, was situated near the coast of Asia, in what is now called the Archipelago. *Miletus*, a city about thirty miles farther to the south from Ephesus. The Apostle seems to have had the direction of the vessel, which he could not have had, if merely a passenger; it is, therefore, probable that it belonged to some of his friends. The historian continues to speak in language which shows that he was one of the company. *Determined*—for Ephesus was behind. He could not refrain from ministering to a church so dear to his heart. *Spend the time.* Not even in Asia would Paul have spent the time fruitlessly; but he considered that he would have wasted it, if he had neglected greater results. *The day*—the accusative of time—of Pentecost. (See on chap. ii. 1). Time was pressing. (Verse 6.) At the feast there were great crowds, and therefore a great opportunity for conversions. Notice the indefatigable diligence of the great Apostle, and his unwearied industry in the service of the gospel.

17. † And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church. 18. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons. 19. Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: 20. And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house. 21. Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

† xix. 1, 10. † 1 Cor. xv. 9, 10. † Phil. iii. 18. † 2 Cor. iv. 7-11. † Verse 3. † Verse 27. † 2 Tim. iv. 2. † Mark 4, 15; Luke xxiv. 47.

In the style of the New Testament, an

"elder" does not signify a person advanced in years, but one invested with authority. The title is given to the rulers of the Jews, who are frequently called the elders of the people and to certain office-bearers in the Christian Church, of whom two classes are pointed out by Paul in one of his epistles, elders who only rule or govern, and elders who both rule, and labor in word and doctrine. Of the latter description, we apprehend, were the elders of Ephesus, for they are exhorted "to feed" the Church, a duty of the pastoral office, which consists in preaching the Gospel for the edification and comfort of the people. It deserves notice that the same persons, who here receive the appellation of elders, are called, in verse 28, overseers or inspectors. *Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, &c.* Happy is he who can begin his discourse in such terms, and to whom the conscience of the hearer bears a favorable testimony! Paul appeals solely to the conscience of his hearers, and asks for no flattering reply. It is not his object to obtain letters of commendation from men; he desires to see the fruit of his labors, and to promote the cause of the truth. *With all, the utmost, humility of mind, lowliness of mind. Many tears.* How beautiful a feature in the character of such a man! So much tenderness united to so much energy, the very softness of a woman to the indomitable spirit of a hero. What a pattern to the Christian minister, that while in his own person he is "enduring hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," he may, in his conduct to others, imitate the Christ-like spirit of him who could say, "We are gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children, so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us" (1 Thes. ii. 7, 8), that while as the minister of God, he is inflicting, as he is too often called to do, like a wise physician, many a deep and painful wound, he may learn to feel, and even to weep, for those upon whom his prayers and labors have been wasted, and to whom the blessed Gospel of a loving Saviour, has only been the "savor of death unto death." *Temptations* (or trials)

which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews. There is no distinct mention in the Acts of the machinations of the Jews at Ephesus, but we are informed that their disposition was so hostile, that Paul had to separate himself and his disciples from the synagogue, and in the tumult, Alexander, a Jew, came forward, apparently with the intention of accusing the disciples. (See chap. xix. 9, 23.) That the condition of the Apostle in Ephesus was one of great danger, we learn from his epistles to the Corinthians. (1 Cor. xv. 31, 32; 2 Cor. i. 8-10.)

The human mind, it seems, was the same then as now. The hearer might wish some truth to be kept back; the preacher might be tempted to indulge the hearer's wish. The prophet might prophesy falsely, because the people loved to have it so. (See Jer. v. 31.) Paul, however, *kept back nothing that was profitable, but showed and taught them both publicly and from house to house.* The history shows his manner of *teaching publicly.* Wherever there were Jewish synagogues, these he entered, and expounding the law and the prophets, "showed from the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ." When, as at Ephesus, he could no longer attend the synagogue without danger, or when, as appears to have been the case at Athens, there was no Jewish synagogue, he used the most convenient place of meeting, as the school of Tyrannus, or even disputed in places of public concourse "with them that met with him." (See xix. 9, xvii. 17.) Thus he acted as what he was, a herald, one who has something to announce, and the subject of his announcement was: Man a sinner, and Christ a Saviour; *repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

But public preaching must not supersede private instruction. It opens the way for it, but does not supply it. The one draws the bow at a venture, the other carries the arrow home, and lodges it in the heart—not to wound, but to heal; not to destroy, but to save. Therefore he taught *both publicly and from house to house.* He had thus opportunity of pressing his doctrine more closely upon the conscience, and also of explaining it more accurately. He could resolve doubts as well as declare

truths. He could reach the individual case, and prove to every heart, which "knew its own bitterness," the nature of that "grace of God which had appeared unto all men."

Thus Paul fulfilled his mission, *to the Jews, and also to the Greeks*. Both, it seems, required the same. Both required *repentance toward God*. The Jews had offended against the law which God had revealed to them; the Greeks had offended against "the law written in their hearts." So that "there was no difference, for that all had sinned, and come short of the glory of God." All, though in various degrees of guilt, were to come before God in one common attitude as sinners. But as repentant sinners, intending to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking henceforth in His holy ways. And, also, as sinners who sought acceptance with God, through *faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*. Repentance toward God was to lead to faith toward Christ Jesus. Sorrow for sin was to produce love of the Saviour. The law, convincing them of sin, was to bring them to Him who takes away sin. They were shown their condemnation in the sight of God, that they might embrace His offer of salvation. And if they were thus taught *repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, nothing was kept back which was profitable for them*.

22. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: 23. Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me.

*xix. 21. *James iv. 14. *ix. 16, xxi. 11. *Or, wait for me.

Bound in the spirit, that is, constrained by an overpowering sense of duty. He felt himself shut up to the conclusion that he must go up to Jerusalem, and therefore he could neither be terrified by dangers, nor moved by entreaties and remonstrances: he had no choice in the matter: a necessity was laid upon him. *Not knowing the things*, &c. Though Paul sometimes prophesied, he could not command the attribute of foreknowledge when he pleased. The use of it was always a miracle, and limited to a particular subject. He was therefore left uninformed of the ordinary course of life; and had to learn the will of God by events. (See Phil. ii. 23).

It is the same with us. But is this to be lamented? "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." The concealment is wise and kind. We may judge of this by our past feelings. Had we been previously informed of the scenes through which we have passed, our hearts would have failed at the thought; yet when the dispensations came, we were able to bear them, and had been really though unconsciously prepared for them.

But Paul's ignorance was not entire. Though he knew not *what* in particular would befall him at *Jerusalem*, yet the Holy Ghost testified, probably through the prophetic announcement of others, (though Luke has not recorded the instances) that in every place bonds and afflictions awaited him: so that he was sure of one thing—sure of being always a sufferer. And thus it is with us. Though the future is not laid open to our view, yet it is not concealed from us in every respect and degree. We may certainly expect that trials of one kind or another will be our lot. They grow out of our very state and nature. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." This, however, is not all we know; we know also that God will be found to His children the same He always has been—that He will prove Himself the hearer of prayer—and that He will never leave them nor forsake them.

21. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

*Chap. xxi. 13; Rom. viii. 35, 37; 2 Cor. iv. 16. *2 Tim. iv. 7. *2 Cor. iv. 1. *Gal. i. 1.

None of these things move me, or, *I make account of nothing*, i. e., which I may be called to suffer. (See 2 Cor. xii. 10.) *So that*, with this aim, *I might finish*, &c. That he should shrink from no danger, that he should be willing to offer up his life for the sake of the Gospel, he regarded as due to his office, as essential to his character as an approved minister of Christ. *With joy*. Paul's language expresses great desire and great anxiousness for this result. He deemed nothing too much to do or to suffer for such a privilege. All who have gone before us at death finished their course, but many finished it with joy. How will you finish yours? The Lord

has appointed us bounds which we cannot pass. We have an allotted course of service and suffering; and the end is sure—and the end is nigh. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of *that* man is peace. *He* shall enter into rest, and be forever with the Lord. But how will *you* end? will you be defeated or crowned? will you be clothed with shame, or shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father? O let it be your prayer and care to realize this final blessedness; and endeavor to judge of everything now as it will affect you at last. *The ministry which I have received, &c.* Note, 1. Paul's jealousy for the peculiar character of his mission, as immediately from Christ Himself, on which all the charges against him turned. 2. The burden of that Gospel which he preached—GRACE. It was "the Gospel of the grace of God." "Nothing," says *Leighton*, "begets so generous and undaunted spirits as the fear of God; no other fear, none of those base ones that torment worldly men, dare claim room where that fear lodgeth. The only cause of the fear of Christ's legates is in consideration of their Master. Would they remember Him much, it would ennoble their spirits to encounter the hardest evils of life, and death itself, courageously in His service."

25. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

I know. This expresses not absolute certainty, but assured persuasion. *Shall see my face no more.* He was bound on a dangerous journey, and it was probable that he would never see them again. Whether he afterward visited Ephesus or not, is a matter of doubtful inference, though critics have conjectured that he revisited this region. (Phil. i. 25-27; ii. 24; Phil. 22.) Thoughts on death increase the zeal of preachers. He who at all times says to himself: "This is perhaps my last sermon, my hearers will see my face no more," will the more earnestly entreat them: "Be ye reconciled to God."

26. Wherefore, I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.—12 Cor. vii. 2.

I take you to record. I call on you to bear witness, or, I solemnly protest unto you. *I am pure, &c.* Those who perish in their

sins cannot charge their unhappy doom on me. I have delivered my soul from the guilt of not warning them. (Comp. Ezek. xxxiii. 4-6.) It is happy when the ministers of God can appeal to the consciences of their people, and summon them in as witnesses to bear record for them at the bar of Christ. Many would gladly imitate the Apostle, and, like him, testify in their farewell sermons, that they are pure from the blood of all men, but that joyful consciousness is the fruit only of long-continued humility, of trials, and of tears. (See verses 20, 18-20, 27.)

27. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.—1 Eph. i. 11.

Shunned. A military word from soldiers who recoil, and leave their standing. "Its proper import in such a connection," says *Doddridge*, "is to *disguise* any important truth, and at least to *decline* its open publication, for fear of displeasing." These words naturally suggest the idea that there had been certain difficulties in the way of his declaring all the counsel of God, difficulties which might have operated to induce a less zealous and less faithful preacher to sink, or to obscure the message he had been commissioned to declare. Considering the mixture there was in the congregations which heard Paul preach, it was probable, if not certain, that by declaring the whole counsel of God he would give some offense, yet he had not shrunk from doing so. God requires his servants who are entrusted with the Gospel to "cry aloud and spare not," to set their face as a flint, to lift up their voice as a trumpet, to keep back nothing which can profit, however painful. Paul knew the character and conduct of Felix and Drusilla, but "he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." "It is a poor sermon," says *Whitfield*, "that gives no offense, that neither makes the hearer displeased with himself, nor with the preacher." It was a noble eulogium that Louis XIV. passed on one of his preachers, Massillon: "I don't know how it is, when I hear my other chaplains I admire them, but when I hear Massillon, I always go away displeased with myself." Observe, Paul does not say he *had* declared the whole counsel of God (for who but God himself can do that?),

but he "had not *shunned* to declare" the whole counsel of God; that is, he had not concealed from them any truth necessary to salvation. It was thus that he kept himself "pure from the blood of all men."

It should be remembered that not only the preacher who declares the counsel of God, but the people who hear that Divine counsel, are responsible to Him for the manner in which they wait on the preaching of the Word. On the great day of reckoning, when the books shall be opened, and the secrets of all hearts shall be made known, the minister shall then answer for his part and the people undoubtedly shall answer for theirs. Those do not value their own souls, or love their ministers, who desire them to "speak smooth things" unto them, to "prophesy deceits," to declare only such things as are palatable such truths as even the natural heart can bear without reluctance or misgiving. (See Ezek. xxxiii. 8, 9.)

28. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Col. iv. 17, 1 Tim. iv. 16, Heb. xiii. 17, 1 Prov. x. 21, Jer. iii. 15, John xxi. 15-17, 1 Peter v. 2, 3, Eph. i. 14, Col. i. 14, Heb. ix. 12, 14, 1 Peter i. 18, 19. Rev. v. 1.

Therefore: As I am innocent, take heed lest the guilt of neglect shall fall on you. (1 Tim. iii. 27, iv. 16, vi. 11.) Observe how the personal is put before the pastoral care. They are required first "to take heed to themselves," that they might not be diverted from their duty by the cares and amusements of life, nor through indolence and remissness let slip opportunities of doing good; that they might always perform their functions from pure motives, with a proper sense of their importance, and an ardent desire to accomplish their design, and that their conduct might uniformly serve to illustrate and enforce the doctrines which they taught. The duties of the ministerial office are so various and weighty, the temptations are so great, and the consequences of error and negligence are so fatal, that incessant vigilance is indispensably necessary. *To all the flock.* A common metaphor both in the Old and in the New Testament. The general injunction is limited to the duty of "feeding" the flock, by the preaching of the Word, and the dispensation of the other ordinances of the Gospel, which are the means of

communicating spiritual nourishment to the soul. The design of the ministry is "to perfect the saints, and to edify the body of Christ," to impart instruction and consolation to believers, to assist their progress in faith and piety, and by this holy discipline to train them for eternal life. The care which is requisite for these important purposes must be extended to all the flock, or to all the individuals of which it is composed. *The Holy Ghost.* The Holy Ghost, as the great agent in the selection of ministers, the Lord of the harvest who sends forth the laborers into His harvest. (Acts xiii. 2.) The personality, deity, and sovereignty of the Holy Spirit all are here clearly shown. Bishops is the Anglicised form of the Greek word, which means *overseers, inspectors*. It is here applied to the same persons who were before described as *elders* (verse 17, on which see notes), proving clearly that the titles are convertible in this case; as they are in Titus i. 5-7, a conclusion strengthened by the otherwise inexplicable fact, that both are never named together as distinct classes of church officers. *The Church of God, which he hath purchased with his blood.* The most able critics have shown that the present is the genuine reading of the verse, though a few copies have "the church of the Lord," a phrase not used in the New Testament. The passage is a most decisive testimony to the Deity of Christ. The atonement and ransom of our souls is the blood of Jesus, who is as truly God, as man: and thus in His mysterious Person, as God and man, He "purchased the Church with His own blood." This gave the infinite value to His sacrifice; and it suggests to His ministers the most powerful motives to faithfulness, diligence, patience and fortitude in their work. (See 1 John, i. 7.)

29. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

1 Matt. vii. 15; 2 Peter ii. 1. 1 Jer. xlii. 20, xxlii. 1; Ezek. xxxiv. 2, 3; Zech. xi. 17. 1 John ii. 19; Jude 4, &c.

Two classes of coming enemies are here announced, the one more external to themselves, the other bred in the bosom of their own community. Both were to be teachers, but the one "grievous wolves not sparing," *i.e.*, making a prey of "the flock,"

the other not only teaching error in the Church, but rending it by schismatical divisions forming schools or parties. Perhaps the one pointed to that subtle poison of Oriental Gnosticism, which we know to have very early infected the Asiatic Churches; the other to such Judaizing tendencies as we know to have troubled nearly all the early Churches. See the epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Timothy, also those to the seven Churches of Asia. (Rev. ii., iii.)

31. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

32 Kings iv. 3. 33 Col. i. 23.

Therefore watch, that is, on account of the impending danger, a watchful oversight becomes the duty of the elders. According to Paul's statement, as here recorded, he had resided three years at Ephesus. According to chap. xix. 8-10, he had taught two years in the school of Tyrannus, three months preceding, he had taught in the Jewish synagoge, and previously (chap. xviii. 19), he had been in Ephesus with Aquila and Priscilla. It was usual among the Jews to reckon a part of a day for a whole one, and so a part of a year might, in a general statement, be reckoned for a whole one, as if the Apostle had said about the space of three years. *I ceased not to warn, &c.* How deep and tender was the Apostle's solicitude for the welfare of the Church! The language which evil-minded men represent as that of self-praise, is not always really of that description. It was love which constrained the humility of Paul to reveal to us his tears.

32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

33 John xvii. 17. 34 Chap. x. xxvi. 18; Col. i. 12; Heb. ix. 15; 1 Peter i. 4.

The heart and thoughts of all those whom Paul addressed were, at this trying hour, fixed upon *himself*. How happy must he, then, have felt at being thus able, at a moment when he could no longer aid, no more instruct them, to point them to One from whom "neither life, nor death," nor time, nor eternity could ever separate them. "I commend you to God, to Him in whom is all fullness of protection, all abundance of power, all infinity of love. And to the word of his grace. There may be many, in passing through life, in whose spiritual

welfare we are deeply interested, and yet from whom we are constantly and unnecessarily absent, many, perhaps, so circumstanced that they are unable to partake of the spiritual advantages under which we live. How highly encouraging, then, is it, that in all such cases we are able to commend them not only to God, but to His written Word, which, thanks be to God, in this favored country, cannot be taken from them and which Paul here distinctly declares "is able to build them up" for their future and unfading inheritance. If we are unable to do more for those we love, we ought to urge them by every consideration most awakening and most influential, urge them by the value of that soul within them which is perishing for want of knowledge, and by the Saviour who died for its redemption, to search the Word of God's grace frequently, daily; however small the portion to which their time and opportunities may limit them, if it be accompanied by earnest, fervent prayer, it shall not be lost; it is an omnipotent word, it cannot return void to him who sends it, but is powerful through God, to the pulling down of the strongholds of ignorance and sin, and to the building up to "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," "all them which are sanctified."

33. I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.—1 Sam. xii. 3; 1 Cor. ix. 12; 2 Cor. vii. 2.

Paul concludes his address with an assertion of his disinterestedness, as an example to the Ephesian elders, and as a warning against avarice and covetousness. (See 2 Cor. xii. 14). *Apparel*. Raiment is here mentioned along with gold and silver, because among the Orientals it was a chief part of their wealth. The Ephesians, we are informed, were celebrated for their luxurious apparel. "Although the preachers of the Gospel do not, like Paul, work at a trade, but 'live of the things of the temple' (1 Cor. ix. 13), these words furnish them with a valuable lesson. They ought to demonstrate by their self-denial and personal efforts (which should comprehend far more than the ordinary official duties), and by their entire freedom from avarice, that the world very unjustly accuses them of performing the least amount of work, and of receiving for

it a disproportionately large amount of wages."

34. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

*Chap. xviii. 3; 1 Cor. iv. 12; 1 Thes. ii. 9; 2 Thes. iii. 8.

These hands: no doubt stretching out his hands toward his audience. This refers to the fact that Paul and his companions supported themselves chiefly by their own labor. No mention is made of this fact in the account of Paul's residence at Ephesus. Luke, however, informs us that he labored as a tent-maker at Corinth, and in the first epistle to the Corinthians, written from Ephesus, express mention is made of his still continuing to work with his own hands. (See 1 Cor. iv. 11, 12). Here, then, is another example of the undesigned coincidences between the Acts of the Apostles and the epistles of Paul. It is not unlawful for a minister of the Gospel to labor with his hands, for the support of himself and his family, when the poverty of the members of the Church is such that they cannot maintain him without it. Observe, 1. Paul was sometimes reduced to the want of the common supports of life, though so great a favorite of heaven, and so great a blessing to this earth. 2. He did not work at his calling to enrich himself, but to maintain himself—it was to have his *necessities* supplied. 3. He had a head and tongue by which he might have made money, but he earned his bread by a manual occupation. 4. He worked not only for himself, but also for the support of *them that were with him*. "It had better become them," says an old writer, "to have worked for him, to maintain him as their tutor," but so it is; those that are willing to take the laboring oar, will find those about them willing they should have it.

35. I have shewed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

*Rom. xv. 1; Eph. iv. 2; 1 Thes. v. 14. *Luke xiv. 12-14.

The Apostle had shown them, both by precepts and by his own example, how they ought "to support the weak," and he exhorts them to *remember the words of the Lord Jesus, &c.* In referring them to these words for their remembrance, it is to be supposed that he communicated them to those whom he addressed, in the course

of the "three years" during which he exercised his ministry among them. It is remarkable that there is no other passage in which any words of our Lord are recorded, but this solitary one. Except what is written in the four Evangelists, there is no record of the kind, except this one, which mentions the blessedness of giving above that of receiving. This shows us *the great uncertainty of tradition*. We should have known nothing of this saying of Christ, but for the Apostle Paul, which shows us how improper it is for us to depend on tradition for the support of important doctrines, when we cannot know one word of the Saviour's teachings but as it is recorded. The pleasure of giving is superior to that of receiving. It is higher, purer, nobler. It is the pleasure which arises from the testimony of *conscience*, the testimony that we are rightly employing the gifts which God has imparted to us, and without which there cannot be true enjoyment. It is the pleasure of *sympathy*. God has so formed us, as to feel our connection with those around us, and to find delight in beholding the flowers with which we ourselves have decked the moral garden of the world. There is more improvement of character in giving than in receiving. To be insusceptible, to be incapable of gratitude is deemed monstrous, but tender compassion and rich and self-denying liberality are regarded as indications of a higher order of excellence, and they are justly so regarded. In giving we become imitators of God (Matt. v. 45-8), like Christ, who "came not to be ministered unto but to minister" (2 Cor. viii. 9), like the angels, whose nature it is to give. (See Heb. i. 14; Luke xvi. 22.) Giving is surer of a higher reward than receiving. We mean a reward which is not of debt, but of grace. (See James i. 27; John xiii. 34, 35; Matt. xxv. 30, vii. 21-27; 2 Cor. ix. 14; Matt. v. 7; Ps. xli. 1-3; Luke xvi. 9; Gal. vi. 7, 8; 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7; Prov. xix. 17; Matt. vi. 19, 20; 1 Tim. vi. 17-19.)

36. And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.—*Chap. xxi. 5.

Kneeled down, or, *having kneeled*. This was the attitude in prayer which prevailed among the early Christians, except on the Sabbath, and during the seven weeks be-

fore Pentecost, when they generally stood. They regarded the latter posture as the more appropriate one for the expression of gratitude, and adopted it, therefore, on joyful occasions. (See on Luke xviii. 11.) *And prayed with them all*, no doubt in the sense attached to the words now, to wit, that of leading the devotions, or praying in the name of all.

37. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him;—Gen. xlvii. 29.

Wept sore. Christians are not Stoics, who professed to be unconscious of strong emotions. Their love is a fountain from which tears often flow. "We too," says one, "should fall on Paul's neck, and endeavor to retain him with us, and this is done when we receive his doctrine and believe the Gospel which he preached." (1 Thes. ii. 13.) *Fell on Paul's neck*, &c. Still in the East relatives and friends, on meeting or parting, embrace each other, and kiss each other's hands, face or shoulder. With the Greeks and Romans it was not unusual to kiss the head. How solemn, affecting and tender, is this farewell! It is not possible even for the nearest relatives and friends to give more sincere and lively proofs of concern. Whence could this be derived? Whence but from their common hopes in the Gospel, which had blended their hearts, and made of the disciples as it were, one family? Such admirable effects of harmony and love was the faith of primitive Christians able to produce. How different from the sad apathy and indifference so often shown toward Christian brethren in modern times! While our holy religion teaches charity to all men, it commands it more especially to the household of faith. Let us look back frequently upon the ancient examples of true Christian love and charity, and remember that Christ is our Head, and we ourselves members one of another. These are sacred bonds of affection, and persuasive motives to sympathy.

38. Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.—Verse 25.

See his face no more. This assurance struck a tender chord in each heart, and "tears unbidden flow." We cannot but observe again how holy is that tie of spir-

itual interest, that clasping of soul with soul, and heartfelt recognition of human brotherhood, which is here manifested. But a few years before, and what was Paul to the elders of Ephesus, or the elders of Ephesus to Paul? They knew not, cared not, for one another. But they accept Jesus as their Saviour, imbibe His spirit, catch a glimpse of the hallowed ties that unite man to man, and man to God, and lo! they are new creatures, they are born, spiritually born, into a new universe. They look upon each other with different eyes; they are now brethren, they feel that their connection is no coarse or common one, but that it has been formed in heaven, that it is knit by the fingers of God, and will last evermore. *And they accompanied him unto the ship.* Desirous of going as far, and remaining as long with Paul as was permitted them, they went with him even to the water's edge, yet there they were compelled to leave him. As has well been remarked, it is an affecting thought that there is a point at which our dearest bonds must be broken, our closest relationships dissolved, our most attached friends leave us—a point at which husbands and wives, parents and children, ministers and people, must part. We may travel together long, profitably and peacefully, but it cannot be uninterruptedly. A parting hour must arrive, when "one shall be taken and the other left." Both may go together to the water's edge, but we must enter those waters singly and alone—Jordan must be passed, and on its banks all that is earthly must be left behind. Would we so part that we may be reunited, that when that flood is crossed, we may meet again in the celestial city? It is now within our power—the offer, the hope, the certainty, are all within our reach. Instead of separating from those we love with the feeling of those Ephesian Christians, "we shall see his face no more," in all our separations, even the most painful and the last, if we are, indeed, the children of the same Saviour, the possessors of the same hope, anchored within the veil, sure and steadfast, our feelings may rightly be, "Blessed be God, we shall see their face again."

1. What did Paul do after the uproar was ceased? 2. How long did he abide in Greece? 3. Who accompanied him into Asia? 4. Explain the phrase—"the days of unleavened bread." 5. What did the disciples come together upon the first day of the week to do? 6. Who preached to them? 7. What is said of Eutychus? 8. Why would not Paul spend the time in Asia? 9. Whence did he call the elders of the church at Ephesus? 10. Repeat his address to them. 11. What did he do after he had "thus spoken?" 12. What effect was produced upon them all? 13. Why did they sorrow most of all? 14. Where did they accompany him?

CHAPTER XXI.

1. *Paul will not by any means be dissuaded from going to Jerusalem, 9 Philip's daughters prophetesses, 17 Paul cometh to Jerusalem: 27 where he is apprehended, and in great danger, 31 but by the chief captain is rescued, and permitted to speak to the people.*

AND it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara:

And it came to pass, &c., rather, "When now it came to pass that we set sail." Those who now journeyed with Paul to Jerusalem were Luke, the author of the Acts, Trophimus (xxi. 29), and Aristarchus (xxvii. 2). No mention is made of the others who accompanied him into Asia (xx. 4), so that it is probable they remained behind at Miletus. *Gotten*, literally, *torn from them*; language strongly expressive of the powerful reciprocal affection of these disciples of Christ. *Coos*, or *Cos*, is a small island in the Archipelago, about forty miles directly south of Miletus, opposite the cities of Cnidus (xxvii. 7) and Halicarnassus. It was famous for its wines, its ointments, and its fabrics. We learn from Josephus that many Jews were residents in the island. Its modern name is Stanchio, and it is still renowned for its fertility. *Rhodes* was at the entrance of the *Ægean*, on the coast of Caria. The celebrated colossus was prostrate at this time, having been overthrown by an earthquake. *Patara* was a coast town of Lycia, at some distance from the left bank of the Xanthus. "Now its port is an inland marsh, generating poisonous malaria, and the mariner sailing along the coast would never guess that the sand-hills before him blocked up the harbor into which St. Paul sailed of old."

2. And finding a ship sailing over to Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth.

Finding a ship (their former one going no farther, probably). *Unto Phenecia*. (See

on xi. 19). *Went aboard*. One would almost think this extracted from a journal of the voyage, so graphic are its details. (See Is. lx. 9, in which the allusion is doubtless to merchant ships.) The traders in that ship little thought that the freight which their Jewish fellow-travelers brought on board, was more precious than the purple of Tyre, the spices of Arabia, and the amber of the Hyperboreans—the precious pearl of the Gospel that saves men.

3. Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.

Cyprus. (See on xiii. 4.) *We left it on the left hand*. As will appear by examining the map, they sailed along the southern coast of Cyprus. *Sailed into Syria, i. e.*, completed our voyage to it. *Landed at Tyre*, the chief city of Phœnicia (see on chap. xii. 20), where it was foretold that Christians would be. (See Ps. lxxxvii. 4, and compare with it concerning the people of Philistia and Ethiopia, Acts viii. 40, verse 27.) *Her burden*. So frequently does God's kingdom adapt itself to the outward opportunities of the world: but *God* secretly directs worldly things to advance His kingdom.

4. And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.—verse 12.

Finding—when he had sought them. At one time they were alone, at another with the brethren. *Seven*—So that they also enjoyed a Sabbath there. Paul was in haste, but in a good way. *Said*—the Spirit said that bonds awaited Paul: therefore the disciples begged him not to go.

5. And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way: and they all brought us on our way with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed. Chap. xx. 36.

Those days—the seven mentioned in the preceding verse. *They all brought us, &c.*

It is not likely that Paul and his companions had either wives or children with them, and it is more natural to suppose that the brethren of Tyre, with *their* wives and children, are those that are meant. These, through affection to Paul and his friends, accompanied them from their homes to the ship, and the coming out of the husbands, wives and children, shows what a general and affectionate interest the preaching and labors of these holy men had excited. It is delightful to discover by such little traits as these, how early and how important was the advancement in civilization produced by the Gospel. In the most polished state of society in the heathen world, what was woman? A mere toy, a gilded bauble to help to while away a vacant hour, but admitted to no partnership in the higher and more elevating relations or feelings of human life. But no sooner did the Gospel, with its lessons of Christian love, find its way into the heart, than woman resumed that place in society to which God in His mercy had originally appointed her. She became the help-meet for man, his ready partner in every sorrow and in every joy, not merely the unintellectual companion of his pleasures, but the true and sympathizing friend, as valuable, perhaps more valuable, in the darker hours of sicknesses and griefs, and trials, and partings, than in those brighter and happier moments in which alone she had, before the introduction of Christianity, been ever heard of. *And prayed, i. e.,* the whole company, though led no doubt by the Apostle, as in xx. 36, on which see notes. Parents ought to conduct their children to those places where they may be encouraged to pray and to do good in general, but not to those where they may be corrupted. The meeting and the parting of Christians should not take place without prayer and good wishes.

6. And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship: and they returned home again.

With the words *taken our leave one of another*, are connected both *we took ship*, and *they returned*, &c.

7. And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

Tyre. (See on verse 3.) *Ptolemais*—a celebrated city south of Tyre, in the tribe of

Asher, anciently called *Acho*, now St Jean d' Acre, or Acre. (Judges i. 31.) It received the name of Ptolemais in honor of Ptolemy the First, king of Egypt, who also acquired dominion in Palestine. He enlarged and adorned it. In modern days it underwent a memorable siege by Napoleon Bonaparte. *Saluted the brethren, and abode, &c.* Disciples gathered probably as at Tyre, on the occasion mentioned chap. xi. 19.

8. And the next day, we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Cesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.

*Chap. viii. 26-40. †Eph. iv. 11, 2 Tim. iv. 5. ‡Chap. vi. 5.

From Ptolemais the travelers proceeded by land, as it seems, and at length reached *Cesarea*, which was only thirty-six Roman miles distant, that is, not more than a day's journey. This is the third time that Paul has been at Cesarea. He was there on his journey from Jerusalem to Tarsus, and again on his return to Antioch from his second missionary progress. (ix. 30, xviii. 22, viii. 40, on which see notes.) *Entered into the house of Philip the evangelist* (not the Apostle, but), *one of the seven* (whose appointment is recorded in vi. 5, 6). In the persecution on the death of Stephen, all the Church at Jerusalem were scattered abroad through Judea and Samaria except the Apostles. Among those thus dispersed was Philip, who seems never to have gone back after the re-organization of the Church in which he was ordained a deacon. The term "evangelist" answers apparently very much to our *missionary*. (See on viii. 26-40. See also 1 Tim. iii. 13.)

9. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.—Joel ii. 28.

Had four daughters, &c. This remark does not seem to be merely incidentally introduced, but is probably an indication that the daughters of Philip, influenced by the spirit of prophecy, foretold the sufferings which awaited the Apostle at Jerusalem. (See verse 10.) *VIRGINS.* Eusebius gives from Polycrates traditional accounts of them, that two were buried at Hierapolis, and one at Ephesus. From that passage, and one cited from Clement of Alexandria, it would appear that two were afterward married, according to tradition. To find an argument for the so-called "honor of virginity" in this verse, only shows to what resources those will stoop.

who have failed to apprehend the whole spirit and rule of the Gospel in the matter. *Prophecy.* (See xix. 6, xxi. 9; Rom. xii. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 10, xiii. 2, 8, xiv. 6; 1 Thes. v. 20.)

10. ¶ And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus. 11. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

chap. xi. 28. Verse 33; chap. xx. 23.

Concerning this prediction, the fulfillment of which is afterward related, we remark, that although it is said that the Jews should bind Paul, and deliver him up to the Gentiles, yet he was actually bound by the Gentiles, or by the captain of the Roman garrison, who had rescued him out of the hands of the Jews. There is however, no contradiction between the prophecy and the event, because in the prophetic style, and indeed in the common style of the Scriptures, things are represented to have been done by a person which were done by others at his command, or through his influence, direct or indirect. It was in consequence of the rage which the Jews expressed against Paul, that the Romans seized and bound him. Agabus accompanied the prediction of his sufferings with a symbolical action or an action expressive of their nature. Actions of this kind are frequent among nations in the earlier periods of their history, when the imagination and passions operate with great vivacity, and perhaps the penury of language requires the aid of visible signs, and some of them are retained on particular occasions, after a people is far advanced in civilization. They were common among the ancient prophets. Isaiah walked "naked and barefoot," to signify, that the Egyptians and Ethiopians should be spoiled, and led into captivity by their enemies, and Ezekiel carried out his household stuff in the sight of his countrymen, to intimate that Jerusalem should be plundered by the Chaldeans. In the same manner, Agabus bound his own hands and feet with Paul's girdle, to fore-show that he should suffer bonds and imprisonment. It is probable, that when the prophets first adopted the mode of communicating instruction by appropriate actions, as well as by words, they merely

conformed to the manner of their age. It was calculated to rouse attention, to give a distinct and impressive idea of the subject, and, by interesting the imagination, to fix it in the memory.

12. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. 13. Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus.

Matt. xvi. 22, 23. 2 Tim. iv. 6.

What a fine mixture of tenderness and fortitude! It is impossible to read this passage with any degree of attention, without sentiments of esteem and veneration. We see a great and good man, whose life and happiness were now at stake, willing to meet every danger, and death itself, for the cause of God and religion. Yet with all his unshaken firmness and resolution in this respect, he is not proof against the tears and sorrows of his friends. His heart melts, and sinks almost to breaking, and he is forced in his turn to have recourse to prayers and entreaties, that they might spare him from witnessing their grief, and their too ardent affection. He forgets all the terrors which await himself, unmoved by everything but their sympathy. Can we imagine a more noble spectacle? Compare him with the unfeeling Stoic, and you will easily discern his superior excellence. With more real fortitude, because sustained by a power above all human strength, he did not divest himself of the amiable sympathies and soft endearments of social life. He did not affect a contempt for pain and suffering, nor a disregard to the sorrows of generous friendship. But while he felt these, like other men, his sense of higher motives kept them within just bounds, nor suffered them to change the firm purpose of discharging his duty. Here is the model of a true Christian, who does not root out his affections, but fixes them on proper objects, and chiefly on things above. All the sweet charities of kindred and acquaintance are allowed their just degree of force; we are only to guard against their excesses, to take care that they may not tempt us to violate or omit any of the Divine commands, or so entirely occupy the mind, as in any manner to prevent our perfect submission to the Divine will. For Christianity not only

instructs us in our several duties, but likewise in the relative order to be observed among them; those which belong to God deservedly governing the rest. It will therefore sometimes happen, that we must make painful sacrifices, where our affections are involved. But let us not for this reason despond, for every such sacrifice cheerfully made shall have its reward: "the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed." Let us "endure hardness," as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, whenever His name, or His honor, or His word, or His people, need our countenance and support.

14. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The ^{will of the} Lord be done.

¹Matt. vi. 10, xxvi. 42.

Would not be persuaded. One is often moved for the sake of others, who is not moved on his own account. Hence Paul's firmness is perceived. *We ceased*, with pious modesty. *The will, &c.* They refer the event to God's determination, and submit all to His sovereign pleasure. Hence we learn, that it is the duty and desire, and ought to be the care and endeavor, of all the children of God, to be willing to submit themselves and theirs to the dispensations of God's Providence, in whatever befalls either them or theirs. Such is His justice and righteousness, that He can do His children no wrong, and such is His tender mercy and loving-kindness, that He will do them no harm. That which is often against their will is not always against their interest. Afflictions upon us, if we belong to God, are federal dispensations and covenant blessings, and either are good or shall work for good. It is, therefore, both our duty and interest to submit to the wisdom of Providence, and say with these disciples, *The will of the Lord be done.* (See Matt. xxvi. 39; 2 Sam. xv. 26; 1 Sam. i. 18.)

15. And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

Took up our carriages. "We placed the baggage on the mules or horses."

16. There went with us also certain of the disciples of Cesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.

¹Prov. xvi. 31.

Three things are indicated of this Mnason: that he was a native of Cyprus; that he had been a convert to Christianity for

some time—he was called "an old disciple;" and that he had a house at Jerusalem, with whom Paul and his friends were to lodge. It is an honorable thing to be an old disciple of Jesus Christ, to have been enabled by the grace of God to continue so long in a course of duty, steadfast in the faith, and growing more and more prudent and experienced, to a good old age. And with these old disciples one would choose to lodge, for "the multitude of their years shall teach wisdom."

17. ¹ And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.—Chap. xv. 4.

Received us gladly, consequently cheerfully accepted of his service for the poor saints in Judea. Thus his prayers and those of his Christian friends were answered. (Comp. xv. 31; Rom. xv. 31.)

18. And the day following, Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

²Chap. xv. 13, &c.; Gal. i. 19.

Went in with us, i. e., introduced us. *Unto James*, that is, James the Less, the son of Alphaeus, so called to distinguish him from James, the son of Zebedee. (Comp. xii. 2; xv. 13.) The anomalous condition of the Church until the downfall of Jerusalem, sufficiently apparent from this very chapter, required the constant presence of an Apostle, while the others were engaged perhaps on distant missions. This responsible and arduous commission, which was far more than the pastoral care of any single Church, however eminent or important, would not have been assigned to one of less than Apostolic rank, and is therefore a sufficient proof that James was an Apostle.

19. And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

³Rom. xv. 18, 19. ⁴Chap. xx. 24; 2 Cor. xii. 12.

Declared particularly, in detail, *what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.* As on previous occasions (chap. xiv. 27, and see Rom. xv. 15), no doubt referring to the insidious and systematic efforts of the Judaizing party in a number of places, to shrive the Church of Christ into a Jewish sect, and his own counter-procedure. With what humility Paul speaks of his own labors! God, he says, has wrought all. He claims nothing for himself save the joy which he experiences on seeing the Divine name glorified.

20. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law; 21. And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. 22. What is it, therefore? The multitude must needs come together; for they will hear that thou art come. 23. Do therefore this that we say to thee. We have four men which have a vow on them; 24. Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads; and all may know, that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing, but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. 25. As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded, that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. 26. Then Paul took the men; and the next day purifying himself with them, entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

*Chap. xxii. 3; Rom. x. 2. *Gal. v. 3. *Chap. xix. 32. *Num. vi. 2, 13, 18; chap. xviii. 18. *Chap. xv. 20, 29. *1 Cor. ix. 20. *Chap. xxiv. 18. *Num. vi. 13.

Thousands, or myriads of Jews. There were many belonging to Jerusalem, and many more were collected from other countries, to keep the Jewish festival. (Comp. chap. xx. 16.) Believe, and . . . are . . . zealous of the law, that is, were zealous of the law as binding not on the Gentiles (verse 25), but Jews, and even on them not as a ground of justification. This is plain from James and the elders advising Paul to countenance them as believers, and to bear with their prejudices. That they did not mean Paul to observe the law as a matter of necessity, but expediency, is obvious from their reference to that decree which explicitly declared that salvation was not by the law. And therefore we may conclude that they advised him to do no more in Jerusalem than he would willingly have done anywhere else. To the Jew he became a Jew; while he taught that the law profited not, he complied to observe it, that he might not wound the weak brethren. And in so doing he acted on the same principle as when he says (Rom. xiv. 21), "It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or made weak." He had, however, been represented in a very different light—as teaching the Jews to forsake Moses. This he had hitherto never done, and to refute the charge, he did not hesitate to comply with the advice of his Jewish brethren.

Them take, &c. It was no uncommon thing among the Jews to assist those who were under the vow of a Nazarite by

bearing expenses with them. Such an action in Paul would be a sufficient evidence that he did not condemn the law of Moses. *Walkest orderly, or regularly.* It is plain that James and his brethren thought it most regular and convenient that the Jewish ritual should be observed by those of the circumcision who believed in Christ. They were taught from their earliest years to consider that ritual as of Divine origin; and to be at once called to treat it with neglect was probably more than they could bear. Such a revolution was wisely accomplished by degrees; first by the Apostolical decree, which declared that the law was of no avail in saving men; next by an epistle addressed to them, which demonstrated that the death of Christ rendered the law void, its end being accomplished, and, lastly, by the destruction of the temple, by which obedience became impossible. Then all genuine believers cheerfully forsook the whole ritual of Moses, convinced that Christ had abolished by His death all distinction between Jew and Gentile. These events fully declared the mind of God, and till their accomplishment the strong were called to bear with the weak, not at the expense of conscience or duty, but on the principles of self-denial and expedience in love; they explicitly declared that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availed anything, while they acknowledged those brethren who could not conscientiously neglect the law of Moses. *Things offered to idols, &c.* (See on xv. 20, 29.) *To signify the accomplishment, &c.* Howson connects this sentence with the words "he entered into the temple," and gives the following translation: "He entered into the temple, giving public notice that the days of purification were fulfilled (and stayed there), until the offering for each one of the Nazarites was brought." According to this view, which is also the view of Wieseler, the period of the Nazarite vow was accomplished, and Paul now made to the priests the official announcement of its fulfillment, and his readiness to pay for the necessary sacrifices which were to be offered on the same day. Most interpreters, however, regard the announcement as having reference to the future; that

Paul here announced to the priest when the days of purification were completed—namely, in seven days (verse 27); and that then, at the close of them, the offering would be made for each of the Nazarites. “Paul is among the Nazarites,” says *Lange*.

1. Not as a slave of human ordinances, but in the light of Evangelical liberty, which had power over all things that promote the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. vi. 12.) 2. Not as a dissembler before the people, but in the ministry of brotherly love, which bears the infirmities of the weak. (Rom. xv. 1.) 3. Not as a fugitive from the cross, but in the power of Apostolic obedience, which knows to deny itself from love to the Lord. (Luke ix. 23; see 1 Cor. ix. 1.)

27. †And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, Chap. xxiv. 18. †Chap. xxvi. 21.

Having noticed the treatment which Paul met with at Jerusalem, we have in the narrative which now commences the treatment he met with from the intolerant Jew and the Roman authority. *When the seven days, &c.* (See on verse 27.)

28. Crying out, Men of Israel, help: this is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place; and further, brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. Chap. vi. 13, 14, xxiv. 5, 6.

Men of Israel, help. A short watchword to rouse the populace. *This is the man.* He is well-known in Jerusalem, his name was a household word in all Israel. The charges of the infuriated mob, that this man spoke everywhere “against the people,” were all false; he had never spoken against the people, never against the law, never against the temple, and never polluted the holy place. This last would have been, according to the Jewish law, a most criminal act, punishable by death. There was a court of the Gentiles, so-called, within the precincts of the temple, into which they were allowed free admittance, but beyond that, into the holy place, or court of the Israelites, they were not suffered to penetrate; and inscriptions were written upon the pillars, in the current languages, forbidding any but a Jew to cross the fatal threshold, as being unclean and tending to desecrate the sanctuary of the Most High. “*This holy place.*” This was an interior court, in which some of the sacred things of the temple—as the altar of in-

cense, golden table and candlesticks—were deposited and used. The Gentiles were not allowed to enter that, nor the *chel* or inclosure before it. *Philo* says that it was certain death for any one who was not a Jew to set his foot within the inner court of the temple.

29. (For they had seen before with him, in the city, Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)—Chap. xx. 4.

For *Trophimus*, see on xx. 4. He was a foreigner, and not a Jew from Ephesus. *Whom they supposed, &c.* They had seen Trophimus in the city with him, and from that rushed to the conclusion that he had brought Greeks into the temple. When God has appointed a season of suffering for us, the slightest circumstance may introduce it. How closely the servants of Christ are watched by the world, and what reason had they to be circumspect in their walk!

30. And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

They took Paul. They tumultuously seized on him, and drew him out of the temple, out of the court of the Israelites, where he was worshiping: and . . . the doors were shut, to guard against any profanation of it by riot or bloodshed.

31. And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar: 32. Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.—1 Cor. xi. 23, &c. Chap. xxiii. 27, xxiv. 7.

To kill—with blows. (Verse 32). *Came*—to the Antonian tower, where there was usually a Roman garrison and camp, to overawe the Jews, and to prevent popular tumults. *Tidings*—sudden. *The chief captain of the band.* His name was Claudius Lysias. (Acts xxiii. 26.) *Immediately*—he supposed that delay was dangerous. (Verse 38.) *Soldiers*—the number of soldiers under the command of the Roman tribune varied, according to circumstances, from three hundred to one thousand. God raises up what instruments He pleases to subserve His own gracious ends and designs in the preservation of His people. The barbarous heathen soldiers protect Paul, and keep him from being torn in pieces by the Jews, who professed to worship the same God with him.

33. Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done. Verse 11; chap. xx. 23; Eph. vi. 20.

Took him. With great violence, according to chap. xxiv. 7, probably meaning an armed force. *To be bound with two chains.* To be bound between two soldiers, his right hand chained to the left hand of the one, and his left hand to the right of the other. *Demanded*—of the crowd indiscriminately, it being his first approach. (Verse 34.) *Who, what*—two heads of inquiry. Let not the servant of Christ depend with too much confidence on the aid which the world affords. Here the tribune rescues the Apostle from the hands of murderous Jews, but nevertheless commands him, without hearing his plea, to be bound with two chains.

34. And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude; and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle. 35. And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers, for the violence of the people.

¹Chap. xxiii. 10, 16. ²Ps. lv. 9; Hab. i. 3.

Some cried one thing, &c. They had no intelligent account to give. Reason had abdicated the throne; they were the mere creatures of impulse. A sad sight this. A vast multitude of human beings moved not by intelligent motives but by blind impulse. It is this senselessness that makes the opinion of mobs so worthless, their movements so reckless, and their existence so dangerous. *Could not know the certainty, i. e.,* the true state of the case. *For the tumult,* on account of the confusion, noise and uproar. *The castle*—the castle of Antonia, commanded by the tribune. “This castle,” says *Josephus*, “had four towers, one of which overlooked the whole temple, and was joined to its porticos, and had a double pair of stairs from it, by which the soldiers of the garrison in the castle were used to come down with their arms on the festival days, and keep the people in quiet. As the temple was a guard to the city, so was this castle to the temple.” Paul was conducted thither, probably in order to disperse the multitude, and to allow a further investigation. The soldiers bore him up the stairs on account of the violence of the people.

36. For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

¹Luke xxiii. 18: John xix. 15: chap. xxii. 22; 1 Cor. iv. 13.

The people's violence and impetuosity appear from their cries. Here we see the antagonism of the depraved heart to Christianity. Why was Paul that one

central figure in Jerusalem now against which all that was corrupt in the city pelted its fury and hurled its anathemas? Simply because he embodied and radiated the pure morality, the spiritual worship, and the universal love of the Gospel. Christianity clashes with the corrupt in human nature, stirs it into malice, and makes it rage with fury. Hence it is that its progress is ever a history of battles—battles fought on the arena of the sinner's heart.

37. ¶ And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek? 38. Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?

Men that were murderers, or, men of the Sacarii, an appellation given to a number of persons who carried a small crooked dagger under their garments, with which they committed many murders about this time in Jerusalem. *That Egyptian.* Josephus speaks of this man coming to the city when Felix was procurator. He pretended to be a prophet, and persuaded many to follow him to Mount Olivet, promising that they should see Jerusalem fall down at his command, and that they should have a free entrance into the city over its ruins. The fact that the chief captain made the mistake indicated by this inquiry, plainly indicates that he did not much concern himself with the religious history of the Jews, and felt no interest whatever in the progress of the Christian religion.

39. But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.

¹Chap. ix. 11, xxii. 3. ²Chap. xxii. 25.

Paul's reply to his question threw new light upon his mind, and no doubt convinced him that his prisoner was no ordinary man. The Apostle did not here exaggerate the importance of his birth-place, for Tarsus was the capital of Cilicia, and was famous for its schools of philosophy, and the high refinement and wealth of its people. Xenophon in his “Anabasis” calls Tarsus “a great and flourishing city,” and Josephus says that “it was the metropolis and most renowned city among the Cilicians.” (See on chap. ix. 11.)

40. And when he had given him license, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people: and when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying;

¹Chap. xii. 17.

The bearing and the spirit of Paul in his answer induced the Roman to grant his request, and he "gave him license." The wonderful advantage of this license to Paul then and there to speak, will appear in the sequel. *And beckoned*, &c. Addressing a crowd, an Oriental would not bawl out "silence!" to affront them, but lifts up his

hand to its extreme height, and moves it backward and forward, and they say to each other *pasathe*, be silent. *In the Hebrew tongue*—the language which was spoken by the Jews in Judea in the time of Christ and the Apostles. It was, properly, a degenerate form of the old Hebrew, though it was still popularly called Hebrew.

1. Who said to Paul that he should not go up to Jerusalem? 2. What great mark of respect did the disciples at Tyre show to Paul? 3. To what place did they who were of Paul's company depart? 4. Into whose house did they enter? 5. What is said of Phillip? 6. What of his daughters? 7. What is recorded of Agabus? 8. What did Paul say to those who would dissuade him from going to Jerusalem? 9. How was Paul received at Jerusalem? 10. What did he say in the presence of James and all the elders present? 11. What was their reply? 12. What did the Jews which were of Asia? 13. What did Paul say as he was led into the castle? 14. How was he "a Jew of Tarsus?" 15. In what tongue did he speak unto them?

CHAPTER XXII.

1 *Paul declareth at large, how he was converted to the faith, 17 and called to his apostleship. 22 At the very mentioning of the Gentiles, the people claim on him. 24 He should have been scourged, 25 but claiming the privilege of a Roman, he escapeth.*

MEN, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defense *which I make now unto you.*
*Chap. vii. 2. *1 Peter iii. 15.

Paul appears before us now in a new condition; he is a prisoner, he was "bound with two chains." (Chap. xxi. 33.) In this condition we shall find him now in every chapter to the close of his memorable life. He closes his connection with the city in which he had encountered such violent persecution, by two defenses of himself—the one addressed to the people, and the other to the great council of the nation. We have now to notice his defense before the people. *Men (and, or, who are) brethren.* To this customary form of address Paul, like Stephen, and perhaps in imitation of him (vii. 2), adds *fathers*, either as a general expression of respect, or, as most interpreters suppose, with reference to such priests or elders as he may have seen or known to be among the multitude. *Hear now.* Heretofore they had not heard him because of the tumult.

2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith.)

See on xxi. 40.

They kept the more silence. It is often the fault of preachers themselves, when men do not listen with attention to their words. They do not express themselves intelligibly, but adopt a style which betrays affectation, or is above the comprehension of the hearers. A teacher who is sincerely desirous of edifying will always endeavor to set forth the truth in the plainest and most intelligible language, and to apply it to the hearts of his hearers. The Saviour's mode of teaching affords a blessed and most perfect example.

3. I am everily a man *which am* a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.
*xxi. 39, 2 Cor. xi. 22. Phil. iii. 5. *Chap. v. 34. *Chap. xxvi. 5. *Gal. i. 14. *Chap. xxi. 20; Rom. x. 2.

A Jew. This he avers in order to refute the charge on which he was arrested, namely, that of traitorous hostility to the religion of his fathers. *Born in Tarsus.* (See on ix. 11.) *Gamaliel.* This Gamaliel, by general consent, was an eminent Pharisee, a member of the Sanhedrim. (See on v. 34.) *At the feet.* In Bible language, the teacher is said to be at the head of his disciples. (2 Kings ii. 3.) The pupil sits at the feet—an intimation of the intimate nearness and subjection to the teacher's authority. *And taught according, &c.*

He was not only a Jew, though born in Tarsus, yet brought up in Jerusalem, and taught by one of the most distinguished Rabbis, but he was taught perfectly—strictly in their law, and he was moreover “*zealous toward God*”—a zealot of God.

4. And I persecuted ^{with} ways unto the death, blinding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

²Chap. viii. 3, xxvi. 9-13; Phil. iii. 6; 1 Tim. i. 13.

This way. (See on ix. 2.) *Unto death*, not the aim merely, but the result of His persecution. The facts in the case justify the strongest sense of the expression. (See v. 20 and xxvi. 10.) Paul utters not a word in vindication of his conduct prior to his conversion. He paints the whole in the dark colors of fact.

5. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there, bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.—*Chap. ix. 2, &c.*

Doth bear me witness—He evidently could bear Paul witness: Paul does not doubt his willingness to do so, hence he speaks kindly. Afterward, in chap. xxvi. 5, more severely. *All the estate of the elders*—the whole Sanhedrim. *Brethren*—Jews. (Chap. ii. 29.) *Went to Damascus, &c.* (See on ix. 2, &c.)

6. And it came to pass, that as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

See on ix. 3.

7. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

See on ix. 4.

I fell unto the ground. We must take off the shoes from our feet, like Moses—fall to the dust, like Isaiah—smite our breast, like the publican, if we would hear what God has to say. (Isa. lxvi. 2.) *And heard a voice saying unto me.* It was the manifestation of Christ in the “light,” the “voice,” the address, which gave the turning-point to Paul’s life. Conversion does not originate with self, nor with the agency of man outside, but always with Christ. “When it pleased God to reveal His Son in me.” &c. Christ, when on earth, said not to His murderers, *Why bind ye me? Why buffet ye me? Why scourge ye me, and crucify me?* But now, when His people suffered, He cries out from heaven, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* He is more tender of His mystical body than He was of His natural body, more sensible of His members’ sufferings, than of His own.

8. And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

I am Jesus of Nazareth, or, as it should have been rendered, “I am Jesus, *the Nazarene*, &c. There were three different names, or appellations, by which both Jews and Gentiles were accustomed to express their contempt of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was sometimes contemptuously called, “The Galilean,” at other times, “The Crucified One,” and at other times, “The Nazarene.” These names were very current among the enemies of Christianity in the New Testament times. They were intended to convey the utmost scorn and contempt on the part of those that employed them, and, beyond all question, they must have been often used and applied by Saul, in his frantic zeal against the Church of Christ. (See on ix. 5.) Jesus owned His name from heaven to teach His members not to be ashamed when reproached for it here on earth.

9. And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. 10. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things, which are appointed for thee to do. 11. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.—*1 Dan. x. 7.*

See on ix. 7, &c.

Saw indeed the light but heard not the voice. This extraordinary circumstance indicates what is common in the world. Everywhere there are men, hearing the same voice, but receiving different impressions, seeing the same lights, but observing different objects. A “voice” fraught with deep meaning to some, is mere empty sound to others. A “light” revealing the grandest realities to some, discloses nothing to others. *What shall I do, Lord?* “We may,” says an old writer, “sooner find fire without heat, than a true convert without operative grace.”

12. And one ¹Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwell there. 13. Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

²Chap. ix. 17. ³Chap. x. 22; 1 Tim. iii. 7; Heb. xi. 2.

See on chap. ix. 10, 17.

Ananias, a pious man, according to the law, whose acceptance of the Gospel had by no means destroyed his regard to the Mosaic institutions, and who on that account had an honorable character among all the Jews

who dwelt at Damascus. Thus Paul affirms that he was not introduced to Christianity by an opponent of Judaism.

Brother Saul. They were now brethren by faith and profession, owning the same God, united to the same Saviour, animated by the same Spirit, encouraged by the same promises, partakers of the same hope, and heirs of the same glory. As the Scriptures speak of a brotherhood between Christ and believers, *he is not ashamed to call them brethren*, so it speaks of a brotherhood between believers themselves. *Love the brotherhood*, that is, the whole fraternity and society of Christians, who are cemented by the blood of Christ, and united by the bond of love.

14. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldst hear the voice of his mouth. Chap. iii. 13, v. 30. Chap. ix. 15; Gal. i. 15. Verse 18; 1 Cor. ix. 1, xv. 8. Chap. iii. 14, vii. 52. 1 Cor. xi. 23; Gal. i. 12.

See on ix. 15.

In the address of Ananias there is an accommodation to the views and feelings of the audience. God and Christ are both mentioned by their purely Jewish names. Ananias here asserts that Paul saw Christ, so that we infer that an actual appearance of Christ was granted him, which is not indeed precisely stated either in Luke's account of the transaction, or in either of the accounts given by the Apostle himself. (See on ix. 17.) This appearance was to put him on a level with the other Apostles who had seen the risen Lord. "*That Just One.*" (See iii. 14.) Jesus is thus designated, not merely because, as God, He is absolutely just, the Fountain of eternal rectitude, nor merely because, as man, He "did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth," but as Mediator who has engaged to make unjust men just. His work as Mediator is to make, by His justifying righteousness and sanctifying Spirit, unjust men just to themselves, just to their fellows, just to the universe, just to God. This is His work, and His exclusively.

15. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men, of what thou hast seen and heard. Chap. xxiii. 11, xxvi. 16, &c.

Unto all men. The universal ministry of Paul is expressed in these terms: the Gentiles being as yet not directly mentioned, for fear of irritating the Jews,

whereas, on the contrary, in chap. ix. 15, the commission is to bear the name of Jesus before the Gentiles, and kings, and the people of Israel. *Thou shalt be his witness, &c.* The work of ministers of the Gospel is now to witness for, hereafter to witness against; now they witness for God and His truth, and persuade sinners to believe it, hereafter they will witness against sinners for not believing and obeying the truth of God. With what an heart must a minister study when he considers that every sermon he preaches must be a witness against many, if not most of his hearers!

16. And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord, Heb. x. 22; 1 Peter iii. 21. Rom. x. 13; 1 Cor. i. 2.

Arise, and be baptized, &c. This way of speaking arises from baptism being the visible seal of remission. *Calling on the name of the Lord*, rather, "having called," i. e., after having done so, referring to the confession of Christ, which preceded baptism, as chap. viii. 37.

17. And it came to pass, that when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; 18. And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. 19. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed in thee: 20. And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. 21. And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence, unto the Gentiles. 22 Cor. xii. 2. Verse 14. Verse 4. Chap. vii. 53. Chap. viii. 1. Chap. xiii. 2, 47. Rom. i. 5, vi. 13, xv. 16, Gal. ii. 7, 8, Eph. iii. 7, 8, 1 Tim. ii. 7.

While I prayed. Prayer is an instinct of the soul. Danger seldom fails to rouse this instinct into a passionate supplication even in the most depraved. (See Ps. cvii. 13.) *Volley*, in a storm at sea, was a striking example of this. *I was in a trance.* The trance is the state in which a man has passed out of the usual order of his life, beyond the usual limits of consciousness and volition. To an "ecstasy" in the Apostle Paul we owe the mission which was the starting point of the history of the New Testament Church, the command which bade him "depart far hence unto the Gentiles." It is supposed by some, and with much probability, that it is to this trance Paul refers (2 Cor. xii. 1-5) when he speaks of being caught up to the third heaven. Real, earnest, believing prayer, places the soul under the beams, and breezes, and blessed visions of heaven.

And saw him, the Lord Jesus, mentioned in verse 16. Paul saw Him in his mind. *Saying unto me, &c.* The idea was conveyed in this communication, not only that Paul's testimony would be rejected but that violence would be attempted against his person. *They know that I imprisoned, &c.,—and when the blood of thy martyr Stephen.* (See on chap. vii. 58.) Paul thought that his conversion was so effectual an argument that even the Jews would be moved by it, but the Lord answers, that the Gentiles rather will be moved by it. It often occurs that faithful servants of God imagine that a special blessing would attend their labors in a particular place, rather than elsewhere. But God says: "Nay, thou errest!" and sends them away from the spot where they wished to remain. *Depart, &c.* Paul relates this vision to show that his own inclination and prayer had been that *he might preach the gospel to his own people*, but that it was by the imperative command of the Lord Himself that he went to the Gentiles.

22. † And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.—Chap. xxv. 24.

Notwithstanding the consummate skill with which Paul seemed to have conducted his defense, it was not to prove successful. *Away with such a fellow, &c.* Remarkable instance of pride and prejudice! These Jews heard Paul relate a variety of wonders attending his conversion without the least appearance of displeasure or disbelief; but the moment he cast the slightest reflection upon themselves, although not in his own words, but repeating the command of the Lord, they instantly lose all patience, and are for sweeping him from the face of the earth. The true cause of their infidelity on this occasion, as we see, lay in that part of the account which seemed to reprove their hardness of heart and to represent the Gentiles as directed by God to receive the Gospel. And why is the Gospel rejected by most unbelievers, but because its meek, pure and holy doctrines are inconsistent with the pride and appetites of the world? "Men love darkness rather than light"—why? "because," says the infallible Word of God, "their deeds are evil."

23. And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air;

It is the invariable practice throughout Asia, in the present day, for people who apply for justice to be done against a criminal, to crowd in a tumultuous manner to the gate of the governor's palace, and to stand there uttering the most horrid yells, tearing their clothes, and throwing dust in the air, till they succeed in obtaining attention to their demands. These preparations of the mob, as has been well remarked, present even in our own day an image of man, when the madness of passion controls him. He rends his clothes, casts off the last remnant of shame and modesty, and exhibits himself, without disguise, in his brutal nakedness; he throws up dust in order to sully all that is bright and beautiful, to pollute all that is noble, and to delude himself. "It is dangerous to awaken the lion, the tiger's tooth is destructive, but the most terrible of all terrors, is man in his delusion."

24. The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging, that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

Scourging was a common method of examination resorted to by the Romans. It was administered by the lictors, and was usually inflicted by rods. The tribune, however, in ordering Paul to be immediately scourged, acted contrary to the Roman law, which enjoined that no examination should commence with scourging. Perhaps, in ordering Paul to be scourged, he designed to appease the wrath of the multitude, as Pilate for this reason scourged Jesus. (John xix. 1.) *That he might know, &c.* As Paul addressed the multitude in Hebrew, the tribune, being ignorant of that language, was not able to understand what he said. But when he saw the result, the rage and violent actions of the Jews, he naturally concluded that he had before him some dangerous criminal.

25. † And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? 26. When the centurion heard *that*, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman. 27. Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. 28. And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born. 29. Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him; and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

† Chap. xvi. 37; xxv. 16. † Or, tortured him.

As they bound him, literally, stretched him out, that the Apostle's back might be fully exposed to the stripes. This act is not ascribed to the centurion, who stood by, nor to the chief captain, who was not present even; it refers to those of whom the commencement of verse 22 speaks. *With thongs.* With which they bound him before inflicting the strokes. *Scourging* was threatened. *Thongs* differ from scourging, for they were employed to bind any one who was to be tortured by scourging. *For you.* Emphatic. It was nowhere lawful. *A man that is a Roman.* It was an evil deed, as Cicero tells us, to bind a Roman citizen; it was a heinous crime to scourge one. Paul did not assert his right of citizenship against the bonds (verse 29), for bonds had been foretold: he did assert it against the scourge, that he might defend his body and life, with the object of thereafter preaching the Gospel. *And—that too.* *With a great sum, &c.* The right of Roman citizenship was at first granted only to such foreigners as had conferred distinguished services on the country, or as a mark of honor upon great and good individuals. But, in process of time, it could be purchased for money, and under the corrupt emperors, it was prostituted so low, to fill their treasuries, that it lost its value, and never again recovered its primitive distinction. The tribune, in the present instance, had purchased the privilege with a large sum of money. "But I was free born." This is generally supposed to have been on account of Tarsus being made a free city by Augustus, and its inhabitants thus being admitted to the right of citizenship. *Pliny*, in his "Natural History," says that "Tarsus was a

free city;" *Appian*, that "the people of Tarsus were free, and discharged from paying tribute;" and other expressions are quoted from *Dion Cassius* and *Philo*, bearing upon the same point.

30. ¶ On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.—Chap. xxiii. 28.

He would have known, &c. He wished to ascertain the real ground of Paul's being apprehended by the Jews. *He loosed him from his bands.* From the chains which had been put on him the day before. (xxi. 33.) This was only a temporary removal of his bands, for the sake of his appearing before the Sanhedrim, for in the subsequent notices, Paul appears to be still wearing a chain. (xxi. 27; xxv. 27; xxvi. 29.) *Commanded, or required,* no doubt, by virtue of official powers in cases of emergency belonging to the governor when present, but devolving in his absence on the commander of the forces in Jerusalem. The *chief priests* are mentioned as the most important class of counselors, and *all their Sanhedrim*, the pronoun *their* being omitted by the latest critics. *And brought Paul down* from his prison in the castle to the lower place where the Sanhedrim assembled. According to Jewish tradition, that body transferred their sittings at length from Gazith, an apartment in the inner temple, to a room on Mount Zion, near the bridge over the Tyropæon. It was here probably that the council met at this time, for Lysias and his soldiers would not have presumed to enter the sacred part of the temple. The Romans conceded to the Jews the right of putting any foreigner to death who passed the forbidden limits.

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1. How did Paul begin his defense? 2. Of what does it consist? 3. What effect was produced on the audience?
 4. What did the chief captain command? 5. How was Paul bound? 6. What did he say to the centurion? 7. To whom did the centurion report this? 8. What was the result of the conversation between the chief captain and Paul? 9. Why was the chief captain afraid? 10. Why did he loose Paul from his bands?

CHAPTER XXIII.

1 As Paul pleadeth his cause, 2 Ananias commandeth them to smite him. 7 Dissension among his accusers. 11 God encourageth him. 14 The Jews, laying wait for Paul 20 is declared unto the chief captain. 27 He sendeth him to Felix the governor.

AND Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

^aChap. xxiv. 16; 2 Cor. i. 12; Heb. xiii. 18.

We have now the speech of Paul before the Jewish council, commonly known by the name of the Sanhedrim, and the highest court in the nation. The Jewish writers affirm that it subsisted during all the ages of their commonwealth, and was instituted in the wilderness, when seventy elders of Israel were chosen to assist Moses in the government. The Sanhedrim was composed of the same number of members. Some, however, are of opinion that its commencement can be traced no further back than the return from the Babylonian captivity. It was a court to which appeals were made from the sentences of inferior judicatories; but there were some causes of greater difficulty and importance in which it claimed a sole right to judge. The council was now summoned by the chief captain, as it had been called together at the birth of our Saviour by Herod. He brought Paul before it, because he appeared from the clamors of the people to have been guilty of some offense against their laws; and, probably, that court asserted its right to judge him as a blasphemer of Moses, and of their sacred institutions.

Paul earnestly beholding, &c. In the presence of this august assembly, Paul was not abashed and intimidated. Alone in the midst of enemies, who had both the inclination and the power to injure him, he surveyed them with an undaunted countenance, supported by consciousness of innocence, and the expectation of that assistance, which Jesus Christ had promised to His disciples, when they should be brought before governors and kings for His sake. Instead of endeavoring to disarm their resentment, and to court their favor by any mean concession, or any retraction of his principles, he dared to assert the purity of his motives and the rectitude of his conduct. *I have lived, &c.* The word has an indirect reference to the

"polity" or "commonwealth of Israel," of which he would signify that he had been and was to that hour, an honest and God-fearing member.

2. And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. ^bJohn xviii. 22.

Who this *Ananias* is it is not certain. He presided, however, as the high priest on this occasion. The marvelous indignity which he ordered now to be inflicted on Paul, was in accordance with ancient and modern usages. Striking on the mouth was perhaps intended to express on this occasion that the tongue had been unlawfully employed, and that it should cease its utterances.

3. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?

^cLev. xix. 35; Deut. xxv. 1, 2; John vii. 51.

Shall smite, literally, *is* (or *is about*) *to smite*, the first verb denoting simple futurity, without expressing (although it of course implies) intention or determination on the part of God, much less a desire on the part of Paul himself. *Thou whited wall*—alluding to the beautiful outside of some walls, which were constructed with mud and other base materials. This proverbial expression is analogous to our Saviour's words, in which He compares the Pharisees to whited sepulchres—beautiful outside, but within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. (Matt. xxiii. 27.) *Sittest thou to judge, &c.* Dost thou sit here on the seat of justice, in order to judge me according to the law, and commandest thou me to be smitten contrary to the law? Observe the incisive question as to the complete opposition shown by his judges between their office and their conduct.

4. And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? 5. Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

^dEx. xxii. 28. Ec. x. 20, 2 Peter ii. 10, Jude 8.

I wist not, &c. These words plainly indicate that Paul knew not the dignity of the person whom he addressed, and consequently that he spoke to him simply as sustaining the character and place of judge without regard to any higher office. By this assertion he weakened the force of

the accusation brought against him without acknowledging any guilt. *Ananias* unquestionably was not at this time in the official dress, otherwise he was easily known, and it would have at once appeared absurd in Paul to pretend ignorance of his dignity. But as the Apostle had been absent from Jerusalem, and the office of high priest was frequently changing from one person to another, although Paul had formerly been acquainted with *Ananias*, he might not have known him as at present holding the office of high priest. *Michaelis*, after investigating this subject, says that at this time the office of high priest was vacant, and *Ananias* must have assumed, without authority, the presidency.

For it is written, Thou shalt not, &c. Had Paul quoted, as some think, the law to intimate to his accusers, that as he remembered it, he could be charged only with an unintentional transgression of it, it would have been of little service, for ignorance of the dignity of *Ananias* could not acquit him from a breach of the precept which enjoined respect to every ruler of Israel. And indeed the Apostle's principles correspond with the law of love, which forbids speaking evil of any man. His design, we apprehend, was to inform his accusers, that as he could not want respect to the high-priest, of whom he was ignorant, so neither had he spoken inadvertently, for he remembered and regarded the Divine law, with the violation of which they accused him, and that they ought, therefore, to have considered his words in a very different light. He was indeed convinced of his innocence in what he had said. This was calculated at once to vindicate himself, and to fix more impressively the awful and solemn judgment which he had announced on the minds of his hearers.

6. *But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

^cChap. xxvi. 5; Phil. iii. 5. ^fChap. xxiv. 15, 21, xxvi. 6, xxviii. 20.

Sadducees Pharisees. The Sanhedrim was at this time divided between these two factions. The Pharisees were the popular party, and were perhaps the more numerous, but Josephus informs us that many of the sect of the Sadducees were high in office. It would almost ap-

pear that the high-priesthood was frequently conferred on those of this party. We are expressly informed that Ananias, afterward high priest, was a Sadducee. (*Joseph Ant.* xx. 9, 1). It was no doubt favorable for the Church that there was at this time this division of parties in the Sanhedrim. The Sadducees were chiefly incensed against the Christians, because they taught the doctrine of the resurrection; whereas the Pharisees, out of opposition to their rival sect, were sometimes inclined to favor them.

7. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. 8. For the Sadducees say there is no resurrection; neither angel nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. 9. And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.

^aMatt. xxii. 23; Mark xii. 18; Luke xx. 27. ^bChap. xxv. 25, xxvi. 31. ^cChap. xxii. 17, 18. ^dChap. v. 39.

The multitude—of the associate judges, who favored each of the two sects. *Nor spirit*—spirit, as opposed to angel, means here the spirit of a man who is dead. *Both*—one of these points is the resurrection, the other is, angels and other spirits. *Scribes strove*, disputed violently. They appear as the champions of their party, because they were the men of learning, and accustomed to such debates. *We find no evil in this man.* Human passions were violently inflamed; nevertheless the wisdom of God accomplished its great design. He rules in the midst of His enemies. (Ps. cx. 2). Some, says Paul (Phil. i. 16, 18), preach Christ, who are influenced by hostile feelings, still, if Christ is preached, whatever the motive may be, I will rejoice. *If a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him.* The Pharisees here recollected the declaration which Paul had made the day before, respecting the supernatural appearance of Jesus to him near Damascus, and in the temple. (xxii. 6–8, 18–21). As such appearances accorded with their belief, and as they were now arrayed against the Sadducees, they would, for consistency's sake, express themselves as believing in the reality of such communications from spiritual beings. Probably they meant not merely to speak of those two instances, but to profess that they held themselves ready candidly to consider any views which had, at any time,

been presented to Paul from above. *Let us not fight against God.* The hostility of the Pharisees to the Sadducees led them to assume the appearance of great candor. Well had it been for them had they acted on the principle they now appeared to defend. We cannot but be struck with the similarity of their declaration to that which Gamaliel made when advising the Sanhedrim not to persecute the Apostles. (See v. 39).

10. ¶ And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle. 11. And the night following, the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome. ¹Ps. xlvii. 1, 7; chap. xviii. 19, xxvii. 23, 24. ²Chap. xxviii. 30, 31; Rom. i. 15.

As the tumult and quarreling continued to increase, and the person of Paul himself began to be in peril, it was necessary for the chief captain to take care that his prisoner was not torn from him by the frantic judges. What could the astonished man have thought of such conduct on the part of the venerated assembly! He was well aware of the fanaticism of the Jews in matters of belief, and, lest the members of the Sanhedrim might in the tumult do some injury to this man in his (the chief captain's) presence—a man, too, who seemed worthy of respect, and had shown himself to be a Roman citizen—he ordered a detachment of soldiers to come down from the castle and to drag Paul from the midst of them—to take him away by force, and to take him into the barracks. *The Lord stood by him, &c.* The danger was great, but the comfort, too, was great. We may very well imagine, that just at this moment, when, amid all the complications between the chief captain, the Sanhedrim and the people, appearances seemed to point to nothing but a wearisome imprisonment and hostile plots—despondency came over the Apostle, and he who had stood up so boldly before the council now humbly and meekly implored his Lord for fresh strength and new life. *For as thou hast testified, &c.* As certainly as the former event (which was long previously indicated to thee by the Spirit) has now taken place, so surely shall the other come to pass in due time. Thou shalt testify as thou hast before testified, and I will continue to

guide thee. This is the comfort which the Lord affords to His servant, who in all his weakness is still anxious to testify. In the two chief cities of the world at that time—in the city of God and in the city of Cæsar—was this “chosen vessel” to confess and preach the name of Jesus. “If,” says an old writer, “the Lord stand by, and be graciously present with His servants, in a suffering hour, it is no matter how many and how mighty they be that do withstand them, and appear against them. No doubt these words, *Be of good cheer, Paul*, turned the Apostle's prison into a palace, and enabled him to bid a bold defiance to all the devilish designs of the Jews in Jerusalem against him, having got such good security for his safety, even from God Himself, in the faith of which our Apostle holily triumphs, saying, *If God be for us, who can be against us.* (Rom. viii. 31.) That is, *none can be against us, either safely or successfully.*” We may lament, it is difficult not to lament, that such manifestations as that which Paul received, are no longer granted, that in our troubles and difficulties we have no such encouraging presence of “Him whom having not seen we love;” and yet how much more cause have we rather to rejoice than to repine. “Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world;” that blessed promise is for us, and for our children, a promise which never has been, and never shall be, broken to any of the believing followers of our Lord, while time remains. And such a promise of spiritual aid and spiritual presence far outweighs in value any promise of a personal presence which our Lord could have vouchsafed.

12. ¶ And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying, that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. 13. And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy. 14. And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul. 15. Now therefore ye, with the council, signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to-morrow, as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him. 16. And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul. 17. Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him. 18. So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who has something to say unto thee. 19. Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him, What is that thou hast to tell me? 20. And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou

wouldest bring down Paul to-morrow into the council as though they would inquire somewhat of him more perfectly. 21. But do thou not yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee. 22. So the chief captain then let the young man depart, and charged him, See thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me.

^aVerses 21, 30; chap. xxv. 3. ^bOr, with an oath of excommunication. ^cPs. xxxi. 13. ^dPhilos. iv. 9. ^ePs. xxi. 11, xxxvii. 32, 33. ^f2 Sam. xvii. 17. ^gProv. xxii. 3; Matt. x. 16. ^hChap. xxviii. 17; Eph. iii. 1, iv. 1; Philo. 9. ⁱVerse 12. ^jEcc. xxiii. 2.

Although Paul, through the firmness and timely interference of the chief captain, was secured from the dangers of the lawless and infuriated council, perils far more to be dreaded than open violence were prepared for the Apostle, by the secret machinations of his enemies. *Certain of the Jews banded together, &c.* This conspiracy, atrocious as it is, was quite conformable to the current maxims of the time. On any one who was found guilty of speaking disrespectfully of their law, or impugning its authority, the traditions of that corrupt and degenerate age authorized every private Jew to inflict any measure of violence he could, whenever he obtained opportunity, without waiting for the tedious forms, and the uncertain issue, of a public trial. An offender of this description being considered a greater criminal than either a thief or a murderer, his removal by death was lauded as a meritorious and patriotic achievement, and we need not wonder, therefore, that at a period when such sentiments were universally entertained, men were found, not only forming the deliberate purpose of assassination, but informing the leading characters in the country, and receiving their approbation and encouragement of the bloody design. This execrable plot was sanctioned by a solemn and inviolable oath of abstinence from meat and drink till the assassins should be released from their vow by the death of their victim. Nor was this either an uncommon, or, on their part, a rash and impracticable condition, the miscreants imposed on themselves. In ancient times, when revenge of insults and injuries was inculcated and practiced as a part of every man's duty, it was common for persons who had such a dark and atrocious design in view, to bind themselves to its performance, by voluntarily abjuring for a time some favorite employment, or submitting to some particular personal privation, such

as resolving not to sleep till their enemy had fallen, if they were within reach of the object of their pursuit, and not to cut their hair, to taste wine, or eat flesh, or some other specified article of food, if they were likely to be engaged for a considerable period in watching the fit opportunity of accomplishing their purpose. Even to this day the Arabs, among whom the practice prevails for the nearest of kin to avenge the death of their murdered relatives, and who will compass sea and land in search of their victim, often bind themselves not to eat salt with any one they meet on their travels, for fear of interposing obstacles to their discharge of this debt of honor. Some deny themselves to one enjoyment, others to another, and whatever be the sacrifice they resolve to make, they consider the vow sacred, and, at whatever hazard or inconvenience, to be scrupulously observed, till the obligation has ceased with the death of the object of their pursuit. It was in the true spirit of Arab revenge that the forty conspirators, who plotted the death of Paul, bound themselves to abstain from food and drink till that obnoxious individual was out of the world, and perhaps, as such infamous vows as those which the accomplices mutually entered into, were far from being uncommon, and as they could form no certain calculations as to the length of time they might take to perpetrate the intended murder, the oath by which they bound themselves, in conformity with Eastern usages, might extend only to abstinence from some particular kinds of food and liquor, although the language of the sacred historian does certainly convey the idea, that they imposed on themselves a vow to abstain from all kinds of refreshment. *When Paul's sister's son, &c.* In the method recorded here, and in the following verses, by which the purposes of evil men were thwarted, we find three things which generally characterize the procedure of Providence. 1. Simplicity. What was the agency employed? "Paul's sister's son." This is all we know of the family of Paul. Here is a young man, probably uninfluential and obscure, who does the work. It has ever been heaven's plan to employ apparently insignificant means for the ac-

complishment of great ends. 2. Unexpectedness. Little did Paul expect deliverance would come from such a quarter. Means often most unlikely are employed to accomplish important results. The waters of heavenly mercy often come to men from rocky Horebs. 3. Naturalness. The whole is beautifully natural. It was natural for Paul's nephew, having heard of the malignant plot, to seek access to his uncle, and to warn him of it. It was natural for his uncle to despatch him to the chief captain to impart the intelligence to him. Thus God does, as a rule, in His providential dealings with his people.

23. ¶ And he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Cesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night: 24. And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor. 25. And he wrote a letter after this manner: 26. Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting. 27. This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman. 28. And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their councils: 29. Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of his law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. 30. And when it was told me, how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also, to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell. 31. Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris. 32. On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle: 33. Who, when they came to Cesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him. 34. And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia: 35. I will hear thee, said he: when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.

*Chap. xxi. 33, xxiv. 7. †Chap. xxii. 30. ‡Chap. xviii. 15, xxv. 19. §Chap. xxvi. 31. ¶verse 20, 21. †Chap. xxiv. 8, xxv. 6. ‡Verses 25-30. §Chap. xxi. 39. ¶Chap. xxiv. 1, &c., xxv. 16. †Matt. xxvii. 27.

Two centurions. Though it is not said expressly, the inference is that these officers were to take charge of the expedition. *Soldiers*, who, as they are distinguished from the other two classes named, must be the ordinary heavy-armed legionaries. *Spearmen*, a species of light-armed troops. *The third hour of the night, i. e.*, nine o'clock with us; it being implied that they were to march at that hour as well as be ready. We should read, *that ye may bring him safe*, not *that they may bring him safe*. Who that reads of Paul, attended by his military guard, does not at once think of Luther, his brother in spirit, his successor in office, the partner of his fortunes—how he was taken by armed men, and safely conducted to the castle of Wartburg? *Felix the governor*, or procurator, whose residence was

at Cesarea. Antonius Felix was a freed-man of Claudius Caesar, the Roman emperor, and brother of Pallas, the favorite of Nero. According to the testimony of Tacitus, he governed his people with a servile mind, and indulged in every species of cruelty and lust, and he says that he expected to escape with impunity in the commission of his wicked deeds on account of his great power. He had, at this time, been procurator about five years, and remained in office two years longer (chap. xxiv. 27), when he was succeeded by Porcius Festus. *And he wrote a letter, &c.* The letter addressed by Claudius Lysias to Felix here sets forth the simple facts which had just occurred in connection with Paul's history. The letter extends from the 26th to the 30th verse. *This man was taken of the Jews, &c.* "When we examine this letter," says one, "we perceive that the pagan writes with more honesty and equity than the orthodox Jews speak. And even in our day, Paul fares better with Lysias and Felix than he does with those who profess to adhere to the letter, but who deny the spirit. *Antipatris*. A city built by Herod, and called in honor of his father, *Antipater*. It lay upon the route from Jerusalem to Cesarea, about twenty miles from the latter, in a large fertile plain. Its location was identified by Robinson, in his late researches in Palestine and Arabia. The distance was great for one night's travel, but the Roman soldiers were distinguished for their hardihood; the march was a forced one, and the "night" might be used to include a considerable part of the following day. *And on the morrow*, that is, not on the morrow after leaving Jerusalem, as the text would at first sight suggest, but on the morrow after they arrived at Antipatris—having taken, in all, part of three days to accomplish their journey from Jerusalem to Cesarea. *Returned to the castle*, or, barracks. When they reached Antipatris, the foot-soldiers left and returned to Jerusalem, whilst the horsemen proceeded with Paul to Cesarea. The foot-soldiers were no longer necessary to secure Paul's safety, as they were forty miles distant from Jerusalem, and no plot by the way was now to be apprehended. *And when the governor had read,*

&c. This is a participial sentence, being composed of three participles, literally translated, "And after reading the letter, and asking of what province he is, and learning that he was of Cilicia, I shall hear you," he said, &c. Felix does not inquire whether Paul was a Roman, as this was stated in the letter, but of what province he was, concerning which no information was given. *I will hear thee*, or, give a full hearing. *Herod's judgment hall*. The "Prætorium of Herod" was the name which the palace, built by Herod the Great, received only after it was occupied by the Roman governors. The Apostle was, as it here appears, not confined in a public prison, (probably in consequence of the favorable

statement made in the letter), but was placed in an apartment of the same palace in which the procurator resided. He was thus enabled, after escaping the perils of the road, to perceive the evidence of the Divine protection which he enjoyed, and he saw that he was conducted more and more nearly to Rome, his point of destination, and, indeed, to his own happy end. He was strong in faith, and glorified God. He became more and more firm in his resolution to deliver his Apostolical testimony, and he was well prepared for any future event. The pauses which the Lord sometimes allows in our labors and sufferings, are intended to render us similar services.

1. What did Paul say to the council? 2. What did the high priest Ananias command? 3. What did Paul say to him? 4. How did he answer the charge of reviling God's high priest? 5. What is said of the Pharisees and Sadducees? 6. What did the scribes say? 7. What did the chief captain command? 8. What occurred on "the night following?" 9. For what purpose did certain Jews band together? 10. Who told Paul of this conspiring? 11. What did Paul then do? 12. What did the young man say to the chief captain? 13. What course did the chief captain pursue? 14. Repeat the letter that was sent. 15. What took place when the epistle was delivered to the governor?

CHAPTER XXIV.

1 *Paul being accused by Tertullus the orator, 10 answereth for his life and doctrine. 24 He preacheth Christ to the governor and his wife. 26 The governor hopeth for a bribe, but in vain. 27 At last, going out of his office, he leaveth Paul in prison.*

AND after five days, Ananias ^athe high priest descended with the elders, and *with a certain orator* named Tertullus, who informed ^bthe governor against Paul. — Chap. xxiii. 2, xxv. 2. ^cPs. xi. 2.

Time, that is, on the *fifth day* after Paul's departure to Cesarea. *Ananias*. (See on xxiii. 2.) *Orator*. This is the only passage in all Scripture where an *orator*, and the term *orator* occur. *Tertullus*. He seems to have been an Italian. *Informed*, in the forensic or judicial sense, of which we have examples in the English terms—*informer, criminal information*, &c. Whether this information was in writing or by word of mouth, is not determined by the narrative, and happily of no importance.

2. And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse *him*, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, 3. We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. — Ps. xii. 2.

Great quietness. Except clearing the country of the Sicarii and other robbers, Felix was cruel and unjust in his administration. *Very worthy deeds*, &c. Almost every word of this oration is false—the accusation of Paul, the encomium of the government of Felix, and the declaration of a lawful intention in what they had done and attempted.

4. Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words,

Of thy clemency, or in thy moderation and impartiality. *A few words*. The word in the original, thus rendered, is an abbreviated but intelligible phrase for *hear us speak concisely*. This promise, to be brief, might almost seem to have been caused by some appearance of impatience in the procurator, at the prospect of a formal and elaborate harangue.

5. For we have found this man *a pestilent fellow*, and ^aa mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: 6. Who also hath gone about to profane the temple:

whom we took, and would have judged according to our law. 7. But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands. 8. Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom, thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things whereof we accuse him. 9. And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.

^aLuke xxiii. 2; chap. vi. 13; xvi. 20; xvii. 6; xxi. 8; 1 Peter ii. 12, 19. ^cChap. xix. 37; xxi. 23. ^dJohn xviii. 31. ^eChap. xxi. 33. ^bChap. xxiii. 30.

Pestilent fellow, literally, a *pest*, a dangerous man, spreading discontent and disaffection throughout the body of the Jews. *A mover of sedition*, &c., exciting the Jews to tumults and to rebellion against the government. *Throughout the world*. Paul had been extensively traversing the Roman empire; and though Felix had no jurisdiction out of Judea, yet Tertullus wished to make out a strong case, and to prejudice him as much as possible against Paul. *Nazarenes* occurs here only as a term of reproach. (See on ii. 22.) *To profane the temple*. By this the fawning orator insinuated that as the Romans permitted the Jews to be governed by their own laws, it was Felix's duty to maintain them in the possession of this privilege, which he immediately hinted Lysias had violated—he came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands (see on xxi. 31), when, as Tertullus pretended, they were to judge him according to the ecclesiastical law of their nation. *Of whom*, rather, *him*, for none else was examined. This accusation of Paul, together with the circumstances by which it was aggravated, were all mere fictions, of which Tertullus offered no evidence, except the assent of the high priest and elders, persons who could scarcely be considered as impartial witnesses, and of what consequence, therefore, was their base assertion? What a contrast is here presented to the noble defense of the Apostle!

10. Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself: ¹Felix, made procurator over Judea, A. D. 53. ²1 Peter iii. 15.

Paul's very preamble stands in remarkable contrast to Tertullus' speech. In it the Apostle aims to convey some covert rebuke to the conscience of the hired orator, and to the Jews who were principally concerned. This rebuke is conveyed with as much plainness as delicacy, and generally in this preamble, so full of

dignity and so superior to the babbling of the speech-maker, an efficient groundwork is laid for the defense which is to follow. Tertullus commenced with deceitful flattery; Paul contents himself with acknowledging the many years' existence of Felix's official position, giving him to understand that he was acquainted both with his person and rule. Tertullus spoke of gratitude for various praiseworthy matters, which in fact had no existence. Paul, on the contrary, by the mention of his long-existing title as *judge*, recalls to his mind the duties and obligation of his office. Tertullus, with courtly affectation, prayed for an indulgent hearing; Paul, without any such request, declares—as before his judge he had a right to do—that he will “answer for himself,” only expressing a kindly expectation of justice, and the more confidently as he is speaking before Felix. Tertullus said much more than he was cognizant of; Paul utters only what he knew, and could express without uncourteousness. Tertullus spoke as the hired servant of others, Paul desires “cheerfully to answer for himself.”

11. Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship.—¹Chap. xxi. 15.

Paul meant that as it was only twelve days since his arrival at Jerusalem, the crime of which he was accused—namely, an attempt to profane the temple—must have been of recent occurrence, and therefore could be easily investigated.

12. And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city: 13. Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.—¹Chap. xxv. 8, xxviii. 17. ²1 Peter iii. 16.

Here is Paul's answer to the charge that he was a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the Roman empire. To this he replies that this was a mere assertion, incapable of proof. Before the words *neither in the synagogues, nor in the city*, are to be supplied, “They found me disputing with any man, or raising up a popular tumult.” So that these acts—disputing and raising up a popular tumult—are denied with reference to these three places—the temple, the synagogues, and the city.

14. But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets: 15. And have hope toward

God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.

1 Mic. iv. 5. 2 Tim. i. 3. Luke xxiv. 27; chap. xxvi. 22, xxviii. 23. Matt. xxii. 40; Luke xvi. 16; John i. 45; chap. xiii. 15; Rom. iii. 21. Chap. xxiii. 6, &c., xxvi. 6, 7, xxviii. 20, &c. Dan. xii. 2; John v. 28, 29; 1 Cor. xv. 12-27, Rev. xx. 6, 13.

Christianity was stigmatized as a heresy. But, with whatever odious name it might be branded by the Jews, it was not an apostasy from the ancient religion of the country, for Paul continued to worship the God of his ancestors; and the doctrines which he had embraced, although they were represented by his accusers as novel and blasphemous, were contained in their own sacred writings. The Law prefigured and the prophets foretold Jesus Christ and redemption through his blood. *And have hope toward God, &c.* The reason for specifying this article of His faith, seems to have been his former avowal of it in the presence of the Sanhedrim, which, having caused much contention among the members of the court, had probably been misrepresented to Felix. "If I have declared my hope of the resurrection of the dead, they cannot consistently blame me, since the same hope is entertained and professed by themselves." The resurrection of the body is not a doctrine peculiar to Christianity, but has always been an article in the creed of the Jews. It was rejected, indeed, by the Sadducees, but while in point of number they were an inconsiderable sect, their naked and comfortless system was at variance with the faith of the nation, founded upon the promises of God, and was regarded with detestation by the devout and sober-minded part of the community. With a greater part even of the orthodox Jews, this hope was nothing more than a speculative opinion, but the life of Paul was an illustration of its practical effects.

16. And herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men.—Chap. xxiii. 1.

Paul appeals from those who persecuted him to the great God, before whom he had walked in sincerity of heart—from the multitude of those who were his enemies, to all the rest of mankind, before whom his conduct had been irreproachable, and he opposes to the artifice of Tertullus and the policy of Felix the purity of his conscience. *I exercise myself, &c.* I

strive, exert myself. In this conscience I find a witness who clears me, an advocate who pleads for me, a judge who acquits me, and a superior authority which relieves me from all the injustice men can do me. In view of the retribution which will take place at the resurrection of the just and the unjust, it was the constant study of the Apostle to act such a part, that his conscience should bear testimony in his favor, and anticipate the approbation of his judge. Whatever opinion, therefore, Felix might entertain of the grounds of his hope, he could not condemn him for adopting a principle which exerted so salutary an influence on his conduct. *Toward God and toward man.* It is not enough in order to have "a conscience void of offense," that we be faithful in the duties which we owe to man—such as rendering to men their due, tribute to whom tribute, being just in our dealings, true to our word, charitable to the poor, compassionate to the distressed, and complaisant to all the world. Neither is it enough that we attend to the duties we owe to God—such as being zealous defenders of sound doctrine, constant in our attendance upon public worship, regular at home, in praying, praising and reading the Scriptures. There must be fidelity in *both these classes of duty.* There can be no conscience toward men without conscience toward God, and no conscience toward God without conscience toward man. The obligations which rest upon us in relation to duties both Godward and manward, rest upon the same foundation—God's will. We cannot, dare not separate them. Conscience is sadly defective when it ignores either the claims of the Supreme Being, or of those of our fellow-creatures, or makes attention to the one a reason for neglecting the other. The Emperor Constantius Chlorus, father of the great Constantine, though a heathen prince, indiscriminately took into his service both heathens and Christians. One day, with a view to try them, he commanded all the Christians of his household either to renounce their faith, and become heathens, or quit their office. As at all times men are to be found who acknowledge no other king but Cæsar, and who prefer the favor

of their prince to that of their God, some of them sacrificed to idols, but others of them renounced their worldly interests that they might preserve their religion. After this what did the Emperor? He recalled and continued in his service all those who had been faithful to their God, and dismissed, with disgrace, those who, from avarice or ambition, had abjured the Christian faith. He went upon the supposition that a man who is a traitor to his God would never be faithful to his prince. In like manner it may be affirmed that a man who is not faithful to his fellow-beings, cannot be faithful to his God. From this declaration of the Apostle, learn, 1. That we must, in our several stations, so far as they enable us to act, seek out for all proper occasions to exercise our talents, and this not merely for our own profit, but for the glory of God and the good of mankind. 2. That it is our duty carefully to examine our hearts and lives, for how can we possibly know whether we have a conscience void of offense without a due inquiry into its real condition? 3. That we should accustom ourselves to contemplate the hopes and fears of a general resurrection, so as to bring them into action, as motives of conduct.

17. Now after many years, I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings. 18. Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult: 19. Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had aught against me. 20. Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil-doing in me, while I stood before the council; 21. Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead, I am called in question by you this day.

*Chap. xi. 29, 30, xx. 16; Rom. xv. 25. *Chap. xxv. 16.

Here the Apostle states, that after many years of absence, he came to bring alms to his nation from the Christians of Greece and Macedonia, and was seen by certain Jews from Asia, purified or performing his Nazarite vow in the temple, without any concourse of people or tumult whatever, and that they ought to be present (and no doubt would have been) if they had anything to prove against him. But, since they did not choose to appear, he appeals to his accusers on the spot, whether he had done evil while he stood before the council; or been guilty of any offense except his crying out among them, "touching the resurrection of the dead, I am called in question by you this day." —

22. ¶ And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter. 23. And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or to come unto him.

*Verse 7. *Chap. xxvii. 3.

In the Apostle's short defense every line speaks truth and integrity. And Felix was so sensible of Paul's innocence, that he found it impossible to give sentence against him. At the same time, willing to gratify the Jews, he would not entirely acquit and set him free, but deferred any further hearing till Lysias the chief captain should come down. This, we are told in verse 22, which may be more clearly rendered as follows: "Then Felix deferred them, and said, having obtained more exact knowledge of that way (or religion) when Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will determine your matter." But we may easily perceive what impression the business had made upon his mind; for although he ordered him to be detained in custody, yet he made this as light and easy as possible; "he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come to him." Here we have an instance of a man wanting firmness to do complete justice, yet endeavoring to make some amends to the injured person, a case by no means uncommon in life, proceeding sometimes from fear, sometimes from interest, sometimes from partial affection, or other causes, which are sufficient to turn conscience aside, yet not wholly put down its awful warnings.

24. ¶ And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

After certain days—in which Paul had been kept in this lenient confinement. Felix came. It seems he had been absent a short time, and now came again to Cesarea. With his wife Drusilla, &c. It appears from Josephus, that Drusilla was the daughter of Herod Agrippa, and the sister of that Agrippa who is mentioned in chap. xxv. 13. She had been married to Azizus, king of Emessa: but Felix, struck with her great beauty, by means of a wicked Jew, named Simon, who professed himself a magician, persuaded her to abandon her husband, and marry him,

which she did, though Azizus had but a little before submitted to circumcision, and so embraced Judaism, as the condition required, in order to his marrying her. Josephus adds, that she was afterwards consumed, together with a son she had by Felix, in a terrible eruption of Mount Vesuvius. To gratify Drusilla's curiosity, as she was desirous of seeing and hearing so extraordinary a man as Paul, as well as to learn himself, from Paul's own mouth, what were the principles of his religion, Felix "*sent for Paul ;*" and *heard him concerning the faith in Christ.* It is here implied that, in preaching the Gospel, the Apostle availed himself of the proper use of reason and argument, according to the occasion. He adapted his manner to the character of those addressed: he did this to the Athenian philosophers (Acts xvii.), citing their own poets, and appealing to Creation and Providence: with the Jews, as in his epistle to the Romans he reasoned on Jewish grounds, and here similarly adapted his moral reasoning to the Roman governor.

25. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

*Prov. xxi. 12; Jer. xxii. 15-17; Dan. iv. 27; John xvi. 8. *Prov. xxxi. 4, 5; Dan. v. 1-4; Hos. vii. 5; 1 Peter iv. 4. *Ps. l. 3, 4; Dan. xii. 2; Matt. xxv. 31-46; 2 Cor. v. 10; Rev. xx. 12. *Ps. xcix. 1; Isa. xxvii. 11; Hab. iii. 16; Heb. iv. 1, 12. *Prov. i. 24, 3; Matt. xxii. 52, xxv. 1-10.

Reasoned. If ever there was any man, who, in the strength of the Spirit and light within, might have neglected reason, which he was so well qualified to wield, Paul was that man. If ever there was any man who, on the strength of speaking as the oracle of God, might have expected a blind assent in his hearers, Paul was that man. But so far was he from doing this, that it was his constant aim and effort to establish the doctrines of revelation by the arguments of reason. His epistles were not florid, empty declamation. His discourses were not loose harangues, made up of rambling, disjointed observations, nor bold assertions, abruptly thrown out, and unsustained by any show of argument. Neither did he summon to his aid the artifices of rhetoric, or labor after the embellishments of a gaudy eloquence, which, like the meteor's flash, might dazzle for a moment, but leave no ray of light or of heat

behind. But he addressed man as a rational being, and his great object was to enlighten the mind, and carry conviction to the judgment. (See on v. 24.) He "*reasoned,*" presenting the truth in an argumentative strain, which he belived to be best adapted to produce the desired effect of conversion, and bending his whole soul to accomplish this result, with as much earnestness as if all depended on himself, though knowing, as he did, that without the blessing of God, all his efforts must be fruitless.

Of righteousness. This includes truth, justice and mercy in our outward actions, as well as the inward dispositions from which they flow, as meekness, long-suffering, love. (Titus ii. 12; Luke i. 75; Eph. iv. 24.) Paul would probably show his hearers, on this occasion, their want of righteousness both toward God and man; he would show them the necessity of the imputation of righteousness, or of justification before God (Rom. iii. 24, 25), of regeneration, sanctification, and a conformity to God (Eph. iv. 22-24; Col. iii. 9, 10), of practical obedience to His laws (1 John iii. 7; 1 Cor. vi. 9), and he would likewise display the excellency and happy effects of this righteousness *here* (Ps. xxxiv. 15, 17, 19; 1 Peter iii. 12, 13; Isa. iii. 10, xxxii. 17), and *hereafter* (Rom. v. 21), as well as, the way of attaining this righteousness, that it is through Christ (Jer. xxiii. 6; Rom. x. 4; 1 Cor. i. 30; Gal. ii. 16; Acts xxvi. 18; Phil. iii. 8, 9). *Temperance.* This, as to its nature, consists in the due subjection and government of the body, its members and senses, appetites and passions, including sobriety, continence, and chastity, in which both Felix and Drusilla had trespassed in their alleged marriage—in the proper use of all God's creatures, and not the abuse of them, using them with moderation, not idolizing them, nor resting in them, being led to the Creator by them. This would be strange doctrine to Felix. The excellency and necessity of temperance are seen, whether we regard the good of our family, the health of our body, the peace of our mind, the favor of God, or the edification of our neighbor, whether we regard justice to the creatures, gratitude to God for the loan or gift of them, or

our own good here or hereafter. *Judgment to come.* It is certain that there will be a future judgment. Reason assures us that virtue and piety ought to be rewarded, and vice and wickedness punished, but here, too often, wicked men prosper, and good men are afflicted. Conscience condemns us, and creates in us fears and forebodings of a future judgment, or approves our actions, and fills us with confidence and peace, as we do ill or well. (See chap. xvii. 31; 2 Cor. v. 10; Rev. xx. 12.) Jesus Christ will be the Judge in the future judgment. It will be exercised on man in his incarnate state. He shall receive according to the deeds done in the body. It will be universal. It will be simultaneous; all will be judged together. Men, under the Gospel, will be judged as believers or unbelievers; the heathen, that sinned without law, will be treated according to the light of natural conscience. It will be sudden, as a thief in the night, like the deluge on the generation of Noah, like the fire from heaven on the men of Sodom. It will be final, emphatically the last judgment, from which there can be no appeal. "Eternal judgment." (Heb. vi. 2.) Observe the consequence of judgment. (Matt. xxv. 46, xiii. 48, 49.)

"Eternity, the various sentence past,
Assigns the sever'd throng distinct abodes,
Sulphureous or ambrosial, what ensues?
The deed predominant! The deed of deeds!
Which makes a hell of hell, a heaven of heaven.
The goddess, with determin'd aspect, turns
Her adamant keys, enormous size,
Through destiny's inextricable wards,
Deep driving every bolt, on both their fates.
Then, from the crystal battlements of heaven,
Down, down she huris it, through the dark profound,
Ten thousand thousand fathom, there to rust,
And ne'er unlock her resolutions more."

Felix trembled—for Felix was not ignorant of these things; he felt how justly the Apostle spake—how reasonably and simply—how sincerely and faithfully. The truth shook him, but not out of his iniquities. If a man will hear and take the Word of God for his standard, he must fear and tremble when he hears what God says of man dying an unpardoned and impenitent sinner. *Go thy way*, &c. The truth when believed and felt, will always make a man dislike either himself or the minister who sets it forth. "Let me put off the evil day a little longer: I would fain shake off my conviction." Here is an old device of Satan: "You will not die just yet; have a little longer pleasure; go on in thy ways

of vice; think of it at some future season." A more free and leisure period to attend to the things of the soul, may never come. It *did* arrive to Felix, but the opportunity came without the disposition. He saw the preacher frequently, but no trembling now, the good feeling was gone forever!

Here we see, 1. *The duty of a minister.* Paul neither considered the greatness of the persons before him, nor did he bend to their taste and notions, nor did he consider his own safety. He preached justice, to an oppressor, chastity, to an adulteress, judgment to come, to a judge on the judgment seat, while he himself was the prisoner. Truth will pay no undue respect to persons. It aims at the conscience. 2. *The force of truth.* Drusilla, being a Jewess, might possibly shroud herself under her Jewish privileges, but Felix could not thus shelter himself from conviction, he knew something more than Drusilla. Greatness cannot support us against truth. Belshazzar may revel in the midst of his lords and concubines, yet, if God write upon the wall, his loins will tremble, his greatness will not save him.

26, ¶ He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him, 27. But after two years, Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

Ex. xxiii. 8. *Mark xv. 15, Chap. xxv. 9.

Behold the *deceitfulness of sin*. What miserable evasions are here, when the truth is so plainly set before him! Nay, worse than evasions, for he hoped that Paul would offer him a bribe for his liberation; but because the Apostle would not use money for this purpose, if he had it, *Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.* Such is the deceitfulness of sin, that many will trifle with God and with their convictions: they will regard their self-interest and the good-will of men, as Felix did, more than the truth and the fear of God. Men are less disposed to that which is good and has been disregarded so long. Evil propensities have grown by continuance. The disease has gained strength by neglect, and the shrub, by being left, has become a tree, and is too radicated to be removed. Bless God if you tremble at His word, but remember conviction is not conversion. Depend not on excitement in religion, without princi-

ple. Pray that you may tremble to pur- | refuge, to lay hold of the hope set before
pose. Let your fear induce you to flee for | you.

1. Who informed the governor against Paul? 2. What points did Tertullus make in his accusation? 3. Repeat Paul's answer. 4. What disposition did Felix make of the case? 5. What command did he give to the centurion? 6. When, and for what purpose, did Felix send for Paul? 7. Of what themes did Paul reason? 8. What was the effect on Felix? 9. Why did he send for Paul "the oftener?" 10. Who came into Paul's room? 11. What was Felix willing to do, in order to show the Jews a pleasure?

CHAPTER XXV.

2. *The Jews accuse Paul before Festus.* 8. *He answereth for himself.* 11. *and appealeth unto Cesar.* 14. *Afterward Festus openeth his matter to king Agrippa.* 23. *and he is brought forth.* 25. *Festus cleareth him to have done nothing worthy of death.*

NOW when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Cesarea to Jerusalem.

Festus comes into the place of Felix. From the scriptural narrative, as well as from Josephus, we infer that he was a better man and a more upright judge. His official life at Cesarea seems to have been very short. He commenced office in the autumn of A. D. 60, and died in the summer of A. D. 62. *After three days, &c.* The governors of Judea at this time generally resided at Cesarea, but Jerusalem was regarded, for many reasons, as the seat of influence. Hence they spoke in those days of ascending or going up to Jerusalem.

2. Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him, 2. And desired favor against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him.
*Chap. xliii. 14, 15.

The high priest, or, according to the oldest copies and the latest critics, the High (or Chief) Priests, in the plural number. The actual high-priest, at this time, as we learn from Josephus, was not Ananias, but Ishmael, the son of Phabi, nominated to that office by Agrippa. The chief of the Jews. By these are meant the chief-people of the Jews, and as most of these were members of the Sanhedrim, the phrase probably denotes a deputation from that body. (See chap. xxiv. 1.) Two years had elapsed since Ananias and the elders had

appeared before Felix to accuse Paul, yet their enmity against the Apostle had not decreased. They had found themselves baffled by the procrastinating spirit of Felix, but now that a new governor of greater decision had arrived, they thought they might succeed better with him, and as it was his policy to ingratiate himself with them on his entrance into office, they had reason to hope that their request would be granted. *Desired favor*, that is, requested it as a favor from Festus on his accession to office. Nothing is more cruel than false zeal: its rage is heightened by the suffering of its victims, and confirmed by years: fortitude and virtue but inflame it more, being looked upon as new insults upon its infallible decisions. *That he would send, &c.* According to the account which Festus gave of the transaction, the Jews first asked that judgment might be pronounced against Paul, and to this request Festus replied that it was not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to death before the accused had his accusers face to face, and had opportunity to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him. (Verses 15, 16.) Having failed in this, they then requested that Paul might be brought up to Jerusalem, and there tried. The plea would doubtless be, that he was accused of offenses chiefly against the Jewish law, and that his accusers and the witnesses against him, were in Jerusalem; whereas the real purpose was to assassinate him on the way. *Laying wait, &c.*—forming an ambuscade.

4. But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Cesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly *thither*. 5. Let them therefore, said he, Which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him. 6. And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Cesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment-seat, commanded Paul to be brought. 7. And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.

^bNot more than eight or ten days is regarded by the best authorities as the true text. ^cPs. xxxv. 11; Matt. v. 11, 12; chap. xxiv. 5, 13.

But Festus answered, &c. God here protected Paul in a wonderful manner. The Apostle himself was not aware of the extent of the danger from which his life was again rescued. (Verse 3.) How numerous are the cases in which we have been protected and rescued, and of which we shall remain in ignorance until we hereafter stand before the throne of God! The expression *stood round about* indicates the eagerness with which they crowded around their long-lost victim. They felt a fiendish pleasure in having him, as they thought, once more within their reach. *Grievous complaints*—a repetition, most likely, of the charge before Felix. (xxiv. 5, 6.)

8. ¶ While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cesar, have I offended anything at all.

While he answered for himself. In this instance Luke gives only a general account, both of the accusations and of Paul's defense. But from the words in this verse, the charges appear to have been three-fold. 1. That he had broken the law. 2. That he had defiled the temple. 3. That he had dealt in treasonable practices; to all of which he no doubt answered *particularly*, though we have nothing further here than the general statement made. Reproach has been the reward of religion and righteousness. The servants of Christ are happy in their own innocence, and their adversaries render themselves odious by belying them, and laying that to their charge which every one can disprove.

9. But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?

Willing to do the Jews a pleasure. This was merely to please them, and conciliate their esteem; for he knew that as Paul was a Roman citizen, he could not oblige him to take a new trial at Jerusalem. Although men, who are not influenced by

the fear of God, may, for a season, pursue the right path, they can at any time, when earthly motives are presented, deviate from it, and act deceitfully. Hence we should put confidence, not in men, but in God. (Ps. cxviii. 8, 9.)

10. Then said Paul, I stand at Cesar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged; to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.

The Roman governors were the emperor's representatives; the Apostle, therefore, as a Roman citizen, when standing at the tribunal of Festus, was in the place where "he ought to be judged," but should he be sent to Jerusalem, to be tried under the influence of the Jewish rulers, he would, independently of plots and conspiracies, be deprived of his privilege. Nero, who is still infamous, was at that time the Roman emperor.

11. For if I be an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die; but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Cesar.

^aChap. xxvi. 32.

If I be an offender—"if I am unjust," guilty, *i. e.*, in consequence of past wrongdoing. If the degree of guilt was such that he deserved to die, he was willing to die. *I appeal*, &c. It is well known that the Roman law allowed such an appeal to every citizen, before sentence was passed, and made it highly penal for any governor, after that, to proceed to any extremities against the person making it.

12. Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Cesar? unto Cesar shalt thou go.

Festus (little expecting such an appeal, but bound to respect it) having conferred with the council (his assessors in judgment, as to the admissibility of the appeal), said, *Hast thou* (for "thou hast") *unto Cesar shalt thou go*—as if he would add (perhaps) "and see if thou fare better."

13. ¶ And after certain days, king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Cesarea, to salute Festus.

King Agrippa—son of Herod Agrippa, spoken of in chap. xii. 1, and grandson of Aristobulus, son of Herod the Great. As he was but seventeen years of age when his father died, the emperor Claudius did not think it proper to appoint him king of Judea in the room of his father, but made it a Roman province. However, on the death of his uncle Herod, he made him king of Chalcis, which, after he had gov-

erned it four years, he exchanged for a greater kingdom, and gave him the tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias, to which Nero afterward added part of Galilee, with several towns in Perea. *Bernice* was the eldest daughter of Agrippa the First, and a sister of Drusilla. (xxiv. 24.) She was noted for her beauty and her profligacy. Luke's accuracy in introducing her at this stage of the history is worthy of remark. After a brief marriage with her first husband, she became the wife of Herod, her uncle, king of Chaleis, and on his death remained for a time with Agrippa, her brother. She was suspected of living with him in a criminal manner. Her third marriage with Polemon, king of Cilicia, she soon dissolved, and returned to her brother, not long before the death of the emperor Claudius. She could have been with Agrippa, therefore, in the time of Festus, as Luke represents in our narrative. Her subsequent connection with Vespasian and Titus made her name familiar to the Roman writers. Several of them, as Tacitus, Suetonius and Juvenal, either mention her expressly or allude to her. *To salute Festus*. It was their visit of congratulation. Agrippa, being a vassal of the Romans, came to pay his respects to this new representative of the power on which he was dependent.

14. And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying: There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix; 15. About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him. 16. To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him. 17. Therefore when they were come hither, without any delay, on the morrow I sat on the judgment-seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth. 18. Against whom, when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed: 19. But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. 20. And because I doubted of such matters of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters. 21. But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Cesar. 22. Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To-morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.

^cVerses 2, 3. ^dVerses 6, 7. ^eChap. xviii. 15. ^fOr, I was doubtful how to inquire thereof. ^gOr, judgment.

To whom I answered, It is not the manner, &c. Festus, in this address to Agrippa, describes his own sense of justice and his impartial procedure, with much ostentation. But when we closely examine the whole transaction, it plainly appears that

he did not express his real sentiments. We are told in verse 9 that he wished to confer a favor on the Jews. He was disposed to employ indirect means for delivering up Paul to them in Jerusalem, and was prevented from executing his purpose solely by the appeal made to the Emperor. He was a mere man of the world, who was anxious to be popular among all classes, and he trimmed the sails according to the direction of the wind. This is by nature the evil tendency of us all. We are very ready to set forth our own merits, and to justify all our actions, although our conscience may convict us of many human infirmities. Observe what base and vile, what low and undervaluing thoughts, and apprehension, carnal men have of the high and holy things of God. Festus here calls the religion and worship, which was of God's own institution, most profanely and contemptuously by the name of *superstition*.

One Jesus, &c. "Notice," says *Rev. Robert Hall*, "the contemptuous manner in which Festus speaks of the Saviour of the world, as '*one Jesus*,' which was dead. It is very remarkable that this *one Festus* owes all his celebrity to this *one Jesus*, for had it not been for this *one Jesus*, we should never have heard anything of this *one Festus*, for his name is never mentioned in profane history." *Augustus*. This surname was borne by all the emperors, from Cesar Octavianus, who first assumed it. *Would also hear the man myself*. No doubt but Agrippa had learned from his father, by whom, it is to be remembered, James had been put to death, and Peter imprisoned (xii. 2, 3), and from many others, something of the history and pretensions of Christianity; so that he would naturally have a curiosity to see and converse with so eminent a Christian teacher as Paul was; who, on account of what he had been in his unconverted state, was, indeed, more regarded and talked of among the Jews, than any other of the Apostles.

23. ^aAnd on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing; with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth. ^bEx. vii. 24. ^cChap. ix. 15.

With great pomp. The original word properly signifies appearance, a lively im-

age in the mind, phantasy, but by the later Greeks it is used to signify pomp, splendor, parade. What has become of all the pompous solemnities of kings and princes at their births and marriages, coronations and triumphs? They are now as a dream—a mere phantasy. Hence learn the folly and pride of man, who can glory and please himself in the frail and wretched being he has here, who doats on this poor natural life, and cannot be persuaded to think on one higher and more abiding, although the course of time, and his daily experience, tell him this truth, that “all flesh is grass.” *Into the place of hearing:* in Latin, *auditorium*. Either the usual place where such causes were heard, the judgment-hall, or perhaps rather the place of hearing, set apart for the present occasion. *Chief captains*, or “tribunes.” These were the commanders of the Roman cohorts stationed at Cesarea. *Principal men of the city*. Among them were the *assessors*, or counselors of the governor. (Acts xxvi. 29, 30.) Thus Paul was brought before Festus, the representative of Cæsar, king Agrippa, the representative of the Jews, and all the nobles of Cesarea. Now was our Lord’s prophecy fulfilled: “Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. (Matt. x. 18.)

24. And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. 25. But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed unto Augustus, I have determined to send him. 26. Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and especially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write. 27. For it seemeth to me unreasonable, to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes *laid* against him.

¹Verses 3, 7. ²Chap. xxii. 22. ³Chap. xxlii. 9, 29, xxvi. 31. ⁴Verses 11, 12. ⁵Prov. xviii. 13. John vii. 51.

In the statement which Festus, in in-

troducing Paul, now makes, he vindicates two things.

1. His *personal* conviction in the matter. *But when I found*, &c. Here is a strong testimony to Paul’s innocence. Festus had heard all that the Jews had to say against him, both at Jerusalem and at Cesarea, he had seen and spoken to Paul himself; he had undoubtedly given much attention to the case, and here, in the open court of Cesarea, he declares that he had found “nothing worthy of death,” and that he had no “*certain thing*” of which to accuse him. This indicates—

2. His *official* embarrassment. Festus was bound to send Paul to Rome, to the emperor, to be tried. Paul had demanded this, and the request he could not disregard; but in sending him to the chief authority, whom he calls “*my lord*,” it was his duty to specify the crimes that he had committed. But the crimes he could not find. *It seemeth to me unreasonable*, &c. If Festus had done his duty, and acquitted Paul, he need not have sent him to Rome; but now he was bound to send him to Rome, and here was his embarrassment. What was he to do? He was unable to report the case to Nero without criminating himself. His hope, therefore, was, that something would come out before Agrippa that would solve the difficulty.

Although God sometimes permits his servants to be loaded with slanders and reproaches, yet He will find a time to vindicate their innocence, and cause their very judges, if not their accusers, to proclaim them guiltless. And it is no small mercy to have our reputation freed from those blemishes which the uncharitable suspicions, or rash censures of men, have cast upon us.

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1. Who informed Festus against Paul? 2. What did they desire against him? 3. What did Festus answer? 4. When and where did he command Paul to be brought before him? 5. What did Paul answer for himself? 6. What did Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, say? 7. State Paul’s reply. 8. What did Festus decide? 9. When was Paul brought before Agrippa? 10. What did Festus say before king Agrippa?

CHAPTER XXVI.

2 *Paul, in the presence of Agrippa, declareth his life from his childhood, 12 and how miraculously he was converted, and called to his apostleship. 24 Festus chargeth him to be mad, whereunto he answereth modestly. 28 Agrippa is almost persuaded to be a Christian. 31 The whole company pronounce him innocent.*

WHEN Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself:

As king Agrippa occupied the highest rank in the assembly, as the guest of the procurator, he enjoyed the honor of being president on this occasion. Hence he opens the proceedings, and at last breaks up the meeting. Alas! that the reign of evil in our world should be so mighty as to give tyrants a power over a good man's tongue. "*Permitted to speak!*" Why, Paul had a Divine right to speak, and the world stands in urgent need of his utterances. *Stretched forth the hand.* A becoming expression of the earnestness of the speaker, and designed to draw the attention of the assembly. The eloquent Demosthenes often used the same gesture with Paul here.

2. I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee, touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:

It was gratifying to the Apostle to be permitted to speak at all on this occasion, for he had much that lay on his conscience to say, much that would throw light upon his history and his religion. But it was especially gratifying to him to be able to speak on this occasion before Agrippa.

3. Especially, because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

^aDeut. xvii. 18. ^bChap. xxiv. 4.

I know thee to be expert in all customs, &c., well acquainted with the customs and the disputes which exist among the Jews. Agrippa was himself a Jew, and was truly represented by Paul as having adequate knowledge of Jewish manners and opinions. His early education in Jerusalem, in the family of his father, Agrippa the First, who was a bigoted Jew, his connection with the sacred treasure, and with the government of the temple, and his having a voice in nominations to the priesthood, must have made him intimately acquainted with Jewish affairs. The Apostle's opening remarks were adapted to gain the good will of Agrippa, but he by no means

transcended the limits of truth. Let us imitate the courtesy of Paul, mingled, as it was by him, with unswerving fidelity and truth, without aught of the fulsome or exaggerated in his compliments.

4. My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews: 8. Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee.

^c2 Tim. iii. 10. ^dChap. xxii. 3; Phil. iii. 5.

Which knew me from the beginning—plainly showing that he received his education even from early youth, at Jerusalem. (See on chap. xxii. 3.) *If they would* ("were willing to") *testify*—but this, of course, they were not, it being a strong point in his favor. *After the most straitest* ("the strictest") *sect*—as the Pharisees confessedly were. This was said to meet the charge, that as a Hellenistic Jew he had contracted among the heathen lax ideas of Jewish peculiarities.

6. And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: 7. Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

^eChap. xxiii. 6. ^fGen. iii. 15, xxii. 18, xlix. 10; Deut. xviii. 15; 2 Sam. vii. 12; Ps. cxxxii. 11; Isa. iv. 2, vii. 14, ix. 6, 7; Jer. xxxiii. 5, xxxiii. 14-16; Ezek. xxxiv. 23; Dan. ix. 24; Micah vii. 20; Zech. xiii. 1-7; Mal. iii. 1; chap. xiii. 32; Gal. iv. 4. ^gLuke ii. 37; 1 Thes. iii. 10. ^hNight and day.

For the hope of the promise, i. e., founded on, excited by the promise; or, the sense may be, the hope of its fulfillment. *Made*—given, brought into existence. *To the fathers, i. e.,* to the patriarchs and to the intervening generations. *Our*, which identifies the speaker with the Jewish race and Church. *I stand and am judged*, literally, *stand* (or *have stood*), *being tried* (or on my trial). *Our twelve tribes.* The twelve tribes are also mentioned in the epistle of James. (James i. 1.) This is probably an expression used for the Israelites in general, for although ten of the tribes were carried away into captivity, and appear to have been lost among the nations, yet the Jews did not dis sever themselves from the twelve tribes of Israel. Besides, several of the ten tribes returned with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin from the Babylonish captivity (Ezra vi. 17, viii. 35), and although as a nation they were carried captive to Assyria, yet several remained behind and lived among the Sa-

maritans. *With earnestness, serving God night and day*, alluding to the zeal and earnestness with which the Jews clung to their religion, a zeal which has carried them through the severest persecutions, and which still preserves them as a separate people, distinct among the nations in the midst of whom they dwell, a zeal which no violence has been able to destroy, and no persuasion to overcome. *For, or concerning which hope I am accused of the Jews.* The accusations brought against Paul by the Jews referred to the Messianic hope, because he had taught that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah—he had preached the fulfillment of the hope in the risen Jesus. Hence, then, Paul affirms that he was not chargeable with apostasy from Judaism. He was no apostate, but, on the contrary, a true Jew; along with his accusers, he believed in the promise of the Messiah made to the fathers, but whilst they looked forward to His advent, he affirmed that He had already come. Thus, then, in His defense before Agrippa, as well as in his defense before Felix, he connects Christianity with Judaism, affirming that it is its development, the legitimate carrying out of its principles.

8. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

¹1 Cor. xv. 12, 20.

If this question be considered as addressed to Agrippa, it is not easy to perceive the propriety of it. The resurrection of the dead was not deemed incredible by the Jews, in whose Scriptures it is expressly taught, and who entertained such conceptions of the power of God, as removed the difficulties with which it seemed to be encumbered. They did not disbelieve the resurrection of our Saviour because they judged it to be impossible but because they counted Him an impostor, in whose favor it was absurd and blasphemous to suppose God to have exerted His miraculous power. We consider the question, therefore, as addressed to the Gentile part of the audience, to whom the resurrection did seem incredible. As it was a doctrine of great importance in the Christian system, Paul was careful in this stage of his discourse to obviate an objection against it, which

arises from the complete destruction of the body in the grave. How can it be believed that its parts, which are separated, decomposed, and in appearance annihilated, shall be collected together, and arranged in their original order; and that it shall live again, after an interval of hundreds or thousands of years? He reminds the Gentiles that, however strange it may seem, the event ceases to be improbable, as soon as we reflect upon the agent, to whose power no limits can be assigned. He who created the body of man is undoubtedly able to restore it, after it had been blended with its native elements. Nothing which may be done is impossible to Omnipotence; no effect, how much soever it may surpass the common operations of nature, should be accounted too wonderful to be believed, when God has declared His intention to produce it. “Ye do err,” said our Lord to the Sadducees, “not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.” If we had a lively hope of a resurrection and future life, what influence it would exert over us! What a new color it would give to the whole of our present existence, did we realize in very truth a coming heaven when we die.

9. I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.—1 Tim. i. 13.

*I verily thought, &c. I seemed to myself—*thought. The pronoun opposes his own to another and higher judgment. This same act in which Paul gloried at the time appeared to him as the crime of his life after he became a Christian. In 1 Cor. xv. 9, he declares that he “was the last of the Apostles, that he was not meet to be called an Apostle, because he persecuted the Church of God.” The blessed change which Jesus had affected in his soul, was to him a perpetual miracle, he could not forget the grace which had been granted to him. (See 1 Tim. i. 16.)

10. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. 11. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.

¹Chap. viii. 3; Gal. i. 13. ²Chap. ix. 14. ³Chap. xxii. 19.

Of the saints. So he terms the Christians, appropriately to the beginning of his speech, using a term transferred to them from the Jews. *I—emphasis. Hav-*

ing received, &c.—speaking as to his audience, not his judges. *Authority*, literally, the authority. The article signifies that Paul could not have done this without the authority, and that the chief priests gave a general authority to all who wished to persecute. *I gave my voice*, some read, *gave in my vote*. *Synagogue*—of Jerusalem. *Compelled them to blaspheme*. This was the saddest of all. *Mad*. In the same chapter, Paul confesses and denies madness in himself. (Comp. verse 25.) While he was mad, indeed, no one suspected him of it, but when in his right mind, then Festus taxeth him of madness.

12. Whereupon as I went to Damascus, with authority and commission from the chief priests: 13. At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them which journeyed with me.

^aChap. ix. 3, on which see notes.

At midday. Here, as in xxii. 6, the time of the day when this occurrence took place is particularly mentioned. This may be intended either to remind the hearers that this was no nocturnal vision, but an incident occurring in the blaze of noon, or as a vivid recollection which would naturally dwell upon the mind of the chief actor, although just as naturally passed by in the narratives of others. *A light from heaven*, &c. This light was not indebted to a surrounding obscurity for any part of its luster; on the contrary, it shone forth at midday with a splendor that eclipsed the beams of a meridian sun. It was the light of Divine glory which Saul beheld on this occasion, that light unapproachable, in which Jesus Christ continually dwells. It was of the same nature as that which John describes in his vision, when he says, "His countenance was as the sun shining in his strength." It was that light in which He will appear when He comes to judge the world, "and every eye shall see him." Much as the prophets and Apostles have said of the glory of Christ, it is impossible for us to form an adequate conception of it; the full revelation of it is reserved for a future state, when, if we are true Christians, "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John iii. 2.) How short is the transition between this and the unseen world! How soon, when God pleases, can He transport His creatures into higher scenes of exis-

tence! It is but for Him to draw aside the veil, and objects are presented to the view, compared to which whatever is most admired on earth is mean and contemptible. Every moment we stand upon the confines of an eternal state, and, without dissolving the connection between soul and body, God can open a passage into the "heaven of heavens." Why should we doubt of good men's being admitted into the more immediate presence of Christ at death, when we consider what Saul was permitted to see and hear before he was finally removed from this world? Stephen beheld the heavens open, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God; and Saul, in the transaction before us, was permitted to see that Just One, and to hear the words of His mouth.

14. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

Why persecutest thou me? It will be observed that Jesus identifies Himself with His disciples, He makes their cause entirely His own, and considers what is done against them as against Himself. He and believers, notwithstanding the immense disparity of their circumstances, are one. He is touched with a feeling of their sufferings and whatever insults or reproaches are offered to them for His name's sake, He feels and resents as done to Himself. Let those who are tempted to insult and despise the followers of Christ on account of their conscientious adherence to Him, remember that their scoffs and insults reach higher than they may apprehend; they will be considered as falling on their Sovereign and their Judge. *It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks*. He compares Paul to the bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, who, in order to free himself, wounds himself by kicking against the goads. Thus fruitless is all opposition to the cause of Christ. It will be injurious, it will be destructive to ourselves if not desisted from, but can never eventually injure the cause against which it is directed. The heathen may rage, and yet "the Lord hath set His King upon His holy hill of Zion," and there will forever continue to sit. (Ps. ii. 6; Isa. viii. 14; Luke xx. 18.)

15. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

Whom thou persecutest. (See on verse 14.)

16. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17. Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee; 18. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified, by faith that is in me.

*Eph. iii. 7. Col. i. 23, 25. *Chap. xxii. 15. *Chap. xxii. 21. Rom. xi. 13. *Isa. xxxv. 5, xlii. 7. *Luke i. 79; John viii. 12; 2 Cor. iv. 6; Eph. i. 18. *Col. i. 13; 1 Peter ii. 9. *Luke i. 77; Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14. *Eph. i. 11; Col. i. 12; 1 Peter i. 4. *John xvii. 17; chap. xx. 32; 1 Cor. i. 30; Rev. xxi. 27. *Eph. ii. 8; Heb. xi. 6.

But rise, &c. "The Lord killeth and maketh alive—He bringeth low and lifteth up—He raiseth them that are bowed down." (1 Sam. ii. 6, 7; Ps. cxlvi. 8.) The same evangelical word was addressed to the three disciples on the holy mount, when they heard the voice out of the cloud, and fell on their faces. (Matt. xvii. 7.) And Saul, too, arose, in order to stand, by the power of Jesus Christ, unto this day. (Verse 22.) *To make thee a minister, &c.* It is evident this commission was given to Paul by our Lord, at the time of his conversion, though not mentioned in the compendious narrative of that event. (ix. 15, 16.) *Rise, &c.* The words make a part of the sentence in which Christ bids him rise from his astonishment, into which his appearance to him, in the way to Damascus, had thrown him. *A minister and a witness* may be understood as a generic and specific expression of the same idea, one who ministers by witnessing, or each term may have its distinct meaning, one who administers and one who testifies. *Delivering thee from the people—from the Jews—and from the Gentiles*, put here in opposition to the *Jews*; and both meaning mankind at large, where-soever the providence of God might send him. But he was to be delivered from the malice of the *Jews*, that he might be sent with salvation to the *Gentiles*. *To open their eyes*. Although, no doubt, amidst the many other miracles which he performed, the Apostle gave sight to some who were literally blind, yet these words, like those spoken of Christ's mission (Isa. xlii. 7), are evidently to be understood of those spiritually blind, through inattention, unbelief (2 Cor. iv. 4), prejudice, superstition, love of the world, fleshly lusts, or wicked habits of any sort. *To turn them from dark-*

ness to light. The heathen, even the learned Greeks and Romans, were in a state of great darkness, i. e., ignorance and error, as to spiritual and Divine things in general. By the preaching of the Gospel, and the influences of the Spirit, men are translated from this darkness. *And from the power of Satan unto God*. Satan, who is "the prince of darkness," "the ruler of the darkness of this world" (Eph. vi. 12), obtains his power over mankind mainly through their ignorance. The Gospel, by enlightening men, and bringing them to repentance, by conviction, humiliation, regeneration, rescues them from Satan's power, and brings them to the knowledge, not merely speculative, but experimental and saving, implying the fear and love of God, and obedience to Him. *That they may receive forgiveness of sins*. They do not merit this as a reward or debt, but they "receive" it as a free gift, the effect of Divine mercy and grace (Titus iii. 4, 5), obtained through Christ's sacrifice and intercession (Rom. v. 9, 10), proclaimed in the Word (Acts x. 43, xiii. 38, 39), received "by faith that is in Christ" (see John iii. 14–18, Gal. ii. 16), and sealed on the heart and conscience by the Holy Spirit (Eph. i. 13). This is the same with justification, and is attended by peace with God, the Divine favor, adoption, the spirit of adoption, deliverance from the fear of death, a lively hope of the heavenly inheritance, gratitude, joy, patience under present trials, purity of heart and life. *And inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me*. Note, *Faith* is here made the instrument of salvation at once in its first stage, *forgiveness*, and in its last, admission to the *home of the sanctified*, and the faith which introduces the soul to all this is emphatically declared by the glorified Redeemer to rest upon Himself—"Faith, even that which is in me." And who that believes this can refrain from casting his crown before Him, or resist offering Him supreme worship?

19. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: 20. But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.—*Chap. ix. 10, &c. *Matt. iii. 8.

Whereupon—I was not disobedient. Paul now speaks of his resolution to obey the

Divine call, and of the labors in which he subsequently engaged. He ascribes his obedience to the Divine character of the appearance which he had seen, but especially (if we also refer to the words which immediately precede), to the nature of the precious office which was intrusted to him. He could not resist this heavenly call, he says, because this precious office was conferred on him by Divine authority—an office by which many thousands of benighted souls were to be enlightened and made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. (Col. i. 12.) Surely if all teachers would diligently consider what eternal glory they could give to God, and how great a salvation they could secure for themselves and for others, they would become more diligent, more faithful, and more obedient. *Works* (acts, habits) *meet for*, or worthy of, *repentance*, not merely consistent with it, but suited and proportioned to it, both as its necessary fruits, and as proofs of its existence and sincerity. This varied yet harmonious statement of Paul's great commission may throw light also on the ministerial work in general, and on that of the missionary in particular.

21. For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. 22. Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: 23. That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people; and to the Gentiles.

*Chap. xxi. 30. †Luke xxiv. 27, 46. ‡1 Cor. xv. 23.

Observe with what thankfulness the Apostle owns and acknowledges the merciful providence of God in preserving him both from the fraud and force of his enemies. *Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day.* And how did the sense of Divine goodness upon his soul stimulate him to go on with his work, declaring no other thing concerning Christ, but what Moses and the prophets had foretold of Him, namely, that He should be put to death, and should be the first that should rise again by His own power, and be the author of our resurrection. Note here, that the sufferings of Christ were taught by Moses in all the commands given about sacrifices, and not by Moses only, but by the prophets also, particular-

ly the Prophet Isaiah (chap. liii.), the evangelical prophet and prophetic evangelist, who wrote as clearly of Christ's coming as if He had then already appeared. From this the Apostle argues how black the wickedness of the Jews was, who sought to kill him for preaching the same doctrine which Moses and the prophets had taught before him.

24. † And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself, much learning doth make thee mad.—‡2 Kings ix. 11.

Festus, who, no doubt, had sat in mute astonishment at the declaration of truths which to him must have been completely unintelligible, could no longer keep silence, when he heard the Apostle assert that the crucified Nazarene had risen from the dead, and that this was the incredible fact for which he was hazarding his life. He burst forth before the whole assembly with the declaration which, in all probability, spake the honest conviction of his heart—*Paul, thou art beside thyself, &c.* The charge against Paul was mental derangement. Festus did not denounce him as a hypocrite or a knave, but rather as a brainless fanatic. How extremely natural a result for such a mind to arrive at! A man evidently capable of great things, an educated man, a well-connected man, a talented man, and more than all in the eyes of Festus, a Roman citizen—such a man, at one time voluntarily traversing the earth, from city to city, and from country to country, at another, dragged from prison to prison—for the sole purpose of declaring a fact which Festus imagined no one in his senses could believe, and inducing others to give up every preconceived opinion, and to agree with him in honoring and obeying this dead, but as he asserted, risen and living malefactor—if *this* were not insanity, Festus was acquainted with no principle sufficiently powerful to induce such a result. This is precisely the judgment which the world passes secretly upon every man in every age, who really and conscientiously follows the Apostle's example. There is always in the mind of worldly men, when judging of the conduct of the true and consistent followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, a certain indefinite suspicion that all is not right with them; that if they really

are not hypocrites, a very difficult fact to establish in the minds of their enemies, they are certainly of very weak and questionable judgment; and while the ungodly portion of the world may exercise too much courtesy to say, "Thou art beside thyself," it fully believes, and does not hesitate to insinuate, that the mind, so deeply interested in the things of God as to prefer eternity to time, the promise of the future to the enjoyment of the present, has lost its balance, and should be no guide to them in seeking the way of everlasting life.

25. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

Paul had previously said, in verse 11, that once in his life he had been "mad," but now the clear light of his preaching is reviled by one whose eyes were not yet opened. What does he do? He brings forward the simple counter-proof in calm and well-ordered language, in which he ceases to address Agrippa for the present, and turns to Festus, with whom the whole speech had its due weight. To the charge—"These men are full of new wine," Peter answered in the name of all, "These are not drunken." (ii. 15.) Just so Paul now replies, *I am not mad*. The Master had Himself supplied the model for such a reply, when He said to the Jews "I have not a devil." (John viii. 49.) As a proof of what he says, now follows the humble and proper address, *Most noble Festus!*—a fitting parallel to the previous address—"King Agrippa." Thou seest that I know well before whom I am standing, and that I am quite in my senses! *I speak forth the words of truth and soberness*, even now, at this moment, while I am calmly maintaining the fact. My words are words of *truth* as regards their purport, and of *soberness* (a contrast to nonsense) in their form and style: this is a two-fold counter-assertion, answering to Festus' implied two-fold accusation. By these two words Paul makes a profound distinction between the *subject* of his testimony and *his own personality*, and declares that he testifies quite reasonably of something existing, and is not speaking of some fanciful idea which was only to be found in his own feelings.

25. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him: for this thing was not done in a corner.

The Apostle declares that his discourse would bear the test of the severest examination. And in confirmation of this assertion, he appeals to the king, before whom he spoke with freedom, persuaded of his qualifications to judge in the matter. Agrippa was a Jew, knew the sacred writings, and could not be ignorant of the events connected with Christianity, for these things were accomplished in the view of the public. *For this thing was not done in a corner*. This indeed is the best test of truth, and what distinguishes the religion of the Bible from all religions in the world: for there never was one beside it, in which deceit, disguise, false pretenses, and gross impositions, were not practiced upon the multitude; whereas in *this*, everything was done openly, chiefly before enemies the most subtle and malicious, who never slackened a moment in their vigilance, yet never either in our Lord or His Apostles were able to discover the smallest appearance of craft, or any tendency to hidden arts. They, who preached His resurrection, were enabled to support their testimony by stupendous miracles in the face of thousands: so that if these had not been favored with the sight of our Lord after He rose from the grave, they were yet favored (infinitely above what they had cause to hope) with undeniable evidence of the fact itself. In the same manner Paul confirmed the account of his own conversion, and of having seen the Lord. What better proofs then could be required? And how well-known and admitted must the facts have been, when the Apostle ventures to call upon Agrippa, an unconverted Jew, for his conviction of their truth.

27. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

The courage and confidence here shown proceeded from a vivid persuasion of Agrippa's knowledge of the *facts* and faith in the *predictions* which they verified: and the king's reply is the highest testimony to the correctness of these presumptions and the immense power of such bold yet courteous appeals to conscience. This

passage may be thought, in every quality of fine writing, equal to anything to be found in Demosthenes, or any of the ancient orators.

28. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.—James i. 23, 24.

There is not the slightest reason for interpreting this language of Agrippa as an irony. To do so, would be to suppose him very unreasonably and absurdly ludicrous. Such an interpretation, moreover, would be in direct conflict with the Apostle's apprehension of his case, for it is evident from his answer, and from the sense in which he there uses "almost," in opposition to "altogether," that he *understood* the king to mean seriously that he was almost persuaded, and consequently that he *did* mean so. Paul had an advantage with Agrippa, which he had not on a former occasion when reasoning with Felix. He had now to deal with one who recognized the Scriptures; acknowledged that God had revealed Himself to mankind. Agrippa had that general belief in the Divine word which such men commonly have when brought up in a country where it is professedly received, and God is avowedly worshiped. They are by no means prepared to deny the truth of revelation, any more than they are disposed to act as if it were true. Still, as Agrippa, when pressed closely by the Apostle, could not deny that he believed the prophets, so in our own land, and in our own day, a belief rests upon the minds of many, though it does not influence the heart. And in time of trouble, of danger, of distress, they are ready to say as Agrippa did. They commence, perhaps, some plans of reformation, they abstain from practices which conscience condemns, and enter upon a course of life more consistent with Christian faith. But, alas, they illustrate the momentary feeling upon Agrippa's mind, when he said, *Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.*

29. And Paul said, I would fain to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds. 1 Cor. vii. 7.

The words of Agrippa excited an affectionate emotion in the heart of Paul, while the thought arose with him—*Almost a*

Christian! That profiteth little! Oh that king Agrippa were indeed a Christian!

To be *almost* a Christian, only shows that truth has been neglected or resisted. "This is the condemnation, that light hath come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Agrippa is himself an example. Before what passed at this examination of Paul, he probably knew little of the Christians, except that they were a sect called Nazarenes, and "everywhere spoken against." Now he knew what they believed, and on what their belief was grounded. Now he knew that they rested their faith on the very law and prophets which he himself confessed to be from God. But instead of yielding to conscience, and appointing a time when he might hear Paul again of this important matter, he rises up, and dissolves the assembly. Because on the instant it would cross his mind, that to become a Christian would be the destruction of his worldly prospects, and involve the new-modeling of his whole life. Therefore the movement of his conscience was but the turn of a thought, the feeling of a moment; like the spark which blazes up, and on which at the same instant a drop of water falls, and it is extinguished. But it has shown that there is something within, something which we should not have been aware of if the spark had not betrayed it; something which might have grown up into a continuing and steady flame, if means had been used to foster and not to quench it. When account is given "of the things done in the body," account must be given of the perverseness, the sinfulness, the hardness of heart, which checked that rising flame.

This would furnish just cause for Paul's passionate exclamation, and his prayer that Agrippa might be *altogether* a Christian. *Not only almost but altogether.* He could be nothing else, if he were a Christian at all, in any proper or available sense. There is no mid-way. To be a Christian is to have sought acceptance with God through Christ, and to be looking for salvation through faith in Him. This admits of no middle course. If one

is accused before men, there is no middle course; he must be either innocent or guilty, and must plead either the one or the other. So it is at the bar of God. Either we are trusting in ourselves that we are righteous, or because we are not righteous, we are trusting in Christ, who has made propitiation for our sins. Therefore there can be no mid-way as to *faith*, no meaning in being *almost a Christian*. Neither as to *practice*, can there be a middle course. Because either we are seeking "first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," or we are seeking this world first; that is, preferring it, wherever the interests of the one clash with the interests of the other. We cannot at the same time love God most, and mammon most. Either we are yielding to some desires, and habits, and temptations contrary to the Gospel, or we are rejecting and opposing these, as they must who are *altogether Christians*, and bringing every thought, and word, and deed into obedience to Christ. Such must be their purpose and endeavor. Not because to be altogether a Christian a man must be altogether perfect, but because he must be altogether sincere in aiming at perfection, and allowing himself in nothing short of it.

This was the state of Paul's own heart; and knowing the comfort which he derived from the consciousness of this, and the blessed consequence which should follow, he earnestly desired that both Agrippa, and all before whom he was pleading, might be nothing less: might be *not only almost but altogether Christians*.

Agrippa, however, had now heard enough to satisfy his curiosity, and too much, perhaps, to maintain his ease of mind; and he would hear no more.

30. † And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them. 31. And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. 32. Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

The king rose up, &c. King Agrippa, like Felix and Festus, like his ancestors in the sacred story, flits now from the scene. Nothing came, we believe, of this strange interview between light and darkness, be-

tween sin and the Gospel. Agrippa kept his useless idle faith in Jewish Scriptures, kept, too, his heart's lusts, his obscene idol; his earth-bound life. Times of trial drew on. In the last Jewish wars he sided with the Romans, and then retired to drag out an inglorious age, through thirty uneventful years, with a titular royalty, and in real servitude, under the imperial shadow of Rome. In the year of our Lord 100, being the third year of the Emperor Trajan, he died there, the last prince of the blood-stained race of Herod. Yet, like all whose names, for good or for evil, are once stamped upon the holy page, Agrippa remains to all time for the edification and instruction of the Church which he despised. The court leaves Paul. The king, and all who heard him in the court, withdrew from him, never perhaps to see him again in this world. But he has not done with them. His thoughts will tell forever on their destiny. He will live in their memory, he will meet them in another court. *This man doeth nothing, &c.* The reference here is to the general tenor of Paul's life, his general character and views. His defense had the natural effect of impressing his judges with a sense of his innocence.

Faithful servants of Jesus are grieved when they perceive that their discourses produce no other fruit than that the hearers say: "The preacher is a good man," or, "he has spoken well." And yet, such is here the experience of the holy Apostle. After he had testified of Jesus with the utmost sincerity, joy and power, and had with so much confidence opened his heart to all the hearers, whose salvation he earnestly desired, they all arose, conversed together, and at last said: "That is a good man." Should they not have learned much more, on far more important subjects, from his discourse? Such is the world.

If he had not appealed unto Cæsar. The appeal to Cæsar had placed him beyond their jurisdiction: they could now neither condemn nor acquit him, but had to refer the matter simply to the emperor.

1. What did Agrippa say to Paul? 2. What did Paul then do? 3. What did he say? 4. Repeat his defense? 5. What did Festus say with a loud voice? 6. What was Paul's reply? 7. What did Agrippa then say unto Paul? 8. What is it to be a Christian? 9. What was Paul's answer to Agrippa? 10. What was the result of the consultation between the king, the governor, and Bernice, and those that sat with them?

CHAPTER XXVII.

1 *Paul shipping toward Rome, 10 foretelleth of the danger of the voyage, 11 but it is not believed, 14 They are tossed to and fro with tempest, 41 and suffer shipwreck, 22, 34, 44 yet all come safe to land.*

AND when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul, and certain other prisoners, unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band, —xxv. 12, 25.

And. No packet ships or steamers in this, the palmy time of imperial Rome, crossed the sea at regular intervals, but the waters had been cleared of pirates, and from various directions a plentiful current of commerce tended to the Roman capital. Even consuls and emperors were obliged in crossing the sea to avail themselves of the merchant vessels, which were of a size hardly inferior to the same class of ships at the present day. *Determined.* The path in which believers walk often seems indeed to be determined by accident, or by the caprice or will of men, nevertheless, it will always be found to be, in reality, in strict accordance with the promises of God. The "*we*" includes Luke the historian, and Aristarchus a Macedonian Christian. Who the other prisoners were, or what their crimes, we are not told. With these criminals, Paul the incorrupt and incorruptible was delivered by Festus into the custody of *Julius, a centurion, &c.* From the time of Augustus Octavianus, legions took the name *Augustan*.

2. And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia, one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us, —xix. 20.

Adramyttium was a sea-port with a harbor in Mysia, an Athenian colony. It is now a village called Endramit. *Welaunched.* According to Mr. Lewin's reckoning, it was on the twenty-first of August, in the year of our Lord 60, when Paul's ship departed from Cesarea. The winds at that date are generally from the west, but not violent, and the trip to Sidon was doubtless prosperous. This is the *Aristarchus* named in xix. 29, xx. 4. (See Phile. 24;

Col. iv. 10.) God can alleviate our trials, as in the case of Paul's captivity, when another true friend was associated with the faithful Luke. Aristarchus voluntarily offered himself as a companion of the suffering Apostle. Though he is called a fellow-prisoner in Col. iv. 10, the same term is applied to Epaphras (Phile. 23), where it denotes *fellow-laborers*. This fraternal act of taking up the cross, was so precious in the sight of the Spirit of God, that He caused it to be recorded for our benefit as an example.

3. And the next day we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself. —xxiv. 23, xxviii. 16.

Sidon—a distance of sixty-seven geographical miles. This celebrated city is generally joined in the New Testament with Tyre, from which it was distant twenty-five miles, and of which it was probably the mother city. It was within the lot of the tribe of Asher (Josh. xix. 28), but never conquered by the Israelites. (Judges i. 31, iii. 3.) *Courteously entreated Paul, &c.* This record of the courtesy of Julius teaches us not to undervalue those civilities and attentions of the natural or ordinary politeness which obtains in society, even when they are rendered to us by those who are without.

4. And when he had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. 5. And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia.

The expression "*we sailed under Cyprus*," means they kept near to it for shelter and safety. The ancient navigators, ignorant of the mariner's compass, and other means and resources now enjoyed, were accustomed to creep along the shores as much as possible in sight of land. With the nautical advantages of modern times, the open sea is considered the least perilous. Thus sailing on over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, they came to "*Myra, a city*



THESSALONICA.



PUTEOLI.

of Lycia." Lycia was a maritime district of Asia Minor, bounded on the north by Pamphylia, and on the east, west and south by the sea. Myra was the capital of the district, and situated on the coast. Here they landed.

6. And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy, and he put us therein. 7. And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Chidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone; 8. And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The Fair Havens, nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.

²⁰Or, Candia.

And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria, sailing into Italy; and he put us therein. The first part of the voyage is ended, the second part is commenced. The population of Rome, at this time numerous, were supplied with grain in a great measure from Egypt, whose Nile made it the granary of nations. The ship of Alexandria, now found at Myra, was laden with wheat. It must have been a large vessel, for, besides its cargo, it had two hundred and sixty souls on board, after the centurion, Paul, and his companions, and the prisoners, had embarked. Adverse winds had probably driven the ship on the coast of Asia Minor.

And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Chidus, This was a city, situated on a rocky and mountainous peninsula of the same name, in the province of Caria, between the island of Rhodes and Coos or Cos. It was distinguished for the worship of Venus, and contained the celebrated statue of that goddess by Praxiteles.

We sailed under Crete, now called Candia, an island fronting the Ægean Sea, one hundred and seventy miles long, and about thirty or forty broad, distinguished for its salubrity, fertility and beauty.

Over against Salmone. A promontory at the east end of the island, which they doubled, and sailed under Crete, or south of it, to escape the contrary winds.

Hardly passing it. Having passed Salmone with great difficulty, being almost driven on it, they steered round the coast end of the island, and came to a roadstead, a species of harbor, called the Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea.

9. Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them, 10. And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also

of our lives. 11. Nevertheless, the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

²²Kings vi. 9, 10; Dan. ii. 20; Amos iii. 7. ²³Or, injury.

²⁴Prov. xxvii. 12.

When much time was spent—since leaving Cesarea. But for unforeseen delays they might have reached the Italian coast before the stormy season. And sailing (the navigation of the open sea) was now dangerous because the fast was now already past—the fast of the great day of Atonement, which fell this year on the twenty-third day of September, the Autumn equinox. The period of safe navigation ends here in October, and begins in March. Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, &c. The prediction of the Apostle implies a regard on his part to the probabilities grounded on experience and the laws of nature. It is not accordant with God's actual economy to multiply miracles indefinitely, and though He did honor Paul with a miraculous revelation at this time, and also gave him the power of shaking off the serpent from his hand, so as to escape unhurt by it (xxviii. 5), yet He was pleased to leave the elements to their wonted course, and interfered not for the purpose of favoring His Apostle with a prosperous voyage. When Paul spoke his own human anticipations at the outset of the voyage from the Fair Havens, he stated the apprehension he felt of damage to the lives of the company, but afterward he spoke the word of prophecy, as received by him at the mouth of an angel, when he told them that all their lives should be saved—this having been communicated to him on the very night of this address to the passengers and crew. Nevertheless, &c. That Julius should defer to the opinion of these mariners, in preference to that of his own prisoner, was natural enough, and is here recorded, not as a reproach or censure, but as the unintentional occasion of the subsequent disasters.

12. ¶ And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south-west and north-west. 13. And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete. 14. But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon. 15. And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive. 16. And running under a certain island which is called Claudia, we had much work to come by the boat: 17. Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake

sail, and so were driven. 18. And being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship; 19. And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship. 20. And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

¹Verse 7. ²Verse 21. ³Or, beat. ⁴Ps. cvii. 25. ⁵Verse 41. ⁶Ps. cvii. 27. ⁷Job ii. 4; Jonah i. 5. ⁸Ps. cv. 23. ⁹Ezek. xxxvii. 11.

The crew intended, according to custom, to winter in some convenient port; but, before they could get that purpose accomplished, they were overtaken by a storm, and, being deprived of their usual and only guides, the sun, moon and stars, they were tossed about in the Mediterranean, not knowing whether they were carried to north, east, west or south. The storm that surprised them, and rendered the voyage so disastrous, is thought to have been one of those tremendous gales, called Levanters, which at some particular periods of the year sweep the Mediterranean, in all directions, with the resistless impetuosity of a whirlwind. In this perilous situation, they had recourse to all the means which their limited experience in navigation suggested for the preservation of the ship. Their attention was first directed to the boat, which, as is still the custom in those seas, was towed to the stern of the vessel, and consequently being violently tossed by the heaving billows, must have been a great drag and inconvenience to the ship, already unable to make head against the wind, as well as have been in danger of being separated from it altogether. They "took it up," but their purpose was not to hoist it into the vessel, a thing which Oriental sailors never do, but to fasten it closer to the stern, while it was still allowed, as before, to float upon the water. Their next expedient, as the planks were loosened, and otherwise much damaged, and in danger of falling asunder, was to throw a cable around and underneath, to hold the timbers more closely together—a singular contrivance, which, however, in violent storms, was very common in ancient, and has also been occasionally practiced in modern times. This method of undergirding, as it is called, is by suspending a stout cable under the ship, at one end, to catch it as it is borne up by the water on the other side, and then fasten the two ends very tightly on the deck.

All hope that we should be saved was then taken away. After human effort had exhausted its powers, then God interposed. It is so with the Gospel. It was after human reason had tried every effort to solve the stormy problems of the conscience, and guide the soul into the haven of spiritual peace, that Christ came. "You may see," says one, "Socrates in the twilight lamenting his obscure and benighted condition, and telling you that his lamp will show him nothing but his own darkness. You may see Plato sitting down by the water of Lethe, and weeping because he could not remember his former notions. You may hear Aristotle bewailing himself thus, that his 'potential reason' will so seldom come into act, that his 'blank sheet' has so few and such imperfect impressions upon it, that his intellects are at so low an ebb, as that the notions of Euripus will pose them. You may hear Zeno say that his 'porch' is dark, and Epictetus confessing and complaining that he had not the right 'handle,' the true apprehension of things. 'The world by wisdom knew not God.'"

²¹. But after long abstinence, Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, *Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosened* ²²from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

²³Verse 10. ²⁴Verse 13.

When their distress had reached its extremity, when the last ray of hope had burnt out within them, and the cold shivering midnight of despair was settling on their spirits; at this point a light from heaven breaks on them, and that light leads to their salvation. That light comes through Paul. *Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, &c.* When the advice of wise and devout men has been rejected, and evil results have thence followed, they do not lose time by exhibiting undue sensitiveness, and by uttering reproaches, but proceed to give advice, if advice does not come too late, and offer their assistance, if it is still of avail.

²². And now I ²³exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of *any man's* life among you, but of the ship.—Job xxii. 29; Ps. cxlii. 7; 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9.

Though the Apostle felt that they had done wrong in rejecting his advice, he cheers them by an assurance that there will be "no loss of any man's life," that the ship only would be destroyed. Observe Paul's self-forgetfulness. Whilst all

others were struggling for themselves, he seemed only concerned for them, though, for the most part, they stood in an antagonistic position toward him. He was a prisoner in the custody of Roman officers. The vessel was bearing him, not to his home, not to a scene of friendship, but to that of punishment and death. He did not seem to think of this. His own trying circumstances did not appear to affect him, he was careful for others, he had the "charity that seeketh not her own."

23. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve. ^aChap. xxiii. 11. ^bHeb. i. 14. ^cDeut. xxxii. 9. ^dPs. cxxxv. 4. ^eIsa. xlii. 5. ^fMal. iii. 17. ^gJohn xvii. 9, 10. ^h1 Cor. vi. 20. ⁱ1 Peter ii. 9, 10. ^jPs. cxvi. 16. ^kIsa. xlii. 21. ^lDan. iii. 17, vi. 16. ^mJohn xii. 26. ⁿRom. i. 9. ^o2 Tim. i. 3.

The words "of God" are added because Paul addressed heathens, who otherwise would have understood by an angel a messenger of the gods. The context does not determine whether this vision was made to Paul in a dream, or when awake—probably the latter. *Whose I am*, to whom I belong as His property; in other words, whose servant I am, and *whom I serve*, rather *worship*, to whom I offer religious service and homage. This verb refers to external acts of worship, and not to a religious life in general, except as the latter may be a concomitant of the former. "Happy," says *Rieger*, "is he who can, with sincerity and joy of heart, repeat Paul's confession of faith: 'God, whose I am, and whom I serve,' and who, amid all the scenes which may be presented on the troubled ocean of this world, can continue to pray, 'O God, I am Thine, I serve Thee, be Thou my Preserver.'"

24. Saying, Fear not, Paul, thou must be brought before Cæsar; and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. 25. Wherefore, Sirs, be of good cheer; for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. 26. Howbeit, we must be cast upon a certain island. ^aGen. xix. 21, 29. ^bLuke i. 45. ^cRom. iv. 20, 21. ^d2 Tim. i. 12. ^eChap. xxviii. 1.

Lo, behold, *God hath given thee*, &c. Doubtless Paul prayed earnestly for the safety of those who were in the ship with him, and their lives were granted in answer to his prayers. Paul does not here exalt himself, but merely states what was revealed to him. How greatly are men indebted for their blessings to God's favor toward eminently pious men! How much, too, should this thought excite pious men to a deeply serious and devout life! *Where-*

fore, because of this Divine assurance, *cheer up*, be cheerful, or of good cheer. *For* assigns the reason of this exhortation, *I believe (or trust in) God*, not only in the general, but that it shall be (come to pass or happen) *even as*, literally, *after what manner it has been told (or spoken to) me*. *Howbeit*, but, *we must (or it is necessary for us) upon (literally, in or unto) a certain island be cast (literally, fall out)*. The name of the island, it would seem, was not revealed to Paul.

27. But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country:

The fourteenth night, i. e., the fourteenth night since they left the Fair Havens. *In Adria*—in the Adriatic. Adria is not to be restricted to what is now called the Gulf of Venice, but embraces all that part of the Mediterranean which lay south of Italy, east of Sicily, and west of Greece, and thus included the Ionian Sea. It was on the same stormy Adriatic Sea that the great Cæsar cried to the trembling pilot: "Steer boldly, thou carriest Cæsar and his fortune." *The shipmen, i. e.*, the sailors, *deemed or suspected* that they were in the vicinity of land. "The roar of breakers is a peculiar sound, which can be detected by a practiced ear." Luke does not state the grounds of the conjecture, but it was, no doubt, suggested by the increasing sound which proceeded from the surf.

28. And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms.

To sound, is to cast or let down the sounding line. A fathom is six feet, the space measured by the arms stretched out. The decrease in their soundings, at first twenty fathoms, and a little farther on fifteen fathoms, convinced them that their supposition was correct, and that they could not be far distant from land.

29. Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.—^aPs. cxxx. 6.

Fearing lest, during the darkness of the midnight, they should run against rocks or be stranded, they cast four anchors out of the stern. This was contrary to our practice, but conformed to the immemorial custom of Eastern sailors, who drop their anchors at the stern, which anchors have four flukes, so that, in all probability, from the permanent character of customs in the

East, the instrument dropped by the crew of Paul's vessel was a four-pointed anchor, which both the celebrated travelers, Bruce and Buckingham, inform us is the kind of anchor used to this day by the sailors who navigate the seas and rivers about Egypt and Palestine.

30. And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under color as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship. 31. Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.

Dr. Chalmers, observes: "Perhaps the most practically useful lesson in this passage is what is grounded on the comparison of verses 22 and 23 with verse 31, by which we learn that the absolute decree does not supersede the conditions which precede its fulfillment, but that while the one is sure the others are indispensable. The prophecy—the announced predestination, it may be called—of verse 22, did not supersede the urgency of the prescription in verse 31; the ship's company were all absolutely to be saved, and yet unless the sailors were detained in the ship for the purpose of working it, they could not be saved. Here is a clear example of predestination not infringing upon practice, nor should it on the large scale of Christianity, either. There is nothing, O my God, revealed to me of Thy decree respecting my future and everlasting state; but let me be very sure that except I repent I cannot be saved—except I believe I cannot be saved—without holiness I cannot see God. O let me labor to make my calling and election sure. Let me be enabled to superadd the assurance of experience to the assurance of faith; and meanwhile let me be of good cheer when I bethink myself of that proffered mercy in the Gospel which is held forth to all, and which all have a warrant to lay hold of."

32. Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.

Then. Paul left it to the soldiers to consider what they should do. It should be our work to cut off the ropes of every boat in which we put our trust besides God, then will our dark night pass away before the morning light, and we shall behold the glorious help of God.

33. And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried, and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

While. At dawn there was more opportunity for prolonged exhortation. *Fourteenth day that ye have tarried, or, waited, and continued fasting.* They had not so long abstained from food, although perhaps they had had no regular meals. So Appian speaks of an army, which, for twenty days, took no food nor sleep, by which he must mean they never made full meals, nor slept whole nights together.

34. Wherefore I pray you to take *some* meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

^cMatt. xv. 32; ^d1 Tim. v. 23. ^{e1} Kings i. 52; Matt. x. 30; Luke xii. 7, xxi. 18.

The word *meat* means, in the Bible, *food, that which is to be eaten.* *For this is for your health,* rather, this will be for your safety. They all needed to recruit their strength, so as to be ready to avail themselves of the opportunity which would occur for getting to land. *Not an hair fall, &c.*—a proverbial expression denoting their entire safety. (1 Kings i. 52; Matt. x. 29; Luke xii. 6, xxi. 18.)

35. And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat.

^{f1} Sam. ix. 13; Matt. xvi. 36; Mark viii. 6; John vi. 11, 23; 1 Tim. iv. 3, 4.

Notice, 1. *The calm self-control.* He was in the midst of the most agitating scenes. The boisterous billows—the furious hurricane—the reeling, plunging, shattered ship—the two hundred threescore and sixteen terror-stricken men, were confessedly scenes of terrible excitement, yet how sublimely calm this man is! *He took bread, &c.* A finer picture of moral majesty in man can scarcely be conceived than this. The philosophy of his tranquillity we know. It was faith in that God whose he was and whom he served. 2. *The practical piety.* *He gave thanks to God in presence of them all.* This was according to the Christian practice. (Matt. xv. 36, xxvi. 27; John vi. 11–23; Rom. xiv. 6; 1 Cor. x. 13, xi. 24, xiv. 17; Eph. v. 20; 1 Thes. v. 18.) This thanking God before food, on Paul's part, was not a matter of fanaticism, form or parade, it was an expression of the spirit of his life. Paul lived in the element of religion. There is no moral greatness apart from religion.

36. Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took *some* meat. 37. And we were in all, in the ship, two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.

Then were they all of good cheer, &c. The return of hope brought with it a keener

sense of their wants, and they could now think with more calmness and comfort of satisfying their hunger. "They *also* took," &c. The Apostle had set them the example, and they all followed it. *Two hundred*, &c. Amounting to two hundred and seventy-six. This number, far from being incredible, as some have thought, is not unusually large, considering the size of these Egyptian store-ships (see on verse 6), and compared with the statement of Josephus, that about this same time he was wrecked in the Adriatic with a shipload of six hundred.

38. And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.

Wheat. Most recent commentators translate "provisions," as Job iii. 24, Prov. iv. 17, for, had their cargo been wheat, they would doubtless have thrown it overboard before, as there had already been two discharges, verses 18, 19.

39. And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.

When it was day. After the darkness, light reappears, the night passes away, and the sun rises; our troubles will at length come to an end. God is nearest to us in our greatest distress.

Shore, i. e., beach to run upon, as is the custom in the Mediterranean, even now, with smaller vessels. This inlet on the north-west of Malta, is now called *La Cala di San Paolo* (St. Paul's Creek). It opens to the north-east with a sand-bank in its middle, formed by a current, which passes between the coast and an island: *here two seas meet.* (Verse 41.)

40. And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder-bands, and hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.

They committed. The ship, and themselves with it. *Loosed the rudder-bands.* Formerly fastened, when they left the ship to drive, but now necessary to direct their course. Ships in those days had frequently two rudders or helms. *And made toward shore.* Dashed by the force of the tempest, the vessel is soon hurled thither.

41. And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the fore part stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.

A place where two seas met. Such a place,

for instance, is an oblong mound composed of closely compacted sand. (See on verse 39.) Amid conflicting eddies *the forepart*—the bows or fore-castle—*stuck fast*—plunged into the sand—and *remained unmoveable*. The stern, meanwhile, exposed to the fury of the breakers, is broken to pieces. Now it is a question of life or death—each man for himself.

42. And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out and escape. Ps. lxxiv. 20.

The cruel purpose of the soldiers proceeded from their dread of being called to an account, if any of the prisoners escaped; for the Roman law was very severe in such cases, if there were any room to suspect the guards of connivance or negligence.

43. But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land: 44. And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land. 2 Cor. xi. 25. 1 Ps. cvii. 28-30; verse 22.

The centurion interposed to thwart this murderous project, and he does so for the sake of Paul, who was a prisoner, and who had saved the vessel. Thus God, for Paul's sake, not only saved all the rest of the ship's company from being drowned, but kept the prisoners from being murdered, according to the barbarous proposal of the soldiers. *And the rest.* These words depend on "commanded"—"he commanded the rest" to "get to land." *Boards,* planks which were at hand in the ship. *On things from the ship,* that is, probably on broken pieces of the ship, the hinder part of which had been broken up. *And so it came to pass,* &c. Thus all are rescued, and thus, according to the word of Paul, as given him by the angel, "there was no loss of any man's life, but of the ship."

Let the fiercest tempest arise, let winds and waves dash about us with the utmost fury, yet if we trust in Jesus, and endeavor to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, we shall, though "on boards and broken pieces of the ship," escape "all safe to land."

"Give thy mind sea-room, keep it wide of earth,
That rock of souls immortal; let loose thy cord;
Weigh anchor, spread thy sails, call every wind,
Eye thy great pole-star, make the land of life."

1. To whom was Paul delivered? 2. Who was Julius? 3. Who was Aristarchus? 4. How did Julius treat Paul at Sidon? 5. What ship was taken at Myra? 6. Where was the place called the Fair Havens? 7. What admission did Paul give? 8. What is said of a tempestuous wind which arose, and the consequences? 9. What "after a long absence," did Paul say? 10. What did Paul say as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship? 11. Why did Paul urge them to take some meat? 12. How many persons were in the ship? 13. How did they lighten the ship? 14. What occurred when they ran the ship aground? 15. What was the counsel of the soldiers? 16. What is said of the centurion? 17. Did they all escape safe to land?

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1 *Paul after his shipwreck is kindly entertained of the barbarians.* 5 *The viper on his hand hurteth him not.* 8 *He healeth many diseases in the island.* 11 *They depart towards Rome.* 17 *He declareth to the Jews the cause of his coming.* 24 *After his preaching some were persuaded, and some believed not.* 30 *Yet he preacheth there two years.*

AND when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.—xxviii. 26.

Escaped. The ship is lost, but Paul and his companions are saved. Empires and kingdoms may perish, but the Christian Church continues to float, and is wonderfully preserved. *Melita*, the modern *Malta*, which is sixty miles from Cape Passero, the southern point of Sicily, and two hundred miles from the African coast. Melita, when Paul was there, was a dependency of the Roman province of Sicily. From its position in the Mediterranean, and the excellence of its harbors, it has always been important both in commerce and war. It was a settlement of the Phœnicians at an early period, and their language, in a corrupted form, continued to be spoken there in Paul's day.

2. And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

^bRom. i. 14; Col. iii. 11. ^cMatt. x. 42; Heb. xlii. 2.

Barbarous people, or, *barbarians*. "Every one not a Greek is a barbarian," is the common Greek definition, and in this strict sense the word is used in Rom. i. 14—"I am a debtor both to Greeks and barbarians." It often retains this primitive meaning, as in the text, also in 1 Cor. xiv. 11, where it designates one using an unknown tongue. *Because of the present rain and . . . of the cold.* The appearance of these shipwrecked men, destitute of food and raiment, shivering in the cold and the rain, stirred their hearts with commiseration. This feeling, though often perverted, seems to belong to our nature. Let us take courage in God who will not

leave us defenseless in the work of spreading abroad His truth, even throughout the families of a hostile world.

3. And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. 4. And when the barbarians saw the *venomous* beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live. 5. And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. 6. Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly; but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

^dJohn vii. 24. ^eMatt. xvi. 18; Luke x. 19. ^fxiv. 11.

There came a viper, &c. We may naturally suppose that there had been fuel laid before on the fire, and that the viper was in this fuel, and that it had been revived by the heat, and when Paul laid his bundle on the fire, the viper was then in a state to lay hold on his hand. The viper is one of the most venomous of reptiles. When the Lord designed to introduce His Apostle to these strangers, He previously permitted an evil to befall him, which Paul overcame by faith, thereby he made an impression on the hearts of all who surrounded him. Our afflictions are thus intended, like a bell, to attract to us the eyes and attention of men, the faith which we exhibit under such circumstances, or the victory which we gain by the grace of Christ is designed to induce others to imitate us. *When the barbarians saw, &c.* Their conclusion was such as would naturally occur to persons persuaded that a moral government is exercised over mankind, but whose views were not corrected and enlarged by Scripture, or by accurate observation and extensive experience. They were right in believing that God who knows the actions of men will recompense them according to their desert, and that He sometimes interposes, in a visible manner, to punish atrocious crimes. But they erred in supposing such interposi-

tions to be so regular as to afford certain grounds for interpreting the design of every calamitous event. Possibly these people, not having any correct notions of the justice of the *true* God, may have used the word translated "vengeance," not to express the quality or attribute of any being, but the goddess *Diké*, or vindictive justice herself, who is represented as punishing the iniquities of men. Hesiod makes a goddess of what the Maltese called *justice*:

"Justice, unspotted maid, derived from Jove,
Renov'd and reverenc'd by the gods above:
When mortals violate her sacred laws,
When judges hear the bribe and not the cause,
Close by her parent God, behold her stand,
And urge the punishment their sins demand."

And he shook off the beast, &c. Then was fulfilled the promise of the Lord: "I give you power to tread on serpents," &c. (Luke x. 19; Mark xvi. 18.) God often exemplifies in His servants that Christ has recovered for us also the dominion over the beasts, which had been lost. (Gen. i. 26, 28, ix. 2; 1 Sam. xvii. 34, 35.) Christians cannot be poisoned. *When he should have swollen*, &c., rather, when he should have been *inflamed*, by means of an acrid poison introduced into the blood; it soon coagulates, and in consequence, the extremities of the vessels become obstructed, strong inflammation takes place, and all the parts become most painfully swollen.

They changed their minds. So much were they astonished at his remaining unscathed, where his deliverance from such imminent danger could not have been owing either to the vigor of his own constitution, to his skill in enchantment, or any natural resources of man, that they unanimously ascribed it to a Divine power, and said that *he was a god*. *Æsculapius*, the god of physicians, who ruled over the serpent, was specially worshiped in Melita. So was Hercules (who was famous for having destroyed, in his youth, two serpents that attacked him in his cradle), there worshiped under an epithet signifying *the dispeller of evil*. Hence they probably thought that Paul was *Æsculapius* or Hercules. The inhabitants of Lystra had done just the reverse of what was done by these Melitese: first they sacrificed to Paul as a god, and then they stoned him. (xiv. 13,

18, 19.) Here we see a true picture of man, who judges by appearances and equivocal signs, and changes his opinions as often as the scene around him fluctuates. The same voices which applaud to the very echo the hero of to-day; are to-morrow rending the skies with yells of detestation and abhorrence. Let us endeavor to attain to something of that truly Scriptural and comfortable feeling which enabled Paul to be alike indifferent to the opinion which, at one moment, proscribed him as a murderer, and in the next enrolled him among the gods: an indifference which he himself so plainly and so forcibly expressed, when he said: "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self; but He that judgeth me is the Lord." There is, assuredly, no bar more insuperable to our real progress in vital religion than an overweening respect for the opinion of our fellow-sinners.

7. In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius: who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.

Possessions—estates. *The chief* (or first) *man of the island*, was probably an official title: the more so, as Publius can hardly have borne the appellation from his *estates* during his father's lifetime. Two inscriptions have been found in Malta, at Citta Vecchia, which seem to establish this view. If so (and his Roman name further confirms it), Publius was *legate of the Prætor of Sicily*, to whose province Malta belonged. *Who received us*, &c.—entertained us, viz.: Luke, Paul, Aristarchus (xxvii. 2), and no doubt the noble-hearted Julius, not the entire two hundred and seventy-six, as so indiscriminate a hospitality would be uncalled for, and without any sufficient motive.

8. And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever, and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

James v. 14, 15. Matt. ix, 18, Mark vi. 5, vii. 32, xvi. 18, Luke iv. 40, Ch. xix. 11, 1 Cor. xii. 9, 28.

It has been remarked that no writer of the New Testament uses such exact technical expressions of diseases as Luke, who was trained as a physician. Formerly it was maintained that a dry climate, such as Malta, did not generate dysentery and inflammation of the lower bowels; but

recently physicians resident in the islands have shown that these diseases are by no means uncommon at the present day. *And prayed, &c.*, thereby avowing that he healed him, not in his own strength, but as an instrument of the Divine mercy. Paul experienced, almost at the same time, two fulfillments of his Master's promise, "they shall take up serpents they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." (Mark xvi. 18.)

9. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came and were healed: 10. Who also honored us with many honors; and when we departed they lauded us with such things as were necessary.

11 Th. ii. 6. 1 Ti. v. 17. 2 Matt. vi. 31-34, x. 8-10, 2 Cor. ix. 5-11, Phil. iv. 11, 12.

The miracle on the father of Publius brings all the sick in the island to Paul, and all are healed. Now again beam forth the power and glory of the Apostle: the prisoner is now a miraculous benefactor, and the supposed murderer is a dispenser of life. Then must the ship's company indeed have wondered. Those who were healed amply expressed their gratitude for the benefits received, for at their departure they loaded them with all things necessary for them. There was an inferior honor due to the Apostles which the miracles they wrought were the means of procuring. They never, however, in a single instance, employed their supernatural powers to draw admiration to themselves or to promote their secular interests. Notwithstanding the silence of the history, we may confidently affirm that Paul here, as he did at Lystra, rejected with indignant zeal the honor of being a god; and made the miracles which he performed in Malta subservient to the cause of Christ. A man so eager to do good, who, although a prisoner, does not seem to have been under entire restraint, would not remain inactive during the three months which he spent in the island, and as his wonderful works had gained him the favor of the people, he enjoyed a very favorable opportunity to instruct them in the knowledge of the Gospel. And thus, what we should call an accidental event, the shipwreck of Paul upon an unknown coast, was overruled by Providence as the occasion of introducing Christianity into Malta, where it still exists in the corrupted form which it has assumed in countries subject to the authority of the Pope.

11. ¶ And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

We departed. They probably set sail not earlier than the sixth of the ides of March (*i. e.*, March 10). *Ship of Alexandria.* Malta was in the direct line of the great corn commerce from Alexandria to Puteoli and Rome. This ship, detained probably at Valetta, like Paul's ship from Alexandria, was more fortunate in escaping shipwreck, though arrested in its career by winter. When the Spring of this southern clime approached and navigation opened, this vessel was ready for Julius' use. *Whose sign was* (literally, *with the sign (of) the Dioscuri*). The ancient ships carried at their prow a painted or carved representation of the sign which furnished their name, and at the stern a similar one of their tutelary deity. Sometimes these were one and the same, as appears to have been the case with this ship. Castor and Pollux (the Dioscuri, sons of Zeus), sons of Jupiter and Leda, were considered the tutelary deities of sailors. Castor and Pollux are nothing (1 Cor. viii. 4), but all the ships that sail are the Lord's, and those who sail in them with thanksgiving suffer no harm from any idolatrous banner. Herein those who succeed the Apostle of the Gentiles find consolation, when they set forth with the banner of the cross, but sail in vessels that bear as their banner the golden calf of "money-making."

12. And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days.

This city, the capital of Sicily, on the south-eastern coast of that island, was about eighty miles north from Melita. It was built partly on the adjacent island of Ortygia, and from that circumstance, or as others say, because it included at length several villages, may have received its plural name. The modern Siracusa or Siragessa occupies only a part of the ancient city, *viz.*, Ortygia. They may have stopped here for trade, or in the hope of a better wind.

13. And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli: 14. Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.

Fetched a compass, rather, "coasted about." *Rhegium*—now *Reggio*, a seaport on the S. W. point of the Italian coast, opposite the

N. E. point of Sicily, and at the entrance of the narrow straits of Messina. *After one day the south wind blew*—"a south wind having sprung up," being now favored with a fair wind, for want of which they had been obliged first to stay three days at Syracuse, and then to tack and put in for a day at Rhegium. *The next day to Puteoli*—now Pozzuoli, situated on the northern part of the magnificent bay of Naples, about 180 miles N. of Rhegium, a distance which they might make, running before their "south wind," in about twenty-six hours. The Alexandrian corn-ships enjoyed a privilege peculiar to themselves, of not being obliged to strike their top-sail on landing. By this they were easily recognized as they hove in sight by the crowds that we find gathered on the shore on such occasions. *Found brethren.* How the Gospel reached this place, and who were the instruments of converting these men to Christianity, we are not told. Probably some of the disciples from Jerusalem, who had been scattered abroad in time of persecution, went through Italy preaching the Gospel.

15. And from thence, when the brethren heard of us they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum, and the Three Taverns; whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.
xxi. 5; 3 John vi. 8. Josh. i. 6, 7, 9; 1 Sam. xxx. 6; Ps. xxvii. 14.

Tidings having gone from Puteoli to Rome of Paul's arrival, brethren from the imperial city hastened to meet him, and they meet at Appii Forum and the Three Taverns, two well-known stopping-places on the oldest and most famous Roman roads. "Appii Forum" was a market-place, and Tres Tabernæ, a group of shops and inns, the former about forty miles from Rome, the latter ten miles nearer. The meeting of these brethren gave new inspiration to the Apostle. *He thanked God, and took courage.* Paul attributed their friendship to the right source, the tender compassion of his God, and bold as he was and indifferent to human opposition, he was clearly not indifferent to human love, and human sympathy. It is delightful, from such instances as these, to see that even this great Apostle now when drawing near to the end of his course, was still glad to avail himself of the same aids, and to cling to the same human succors, as we our-

selves. Although, like God's people of old, he doubtless "encouraged himself in the Lord his God," although he possessed His rod and His staff to comfort him, he was still not above the support of a human arm, the ministering kindness of kindred spirits. He who made us, made us weak, suffering, dependent creatures, dependent not merely upon Himself, but upon each other, for much of our peace, comfort and consolation, in traversing this vale of tears, and, doubtless, He made us thus, that we might educate that peculiar faculty of our souls in time, which should form the well-spring of all our joys throughout eternity.

16. And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.—xxiv. 23, xxvii. 3.

Came to Rome. Starting from the Three Taverns, our ambassador, with his company of bondsmen and escort of freemen, would pass the celebrated Alban Hills, and on a summit a little beyond Aricia would cast his first glance upon the imperial Rome. It was itself a magnificent nation, the head of the nations of the earth. He entered the city by the Capenean Gate, where many a conqueror had entered in triumphal procession, but none with a name so notable to posterity as this "prisoner of Christ." *Captain of the guard,* rather, *commander of the camp,* i. e., the Prætorian camp, where the emperor's body-guard was quartered. (See Phil. i. 13.) *Was suffered.* This permission probably resulted from the letters of Festus, expressing that no crime was laid to the charge of Paul; perhaps, also, partly from the favor of Julius and his report of the character and bearing of Paul on the journey. *A soldier*—Prætorian, to whom he was chained. The very imprisonment in which Paul was held favored him. Had he been able to enter into the Jewish synagogues, or to dispute, as at Athens, in the public places with them that met with him, the magistrates would have interfered, and the law would have put him down. But being confined to *his own hired house,* "with the soldier who kept him," he received all who came to him, no man forbidding him; and though he was bound, "the word of God was not bound." Many, we suppose, of his visitors were his own

countrymen, whose lingering prejudices he would endeavor, and often successfully, to remove. But the greater number, probably, were Gentiles; providentially led, through acquaintance or connection, to seek that light which God had set up, ready to enlighten every man.

17. And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans; 18. Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. 19. But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cesar; not that I had aught to accuse my nation of. 20. For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. 21. And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee. 22. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against.

^aChap. xxiv. 12, 13; xxv. 8. ^bChap. xxi. 33, &c. ^cChap. xxiv. 10; xxvi. 31. ^dChap. xxv. 11. ^eChap. xxvi. 6, 7. ^fChap. xxvii. 23; Eph. iii. 1; iv. 1; vi. 20. ^gTim. i. 16; ii. 9; Phil. x. 13. ^hLuke ii. 34; Chap. xxiv. 5, 14; i Peter ii. 12; iv. 14.

After three days. Paul showed his earnestness, in sending for the rulers of the Jews only three days after his arrival at Rome. The three days would probably be spent in intercourse with the Roman Christians, in procuring a lodging, and in refreshing himself after his long journey. By *the chief of the Jews* are here meant the rulers of the synagogues, or the heads of the principal Jewish families at Rome. Paul, thinking that reports prejudicial to him might have been sent and circulated among them, was naturally anxious to justify himself before them, and thus to remove any obstacle which might hinder the reception of the Gospel. *I have committed, or, done nothing, &c.* He held that, so far from abolishing, he fulfilled the law by the Gospel, that Christianity was the true development of Judaism, and that the Christian was the true Jew. His opposition was not against the law, but against its abuse—against the opinion that it was sufficient for justification; but, so far from calling in question, he maintained and defended its divine origin and authority. *Would have let me go, &c.,* would have set me at liberty. Compare xxiv. 22, 23, 26, 27; xxv. 25; xxvi. 31, 32. In all the examinations which the Apostle underwent, before Roman officers and king Agrippa, it became evident that there was no just ground of complaint against

him, and that he ought to have been set at liberty. *When the Jews spake against it.* He speaks mildly: for they had tried, by plotting his murder, to stop his speaking in Palestine. *I was constrained, &c.* His appeal to the emperor had become indispensably necessary, only because the Jews protested against his acquittal, to which the Roman authorities judged him to be entitled.

Because that for, or, on account of, the hope of Israel. By “the hope of Israel” here is meant the Messianic hope—the promise of the Messiah. As if the Apostle had said: “My sufferings are caused on account of my belief in the fulfillment of the hope of Israel.” And this was certainly the case. It was his belief in Jesus as the promised Messiah that was the cause of the hatred of the Jews, and of all those persecutions and sufferings which he endured. *I am bound, literally, encompassed, with this chain,* referring, perhaps, to the fact that the chain encompassed his arm. As already noticed, it was the custom of the Romans to bind their prisoners to soldiers who kept them. Perhaps, however, the expression may be a general allusion to his imprisonment, without necessarily implying that he was always bound to a soldier. *Neither any of the brethren came, shewed, or spake any harm of, or concerning thee.* That is, they neither related the report of others, nor said anything themselves, affecting his character, any more than that of the followers of Christ in general, who were represented everywhere by Jews and Gentiles as a dangerous sect, who sought to destroy every religion on earth but their own. This was a peculiarly favorable circumstance, since it afforded Paul an opportunity to obtain as candid a hearing as any one of the brethren in Christ, and it is no less extraordinary, considering the light in which the Jews in Judea and elsewhere viewed him. It may, perhaps, be partly accounted for from his long confinement as a prisoner in Cesarea, in which situation he would attract less the attention of the public; but certainly the finger of God was in it. *When a man's ways please the Lord, his enemies are at peace with him,* when this is connected with his good and the Divine glory. *Concerning this sect, or*

schismatical party, the reference being to the Christians, to whom Paul notoriously belonged, *we know*, literally, *it is known to us that it is everywhere opposed* (or *contradicted*), i. e., by the Jews, with whom they were in correspondence or communication.

23. And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging, to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.
 Phil. 2. Luke xxiv. 27, Chap. xvii. 3, xix. 8. *xxvi. 6, 22.

When they had appointed him a day, at his own suggestion, perhaps, since by leaving it to them to designate the time he would be more sure of their presence. *Lodging*. Most interpreters identify this with the *hired house* mentioned in verse 30. *There came many to him*, &c. (See on verse 16.) *He expounded*, &c. He furnished a two-fold exposition: he first testified the kingdom of God, i. e., he announced the facts of redemption and of the establishment of the kingdom of God through Jesus Christ, he furnished in the second place certain explanations concerning Jesus, which were derived from the Old Testament and were intended to convince the minds of his hearers. *From morning till evening*. The whole day was occupied, not probably in one formal discourse, but partly in familiar and colloquial discussion on the grand subject. "Who" (says Bengel) "would not wish to have been present? but virtually we are present while listening to those epistles which he dictated from his prison at Rome, and to his other epistolary expositions of Christian truth against the Jews."

24. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.
 *xiv. 1, xvii. 4, xix. 9; Rom. iii. 3.

Such has always been the success of the Gospel; to some it has been a *savor of life unto life*, to others of *death unto death*. (2 Cor. ii. 16.) If all had believed there had been no disagreement, so that all the blame of the division lay on those who would not believe. Perhaps no sermon ever produced the same effect upon all the assembled hearers. Even the discourses of Christ were far from commanding uniform impressions amongst his auditors.

25. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, *Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers*; 26. Saying, Go unto this people, and say,

Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive; 27. For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them, 28. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.
 *Ps. lxxxii. 11, 12; Isa. vi. 9; Jer. v. 21; Eze. viii. 6, 7, xii. 2; Matt. xiii. 14, 15; Rom. xi. 8. *Matt. xxi. 41; Chap. xiii. 46, 47, xviii. 6, xxii. 21, xxvi. 17, 18; Rom. xi. 11.

Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias, &c.

A terrible farewell was this to the unbelievers as they departed. It sounds as the knell of doom. He peals into their ears the soul-startling words of Jehovah to the old prophet. (Isa. vi. 9, 10.) "In the fearful process here indicated," says a modern commentator, "there are three distinguishable agencies expressly or implicitly described—the ministerial agency of the prophet, the judicial agency of God, and the suicidal agency of the people themselves. The original passage makes the first of these most prominent: "Fatten the heart of this people, dull their ears, shut their eyes," &c. The quotation in John xii. 40 draws attention to the second: "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart." That in Matt. xiii. 15, like the one before us, dwells upon the third, and represents the people as destroyed by their own insensibility and unbelief. We have thus a striking and instructive instance of the way in which the same essential truth may be exhibited in different parts of Scripture, under several distinct aspects, or successive phases." *The salvation of God is sent*, &c. The original word here, *sotérion*, is used sometimes for the Author of salvation (as Luke ii. 30), and sometimes, as here, for the preaching of the Gospel. Possibly, God might have given the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, though the Jews had not despised and rejected it.

29. And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

As these were Paul's *last words* to the Jews, the result was that they departed. They left God's word and testimony, and among themselves, now given up to their own folly, they had great reasoning; much *disputation* because they had rejected the truth, much vacillating, asking and seeking because they had refused to receive and believe that which was sure and certain.

30. ¶ And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him.

Dwelt, or, rather, *remained*. *Two whole years, i. e.*, in the state mentioned, with the evident implication that at the end of that time his condition changed. The reader's conclusion is, that the two years completed the term of the Apostle's captivity. *In his own hired house, i. e.*, hired at his own expense. In the bosom of a Christian Church the Apostle could not have been destitute of the means of providing for such an expense. We learn, also, from Phil. iv. 14, 18, that during this captivity Paul received supplies from the Church at Philippi. *Received*—the original word means in its special sense, *received gladly*, because it afforded him such joy to preach the Gospel. (Comp. xv. 4, xviii. 27; see also on verse 16.)

31. Preaching "the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."
4iv. 31, Eph. vi. 19.

Preaching the kingdom—in the very seat of empire of the world. *Which concern the Lord* of that kingdom, *Jesus as Christ*. The kingdom of God, which was promised in the Old Testament, is perfected in the New Testament in and through Jesus. There is no kingdom of God without Jesus, but where Jesus is, there ultimately will the kingdom of God have its full consummation. He who will proclaim the kingdom, let him teach of Jesus, and he who teaches of Jesus let him not forget to proclaim the kingdom. To preach the kingdom of God, and to teach about Jesus is representing the *whole* of the Gospel—"it is the circumference and the center" (see on verse 10). *With all confidence*. Of this confidence of the Apostles at Rome we have additional evidence in the Epistles to the Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians and to Philemon, which were written in that city. They are all fragrant with the oil of joy, wherewith Jesus had anointed him. They also enable us to gather some particulars of his residence, which history has not elsewhere recorded. *No man forbidding him*, better, *unhindered*—outwardly, after so many hindrances were overcome. A victory of God's word. It was in those times considered a very great mercy when the Gospel could be preached without hindrance; it was a source of comfort to teachers, and they diligently employed the

time during which they could enjoy it. But we, on the contrary, whose liberty has so long been established, have well nigh forgotten how great this mercy is. As we have therefore opportunity let us labor to do good. (Gal. vi. 10.)

"The course of the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome (says *Stier*) embraces the whole historical scope of the book; and if, with *Rieger*, we ask, 'When will it again return to Jerusalem?' we may find our question provisionally answered in the Epistle to the Romans, the succeeding book of the New Testament in our arrangement. This reveals, both as regards Jew and Gentile, the whole of God's plan for setting up His kingdom, which is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Here, as has been beautifully observed, "the curtain drops upon the unfinished life of Paul." We read no more of him after this. He disappears forever. It is true that tradition and certain references in one or two of his Epistles have led some to conclude that after this his first imprisonment in Rome, he was released, and returned to visit some of the churches which he had planted. "It is very probable," says *Howson*, "that he went to Spain, and not improbable that he came to Brittany. The general impression is that he was beheaded at Rome, in the last year of the reign of Nero, when Peter was also crucified." All this, however, is at best conjecture; certainty ends with this verse. Curiosity craves for minute information concerning the closing scenes in the life of this wonderful man, but Scripture offers no gratification. Why this? Why is sacred history so fragmentary? There are, no doubt, good reasons. Fuller details are, indeed, unnecessary. Luke has given sufficient memoranda of this great and good man's life to enable us to judge how sublimely he passed through the last scenes. Many years before he had said, "I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the sake of the Lord Jesus." Longer experience had not made him less ready to do or to suffer for the Master whom he served. We possess his parting words: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim. iv. 6-8.)

Thus, like the prophet before him (see 2 Kings ii. 12, 13), who, taken himself from his earthly trials, cast down his mantle to encourage his successor; so has Paul, in

his last recorded sentiments, left for others the comfort wherewith he himself was comforted of God. A crown of glory was prepared for him. But not for him only, the Apostle in labors most abundant, in grace above measure; but for all them also that "love the Lord's appearing;" for all the faithful brethren in every age and country, whose hearts have been directed by the Spirit "to the love of God, and the patient waiting for Christ." (2 Thess. iii. 5.)

1. What was the name of the island at which they escaped? 2. What is said of the barbarous people? 3. What is said of the viper? 4. What did the barbarians say among themselves? 5. What did Paul do with the viper? 6. What did the people say when they saw him uninjured? 7. Who was the chief man of the island? 8. What is said of the father of Publius? 9. Were others in the island healed? 10. What is said of honors conferred? 11. When did Paul and his companions depart? 12. What was the sign of the ship in which they sailed? 13. At what points did they land as they went toward Rome? 14. Who met them at Appii Forum? 15. What disposition was made of Paul at Rome? 16. What was Paul's address to the chief of the Jews? 17. What is said of his "lodging?" 18. When had the Jews great reasoning among themselves? 19. How long did Paul dwell in his own hired house? 20. What is said of him during this time?

APPENDIX A.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE APOSTLES.

SIMON (PETER).

Simon was the son of Jonas, or Jona. This, which signifies *hearing*, was his original name. Hence he is once called Simon Bar-jona, that is, son of Jona. (Matt. xvi. 17.) He was born at Bethsaida. He was a married man, and lived at Capernaum. (Matt. viii. 14; Mark i. 29; Luke iv. 38.) He was a fisherman, and probably associated with his brother Andrew in this business.

The name *Cephas* (a Syrian word signifying a *rock*, and in Latin *Petra*, translated Peter) was given to him when Andrew introduced Simon to our Lord, though he was not called to the special discipleship till some time after this. (Matt. iv. 18-20.) The name *Peter*, does not denote constancy, or firmness, which were not peculiar traits of Peter's character, but strength and boldness. The new name did not wholly supersede the old one, as in the case of Saul and Paul (Acts xiii. 9), for we find the latter still employed (Luke xiv. 37, xxii. 31, xxiv. 34; Matt. xvi. 16, 17; Acts xv. 14), and throughout the Gospel of John, and in the opening words of Peter's second epistle, both names are combined. The religious life of this Apostle, from its commencement to its close, is filled with the most interesting incidents. His two epistles, the date usually assigned to which is between A. D. 64 and 66, and which are called *general*, because they were not addressed to any particular Church or community of believers, constitute a valuable part of the inspired writings.

It may not be doubted that Peter was a spokesman to the college of Apostles, like the foreman of a jury or the chairman of a large committee—a position for which he was qualified by his forwardness of speech and action, and which was naturally accorded to him as one of the oldest, most active, most influential, and most faithful of those who had “seen the Lord.” The story that he was Bishop of Rome, upon which popery asserts her claim to supremacy, has no historical value.

There is no satisfactory evidence that Peter had any superiority of rank, or office, among the Apostles, for the following reasons: 1. The fact that he is named first on the catalogue of the Apostles does not imply that he had. This was owing to the priority of his call. According to Matt. iv. 18, 21, it appears that Peter and Andrew, James and John, were called the earliest to attend constantly on the Saviour, with reference to becoming His public servants. Matthew and Luke mention Andrew next to Peter, as being his brother, and one of Christ's first disciples. The names of James and John

follow, as having been called next, and being persons of great eminence for piety and usefulness, and James is placed before John as being the elder brother. The names of the others seem to be placed nearly, at least, in the order in which they became disciples—Judas (though, perhaps, not last called), being last named, because he was the traitor. It is certain that the Apostles are not ranged in the catalogues according to their dignity, else would the order of the names have been exactly the same in all the Evangelists, which it is not, else, too, it must follow that John and Matthew, whose praise is in all the Churches, on account of their writings, were inferior to Apostles who are scarce once named, except in the catalogues. 2. Whatever honor or authority Peter received from Christ, in establishing the first institutions of Christianity, and declaring what it enjoined and from what it released (Matt. xvi. 18, 19), the other Apostles also received. (Matt. xviii. 18; John xx. 23; 1 Cor. v. 3, 5; Eph. ii. 20; Rev. xxi. 14.) 3. It is plain that the other Apostles and first Churches conceded to Peter no primacy, or authority over his brethren (Matt. xxiii. 8-12; Acts viii. 14, xii. 12, xv. 6-21; 2 Cor. xii. 11; Gal. ii. 2, xi. 14); and that he did not claim it for himself. (1 Peter v. 1-4.) 4. Peter was frequently betrayed into the gravest errors, both of judgment and of practice; he was repeatedly rebuked with great severity by Christ, and he alone of the eleven went so far as to deny his Master, and continued under the reproach of that apostasy, until the risen Saviour condescended to restore him. (John xxi. 15-17.)

Subsequent to Peter's history, as recorded in the Acts, he seems to have lived in the East, as one of his epistles is addressed to the Churches of Asia Minor, and was written from Babylon. It is supposed, from John xxi. 18, 19, that the death predicted of Peter, and expressed by the stretching forth of his hands, and his being bound by cords, was that of crucifixion. Accordingly, ecclesiastical history testifies that he suffered martyrdom, by crucifixion, at Rome, in the reign of the Emperor Nero. It is added that this death, and the tortures connected with it, were endured by the venerable Apostle with marvelous patience and fortitude, and that, deeming himself unworthy to die in precisely the same manner and posture as his Lord, he asked and obtained permission to be crucified with the head downward—a posture which could not fail greatly to aggravate the tortures of the cross.

ANDREW.

Andrew was a native of Bethsaida, and brother (whether the elder or younger is uncertain) of Peter. He, too, was called from his fishing-net to be a fisher of men, and was among the first called. (John i. 41; Matt. iv. 18.) The name Andrew was Greek. He probably had a Hebrew name besides, which had been gradually superseded by the Greek one. It was very common for the Jews of that age to have double names—one native and one foreign. (Comp. Acts i. 22, ix. 36, xii. 12, xiii. 1-9.) Andrew was first a disciple of John the Baptist, whom he left to follow our Saviour, after the testimony of John. (John. i. 40.) He set the first example of brotherhood in Christ, and was the first to proclaim, "We have found the Messiah." (John i. 40-42.) He is mentioned several times in the Gospels, though is not prominent. See Matt. iv. 18-20; Mark xiii. 3; John i. 35-40; vi. 3-13; xii. 22.) Except in the catalogue (chap. i. 14), his name does not occur once in the *Acts*. In the catalogues of Matthew and Luke, Andrew appears second, but in those of Mark and the Acts, fourth. Some of the ancients are of the opinion that he preached in Scythia, others, in Greece, others, in Epirus, or Argos. He is said to have died as a martyr at Patræ in Achaia, being sentenced to be executed on a cross of peculiar form, by Egæus, proconsul of that province.

JAMES THE SON OF ZEBEDEE.

James is the Greek form of Jacob, and it is somewhat remarkable that it now reappears for the first time since the patriarch himself. James, and John (here men-

tioned with him), are in most passages of the Gospels named together, and from the prevailing order it is inferred that John was the younger. They occupy a conspicuous position in the history of our Lord. (Matt. v. 7; Luke viii. 51; Matt. xvii. 1; Mark ix. 2; Luke ix. 28; Matt. xxvi. 37; Mark xiii. 3, xiv. 33.) Their father was Zebedee, their mother Salome, whom some recent critics identify with the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus, in John xix. 25. Zebedee, whose occupation his two sons followed, was a fisherman of Bethsaida, on the Lake of Tiberias, who, from having a vessel of his own, and hired servants (Mark i. 20), appears to have been in good circumstances for his station in life. We know nothing of him beyond his interposing no refusal when his sons were called to leave him (Matt. iv. 21), and his disappearance from the Gospel narrative leads to the inference that his death set Salome free to join her children in ministering to the Lord. Luke viii. 3.)

For the call of James and John to the discipleship, see Matt. iv. 21, 22. It occurred in the Spring or Summer of 27. For a full year after this we lose sight of James. He is then, in the Spring of 28, called to the Apostleship with his eleven brethren. (Luke vi. 13.) In the list of the Apostles given us by Mark, and in the Book of Acts, his name occurs next to that of Simon Peter; in the lists by Matthew and Luke it comes third. (See Mark v. 37; Luke viii. 51; Matt. xvii. 1; Mark ix. 2; Luke ix. 28; Matt. xxvi. 37; Mark xiv. 33, xiii. 3.) On the night before the crucifixion he was present at the Agony in the Garden. On the day of the ascension he is mentioned as persevering with the rest of the Apostles and disciples in prayer. (Acts i. 13.) His zeal seems to have been ardent and strong.

The surname *Boanerges* was given to James and John, probably at the time of the Twelve Apostles, or possibly before. (Mark iii. 17.) This term, which is no doubt a double modification (Greek and Aramaic) of some Hebrew phrase, which cannot now be certainly identified, is translated by Mark, *The Sons of Thunder*. They were doubtless so named with reference to their burning and impetuous spirit, which twice exhibits itself in its unchastened form (Luke ix. 54; Mark ix. 37); and which, when moulded by the Spirit of God, taking different shapes, led James to be the first Apostolic martyr, and John to become in an especial manner the Apostle of Love. James was the first of the Apostles who died. He was slain by Herod with the sword, shortly before the day of the Passover, A. D. 44. Clement of Alexandria says, that such was his firmness in death that the officer at his execution was converted thereby to Christianity, and was martyred with him.

JOHN.

To the particulars given of this Apostle in the foregoing sketch the following must be added. It is generally believed that John was the youngest of the Apostles, but it is not agreed what age he was of when called to follow Christ; some state it at twenty-five or twenty-six years, others at twenty-two, and others conceive him to have been about the same age as his Lord. His character appears to have been affectionate. The most intense affection, however, is compatible with an ardent temper and ambitious spirit, of both which qualities we find some traces in him. (Matt. xx. 24; Luke ix. 49.) He enjoyed, in an eminent degree, the special intimacy of Christ. To him belonged the distinction, in the Apostolic band, of being "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and this love was returned with a more single, undivided heart by him than by any other. He was present at several scenes in our Lord's history, from which most of the other disciples were excluded. His attachment to Jesus was remarkable toward the end of His earthly course. John was a witness to the interesting circumstances which occurred after Christ's resurrection. The tradition which ascribes to him a life of celibacy receives some confirmation from the absence of his name in 1 Cor. ix. 5.

Ecclesiastical historians state that John remained several years at Jerusalem, or at least in Judea, till after the death of Mary, who had been committed to his care. This is corroborated by the Acts of the Apostles, in which we find him at Jerusalem, as one of the chief Apostles of the circumcision. At first we find him with Peter working miracles, and preaching the Gospel with great success and boldness. John was also one of the Apostles present at the council held at Jerusalem, in the year 49 or 50, and before this time he had, probably, not traveled beyond Judea. But the ancient writers inform us that after the death of Mary he traveled into Asia Minor, where he founded many churches, making Ephesus his principal residence, and which continued to be such until, toward the close of Domitian's reign, he was banished to the isle of Patmos, where he wrote the Apocalypse, or Book of Revelation. Being released on the accession of Nerva, it seems he returned to Ephesus, where he wrote his Gospel and three Epistles, and where he died, the last of the Apostles, in the third year of the emperor Trajan, when he must have been about one hundred years of age. (See Preface to Gospel of John.)

PHILIP.

The name is an old Greek one, and is found everywhere in ancient history. Philip was of Bethsaida (John i. 44), and apparently was among the Galilean peasants of that district who flocked to hear the preaching of the Baptist. He is not to be confounded with Philip the Evangelist, spoken of in Acts vi. 5, xxi. 8. The statement that Jesus found him (John i. 43), implies previous seeking. He was the introducer of Nathanael, upon whom our Lord pronounced so high a commendation (John i. 48). He apparently was among the first company of disciples who were with the Lord at the commencement of His history, at the marriage of Cana, and on His first appearance as a prophet in Jerusalem. (John ii.) In the lists of the Apostles his name is uniformly coupled with that of Bartholomew. We find him present at the feeding of the Galilean crowds which were miraculously fed. (John vi. 5-9.) To him the Gentile proselytes (Hellenes) expressed their wish for an interview with Jesus. (John xii. 20, 22.) He was distinguished for his frankness, through which he ventured to open every difficulty to the Saviour. (John vi. 7, xii. 22, xiv. 8, 9.) He was among the company of disciples at Jerusalem after the Ascension (Acts i. 13), and on the day of Pentecost. After this all is uncertain, yet it is said that he labored in Phrygia, and died at Hierapolis, probably as a martyr.

BARTHOLOMEW.

Bartholomew is a patronymic, the son of *Tolmai*. His own name nowhere appears in the first three Gospels: and it has been not improbably conjectured that he is identical with Nathanael. (John i. 45.) Nathanael there appears to have been first brought to Jesus by Philip, and in the three first catalogues of the Apostles Bartholomew and Philip appear together. It is difficult also to imagine, from the place assigned to Nathanael in John xxi. 2, that he can be other than an Apostle. If this may be assumed, for which there seems to be strong reason, he was born at Cana of Galilee, and was known for his uprightness. (John i. 47.) He is said to have preached the Gospel in India, meaning thereby, probably, Arabia Felix, which was sometimes called India by the ancients. It is an authentic fact of ecclesiastical history, that a copy of Matthew's Gospel, in Hebrew, was found by Pantæus in India, left there by Bartholomew. Some allot Armenia to him as a mission-field, and report him to have been there flayed alive and then crucified with his head downward.

THOMAS.

Thomas was also called *Didymus*, the two names being Aramaic and Greek synonyms, both meaning a *twin*. He was probably a Galilean, as well as the other Apostles,
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but the place of his birth and the circumstances of his calling are unknown. Besides the lists of the Apostles, he is named eight times in the Gospel of John (xi. 16, xiv. 5, xx. 24-29, xxi. 2). In the three catalogues of the Apostles by the Evangelists he is coupled with Matthew, and with Philip in Acts i. 13. His character was that of a man slow to believe, seeing all the difficulties of a case, subject to despondency, viewing things on the darker side, and yet full of ardent love for his Master. (John xi. 16, xiv. 5, xx. 25.) In the famous statue of him by Thorwaldsen, in the church at Copenhagen, he stands with the rule in his hand for the due measuring of evidence and argument. "He doubted," says *Augustine*, "that we might not doubt." The earlier traditions, as he lived in the fourth century, represent him as preaching in Parthia or Persia, and as finally buried at Edessa. His martyrdom (whether in Persia or India) is said to have been effected by a lance. The Christians of the Syrian Church in India claim him as their founder, and call themselves by his name.

MATTHEW.

For a sketch of Matthew's history see "Preface" to his Gospel.

JAMES THE LESS.

Was the son of Alphaeus. He is called by Mark (xv. 40) James the Less, either because he was younger than the other James, the son of Zebedee, or smaller in stature, or called later to be an Apostle; and appears to be that James whom Paul calls "the Lord's brother." (Gal. i. 19.) *Alphaeus* seems to be a Greek modification of an Aramaic name, of which *Clopas* (John xix. 25) is supposed to be another form. Now, as Clopas was the husband of the Virgin Mary's sister (John xix. 25), his son would be the cousin of our Lord, and might, according to a common Hebrew idiom, be called brother. (See Gen. xiii. 8; 2 Sam. i. 26; Acts vii. 25, 26, ix. 17.) Alphaeus appears to have died before the commencement of our Lord's ministry, and after his death it would seem that his wife and her sister, a widow like herself, and in poor circumstances, lived together in one house, generally at Nazareth (Matt. xiii. 55), but sometimes also at Capernaum (John ii. 12) and Jerusalem (Acts i. 14). James the Less is mentioned with peculiar distinction. (Acts xii. 76, xv. 13, xxi. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 7; Gal. i. 19, and ii. 9, 12.) He was put to death in the year 62, and tradition says that he was thrown by the Jews from the battlements of the temple, and then dispatched with a fuller's club, while on his knees, and in the act of praying for his murderers. His Epistle was written in the year 61 or 62. It is called *general*, because it was not addressed to any particular Church, but to the whole Jewish nation—to the *twelve tribes scattered abroad*. (Ch. i. 1.)

LEBBEUS.

Besides being also named *Thaddeus*, (Mark iii. 18) he is called by Luke (vi. 16) *Judas, the brother of James*. It is generally accepted that these were three names for one and the same person, who is therefore said by Jerome to have been *trionymus*. As the words *the brother* (in Luke) do not occur in the original, it has been a question whether the ellipsis should not be supplied with the words *the son*, as the ellipsis is supplied here respecting James. The probability is, however, that he was the brother of James the less, son of Mary (sister of the Virgin Mother), and therefore cousin-german of the Saviour. He is the "Judas, not Iscariot," mentioned by John xiv. 22. His given name, doubtless, was Judah, and his two surnames, Lebbeus and Thaddeus, signifying *heartly* or *courageous*, are regarded by some as denoting him as a spirited, brave man. He was the author of the short Epistle near the end of the New Testament canon, which was written, as many have supposed, about A. D. 65, but it is by no means certain. Nothing is certainly known of the later history of the Apostle. It is impossible to determine from conflicting traditions whether he died a natural death, or was martyred, but Edessa seems to be the place where his earthly career terminated.

SIMON THE CANAANITE, (or, properly, the *Canaanite*.)

He is referred to in Luke vi. 15 as "Simon called Zelotes." The two epithets attached to his name have the same signification, the latter being the Greek translation of the former, which is Chaldee. Both seem to point him out as belonging to the Jewish faction called *Zealots*, which was animated by a most bitter and uncompromising zeal against the Roman rule, as a thing accursed, unlawful, and by every means to be put down, and which played so conspicuous a part in the last defense of Jerusalem. If Simon was really a member of this fierce sect, it was a great change for him to be placed thus intimately near to Him who was "meek and lowly in heart." Possibly, as some suppose, the name was given to him on account of personal zeal for the law. Simon is not mentioned in the New Testament out of the catalogues of the Apostles. He is reported, on very doubtful authority, to have preached in Egypt, Cyrene, and Mauretania, and to have been crucified in Judea, under Domitian. A modern writer remarks, that, while Matthew (x. 4) associates Judas Iscariot with Simon the Canaanite, Luke associates him with Jude, the brother of James. This, he thinks, arose not from a varying tradition, but from a varying practice of our Lord, who allowed not Judas always to retain the same companion, for fear of his corrupting influence.

JUDAS ISCARIOT.

Judas is uniformly mentioned last on the lists, with a brand of infamy. Some suppose the appellative *Iscariot* to signify "The Zealot," others, that it is derived from a word signifying *suspension*, and refers to the manner of his death (Matt. xxvii. 5); others, still, that it means "the man of Carioth," or Keriath, a city of Judah. (Josh. xv. 25.) The last explanation is now generally accepted, and if it be right, Judas is the only one of the Apostles whom we have any reason to regard as not a Galilean. Judas came to an awful end. (Matt. xxvi. 34; John xvii. 2; Acts i. 25; see notes below.)

Such were the persons (Matthias afterward being chosen in the room of Judas, and Paul being subsequently selected) Jesus chose to be His Apostles—His assistants and coadjutors in the establishment and administration of His kingdom. It was, indeed, natural to expect that in making a choice He should look to men of influence, authority and weight, that being Himself destitute of all the advantages of rank, power, wealth and learning, He should endeavor to compensate for these defects in His own Person, by the contrary qualities of His associates, by connecting Himself with some of the most powerful, opulent, learned and eloquent of His time. In pursuing an opposite course, however, as He did, and choosing plain, humble, unpretending men, of low birth and low occupations, without learning or education (excepting Paul, who was a scholar), without any extraordinary endowments, natural or acquired, without anything, in short, to recommend them, but their simplicity, integrity and purity of character, He meant to show that He was *above* all such great instruments and agencies as the world might supply, and that He had far other resources, far different auxiliaries, to call into His support, in comparison with which all the wealth, magnificence, power and wisdom of the world were trivial and contemptible things. (1 Cor. i. 26.) Such selection, however, is not an argument against learning in the ministry *now*, unless it can be shown that the ministry now has power to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead and cast out devils.

Why Judas was chosen by Jesus, when it was known that He would betray Him, it must be admitted, is surprising, and at variance with the course which human wisdom would have marked out. (See 1 Cor. i. 25.) Thus was prophecy fulfilled, and

thus was the great purpose accomplished of redeeming the human race by Christ's death. (See Ps. xli.; Acts i. 16.) It may probably serve to solve some of the mystery of this case, to look at the following lessons which it teaches: 1. It is possible to be with Jesus, to hear Him night and day, to *appear* to be religious, and to preach holy doctrines, and yet to perish everlastingly. 2. Although the Church is to desire and aim at absolute purity, it cannot be expected, even in her highest places, during her militant condition, and it is her duty to guard against terror and despair, when great defections do occur. 3. It is the duty of ministers to guard against avarice, hypocrisy, and all unfaithfulness. (Matt. xxvi. 34; John xvii. 12; Acts i. 25.) 4. The choice of Judas supplied a powerful indirect evidence of the purity and blamelessness of our Lord's conduct and ministry, as; if anything *could* have been proved against Him, Judas was exactly the witness who could have proved it, but he had nothing to allege to Christ's disadvantage. (See Matt. xxvii. 4.) 5. Then, again, look how Christ treated Judas—He warned him (Matt. vi. 19–21; Mark vii. 21–23; Luke xii. 10–20), He left him free to go (John vi. 67, xiii. 27), with long-suffering He endured him (John xiii. 11), and finally, with majesty, He removed him.

APPENDIX B.

DEMONIACAL POSSESSIONS.

The subject of demoniacal possessions has given rise to much discussion. Some make the account of them merely symbolic without basis of fact, others regard them as mere diseases; others still look upon the narratives of them as mere accommodations to the error and superstition of the age in which they were written. In support of the common, simple and ancient interpretation of these cases, and as relating to the entire subject in its general bearings, we submit the considerations following:

The whole system of Bible demonology presupposes one arch enemy of God and man, finite yet powerful, an archangel of evil, who is the mightiest finite representative of wickedness revealed to us in the universe. (See notes on Matt. iv. 1.) He is known in the Old Testament history as Belial, Satan, and perhaps as Azazel. In the New Testament he is Satan, Beelzebub, the devil, and the prince of devils, the word *diabolos*, devil, being the corresponding Greek word for the Hebrew *Satan*. Under him there are *demons*, or inferior evil spirits—a kingdom with its subordinate ministers—"the devil and his angels." This is the acknowledged meaning of the word. Thus it is translated in James ii. 19, and rightly, too, for it cannot with propriety be applied to any other beings, nor well admit of any other translation than "the devils believe and tremble." Thus, also, in the Gospels, the same beings that are named *demons*, are named also *spirits*, and *unclean spirits*, and *evil*, and *wicked spirits*. (Matt. xii. 43, 45, x. 1, viii. 16, xvii. 18; Luke xi. 24, 26, iv. 33, &c., ix. 1, iv. 41, ix. 42; Mark i. 23, iii. 11, ix. 25, 26), showing that these names are synonymous terms. It further appears that demons are beings of the same kind, of the same nature as *Satan* and *Beelzebub*, the prince or chief of the demons, for the reasoning of Jesus (Matt. xiii. 22, 32; Mark iii. 22, 30; Luke xi. 14, 26) shows that the casting out demons by *Beelzebub*, is the same as casting out demons by *Satan*, and that *Satan's* casting out *demons* is casting out *himself*. So, too, when the Seventy returned to our Saviour (Luke x. 17, 18), He considered the fall of demons as the fall of *Satan*, and Peter spoke of the demoniacs under the name and notion of "oppressed with the devil." (Acts x. 38.)

That the possessions in question were not mere *diseases*, such as epilepsy, mania and melancholy, we think it impossible to deny. That there was a substratum of disease, which, in many cases, helped to lay open to the deeper evil, and upon which it was superinduced, there can be no doubt, but the scheme which confounds these cases with those of disease cannot, even setting aside the testimony of Josephus, and other historians, that possession in those times was no uncommon case, be sustained by any reverent handler of God's Word.

There is a distinction everywhere drawn in the New Testament between natural diseases and demoniacal possessions. In Matt. iv. 24 there is mention made of four classes of the afflicted. 1. All the sick taken with divers diseases and torments. 2. Those possessed with devils. 3. The lunatic. 4. Paralytics. In Matt. viii. 16 there is a distinction made between *healing the sick*, and *casting out spirits*. Luke, likewise (who was himself a physician), distinguishes (iv. 40, 41) between *healing* and *casting out*, as well as between *diseases* and *devils*. How could it be said that common diseases were *cast out*, and that they *came out crying and saying* anything, especially acknowledging Christ as the Son of God! (See Mark i. 23, 24, 32, xvi. 17, 18; Luke vi. 17, 18; Matt. viii. 29; Mark i. 24, v. 7; Luke iv. 41, &c.) Besides, the unclean spirits are said to "enter into" and "depart out" of those whom they possess, and remain out. They speak and are spoken to, both while within their victims and after they have come out, neither of which things could be affirmed of *diseases*. Every expression that Jesus makes use of with respect to these demoniacs plainly supposes them to be really possessed. He addresses the evil spirit as distinct from the man. (Mark i. 25 ix. 25; v. 8; Luke iv. 35.) In His confidential discourses with His disciples He recognized this distinction. (Matt. x. 8, and especially xvii. 21.) In the charge He gave to the Twelve He distinguished between the casting out of devils and the healing of diseases. (Luke ix. 1.) When charged with casting out devils (Matt. xii. 24) He did not deny the possibility of such a thing. He bade the demons to be silent. (Mark i. 25.) He refers to a particular "kind" of demons. (Matt. xvii. 21.) In addition to all this, it must be borne in mind that the possessed had an invariable dislike and dread of our Lord. They do not appear ever to have come to Jesus of their own accord; but, with one exception, to have been brought to him by others. In that exceptional case, as in all the others, their antipathy and terror seem to have been extreme. "Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God." Surely this infatuated sympathy with their oppressors, and their no less infatuated antipathy to and avoidance of their Deliverer, is something more and something worse than madness. Further, we find that Jesus has represented the casting out of demons as a necessary part of His own work. Very emphatically he sends this message to Herod: "I must cast out demons and do cures to-day and to-morrow." (Luke xii. 32.) He argues from His performance of this work to the truth of His mission, and the advent of God's reign. "If I by the finger of God cast out demons, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." (Matt. xii. 28.) And over their ejection by His disciples in His name, He rejoiced in spirit, as the beginning and earnest of the downfall of Satan's power, saying, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." How then shall all this be accounted for if demoniacs were madmen of whatever sort?

Now it cannot be supposed that the Evangelists wrote and that our Lord spoke on this subject, merely in a figurative manner, and "in accordance with the belief of the time, and with a view to be clearly understood." Accommodation is possible, indeed, when, in things indifferent, language is used which, although scientifically or etymologically inaccurate, yet conveys a true impression, or when, in things not indifferent, a declaration of truth (1 Cor. iii. 1, 2), or a moral law (Matt. xix. 8) is given, true or right as far as it goes, but imperfect, because of the imperfect progress of its recipients. But certainly here the matter was not indifferent. The age was one of little faith and great superstition, its characteristic the acknowledgment of God as a distant law-giver, not an inspirer of men's hearts. This superstition in things of far less moment was denounced by our Lord. Can it be supposed that He would sanction, and the Evangelists be permitted to record forever, an idea in itself false, which has constantly been the stronghold of superstition? If the Evangelists use language with such extraordinary freedom, if they make such amazing concessions to the prejudices and errors of men, no person can have any distinct view of what was in fact their meaning—no one can be certain when they relate things as they were in truth, and when

they relate them as they appeared to vulgar and prejudiced minds. All the ideas which we can have of the man Christ Jesus, who flattered no popular prejudices, who was not only the truth-speaker, but the truth itself, and who came into the world not to make a lie the basis of His mission, but to put an end to all deceptions, to all hypocrisies, to all falsehoods, compel us to believe that He would not have used language which would have upheld and confirmed so great and mischievous an error in the minds of men, as the supposition of Satanic influence, which did not in truth exist.

The distinguished feature of the condition of those whom our Lord and His Apostles signalized by the name of demoniacs, was the complete or incomplete loss of the sufferer's reason or power of will, his actions, his words, and almost his thoughts were mastered by the evil spirit (Mark i. 24, v. 7; Acts xix. 15), till his personality seemed to be destroyed, or, if not destroyed, so overborne as to produce the consciousness of a two-fold will within him, like that sometimes felt in a dream. Plato affirms that "demoniacs do not use their own dialect or tongue, but that of the demons who have entered into them." Lucian says: "The patient is silent, the demon returns the answer to the question asked." Apollonius thus addresses a youth supposed to be possessed: "I am treated contumeliously by the demon, and not by thee." (Comp. Matt. viii. 28 and 31; Mark v. 2, ix. 12; Luke viii. 27, 32.)

We are not to suppose that those who were possessed by devils, were eminently wicked, or in the highest degree offensive to God, and hence they were allowed to be so possessed. Though they were greatly guilty, yet they were not the guiltiest of men. With the exception of Judas, whose case was specifically different from the others, such persons were treated by the Saviour as objects of compassion rather than of condemnation. They may have been guilty of what opened the door and courted the inrush, as it were, of the evil spirits by which they were inhabited, but still their case, in the main, was misfortune—more misfortune than it was crime. Hence, there was in them a groaning under the tyranny they endured, and a piercing cry was continually heard for deliverance. However mysterious it may be, it may not be doubted that, like all God's ways of dealing with men, possession was meant to serve the great ends of moral discipline. Although it might appear, like insanity, so to overbear the reason, and conscience, and will, as to suspend responsibility, it can be readily understood to have formed the most important exercise of the principles and dispositions of all with whom those "vexed with the devil" were related in social and family bonds, as in the beautiful and blessed example of the woman of Canaan and her daughter. And in whatsoever way, or to whatsoever effect, all affliction, including insanity itself subserves the great moral purpose of human life, the same end might be equally accomplished by the worst and most violent assaults of the demon's power.

In regard to demoniacal possessions, the Bible, as in many other things, without contradicting ordinary experience, yet advances to a region whither human science cannot follow. The state itself cannot be fully explained, nor need the skeptical complain of this till they have explained mental derangement. The limits and mutual reactions of the spiritual, mental and corporeal faculties in man have as yet baffled all the researches of science.

To the question, Why were demoniacal possessions so numerous at the commencement of the Christian era? the following answer has been given: "Other forms of affliction have had their day and place as well as this. If the fact were, as seems likely, that about those times men were more addicted than ordinarily to sorcery and divination (Acts xix. 18, 21), might not this, according to the rules of Divine judgment, have provoked this special visitation? Or, can it be thought unnatural, that with the knowledge that their time was short, the evil spirits should then, so far as permitted, have thus put forth their malice and activity to the uttermost? (Rev. xii. 2.) And

as regarded our Lord and the ends of His mission, what was so fitted to confirm His claims, and to illustrate His work in the eye of a sense-bound people, as the opportunity thus afforded for the manifestation of His power over the enemy? The demoniacs recovered by His word to a sound body and a right mind, were more convincing trophies of His power, and more palpable representatives of His work, than were His own disciples, in whom the effect of His influence was chiefly inward and spiritual. Hence He once and again refers to His casting out of demons, not simply like His other miracles, as the proof of His Divine mission in general, but as special evidence of His work and errand, as manifested to destroy the works of the devil, and to establish His own kingdom of grace."

Is it asked, Why do not demoniacs appear at the present day? To this inquiry a three-fold reply may be made. 1. Even admitting that they do not, the most profound observers in mental and psychological science have remarked that certain supernaturalisms seem to affect the human system in particular ages, then disappear, and are the subjects of skepticism in a later era. Phenomena of this kind took place in the middle ages which are unknown now. 2. Yet there are cases, especially of men given over to delirium tremens, which exhibit a terrible approximation to possession, and which, if Satan's power were at the present time in the manifest ascendant, would very possibly develop a clear possession by the power of the evil ones. The same may be said of the habitually lustful, and the opium eater. And how much of the diabolical mingles with the so-called *spiritism* of the present day, may be matter of serious consideration; certainly its phenomena belong not to the Divine, but to the *lower*, if not the *infernal* order of the invisible powers. 3. The might of hell, we cannot doubt, has been greatly broken by the coming of the Son of God in the flesh, and with this the grosser manifestations of its power. (See Luke x. 18.) Satan's rage and violence, it is to be believed, are continually hemmed in and hindered by the preaching of the Word. In heathen lands, where the great conflict between light and darkness begins by the first in-coming of the Gospel, manifestations are sometimes seen not unlike those in the days of Jesus.

AN HISTORICAL INDEX

OF ALL THE PERSONS, PLACES, ETC., MENTIONED IN THE
GOSPELS AND THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

AARON (a *teacher*, a hill), the brother of Moses; a progenitor of Elizabeth, the wife of Zacharias. Luke i. 5;—the Israelites' request of him in the wilderness; Acts vii. 40.

ABEL (*mourning, vanity, vapor*), murdered by his brother Cain. His blood alluded to by our Lord, Matt. xxiii. 35; Luke xi. 51.

ABIA (*will of the Lord*), called also *Abijam*, son of Rehoboam, and a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 7.)

ABIATHAR (*excellent father*), high-priest when David ate the shew-bread. (Mark ii. 26.)

ABILENE (*weeping, mourning*), a small region of Syria between mounts Libanus and Anti-Libanus; and of which Lysanias was tetrarch. (Luke iii. 1.)

ABIUD (*father of praise*), son of Zerubbabel, and a progenitor of Christ. (Matt. i. 13.)

ABOMINATION of Desolation. The Roman army besieging Jerusalem; of which the ensigns and images were brought into the Temple, and placed over against the eastern gate where the Romans sacrificed to them. (Matt. xxiv. 15; Luke xxi. 20, 21.)

ABRAHAM (*father of a great multitude*), a progenitor of Christ. (Matt. i. 1.) Our Lord rebukes the Jews for boasting of Abraham as their father. (John viii. 37-53; Matt. iii. 9; Luke iii. 8, 34. Also alluded to in Luke i. 55, 73, iii. 34, xiii. 28, xvi. 23, 24, 30, xix. 9; John viii. 33; Acts vii. 2, xiii. 26.)

ACELDAMA (*the field of blood*), the field bought with the thirty pieces of silver that betrayed our Lord, and assigned to be a burial-place for strangers. The earth had been dug from it to make earthenware, hence it was called the "*Potter's Field*." (Matt. xxvii. 7-10.) And because of the violent death of Judas, it is supposed to have derived the name of *Aceldama*, "the field of blood." (Acts i. 19.) It was outside the southern wall of Jerusalem.

ACHAIA, a province in the south of Greece, comprising the northern portion of the Peloponnesus, and of which *Corinth* was the capital. (Acts xviii. 1, 12; xix. 21.)

ACHAZ, or *Ahaz* (*taking, seeing*), son and successor of Jotham, king of Judah, and a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 9.)

ACHIM (*rising again, confirming*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Matt. i. 14.)

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, the history of the infant Church for *thirty years* after Christ's death, written by Luke. It begins with the ascension of our Lord A. D. 33 (Acts i.

3-11), and concludes with Paul's first arrival in Rome, a prisoner two whole years for the Gospel, A. D. 63. (xxviii. 30, 31.) The first part of "The Acts" is chiefly occupied with the life of Peter, and the latter part with that of Paul; yet many important incidents respecting Paul have been found omitted, which his epistles supply to us.

ADAM (*red earth*), our first parent, in whom all fell. A progenitor of Christ. (Luke iii. 38.)

ADDI (*witness, traveler*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 28.)

ADRAMYTIIUM (*mansion of death, a commonality*), a maritime town of Asia Minor, at the foot of mount Ida, opposite Lesbos; famous for its shipping trade; a vessel from which conveyed Paul to Rome. (Acts xxvii. 1, 2.)

ADRIA, the *Adriatic Sea*, including the Ionian and Sicilian Seas, and the waters washing the western side of Crete. (Acts xxvii. 27.)

AGAUS (*a locust, a father's feast*), a prophet who foretold the famine in the reign of Claudius, in A. D. 44 (Acts xi. 28), and the imprisonment of Paul by the Jews, (Acts xxi. 10.)

AGRIPPA (*sick, sorrowful*), or *Herod Agrippa, II.*, was the son of Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great; he was a favorite of Claudius, in whose court he continued some time, and having obtained from the emperor the provinces of Gaulanitis, Trachonitis, Batanæa, Paneas and Abilene, lately held by Lysanias, he left Rome about A. D. 53. When Festus arrived as governor of Judea, Agrippa went to Cesarea to salute him, A. D. 60, and there, in company with his sister Bernice, he heard Paul, and "almost" became a Christian. (Acts xxv. 13, 22, 26, xxvi. 1-32.) Nero added other districts to his rule; and when the Jews rebelled against Rome, A. D. 66, Agrippa united with the Roman power, led his forces against Jerusalem, after the taking of which in A. D. 70, he retired to Rome, where he died, A. D. 90.

Alabaster Box. By the English word *Alabaster* is to be understood both that kind which is also known by the name of *gypsum*, as well as the *Oriental alabaster*, which is so much valued on account of its translucency, and for its variety of colored streakings, red, yellow, gray, &c., which it owes, for the most part, to the admixture of oxides of iron. Both these kinds of alabaster, but especially the latter, are and have been long used for various ornamental purposes, such as in the fabrication of vases, boxes, &c. The ancients considered alabaster (carbonate of lime) to be the best material in which to preserve their ointments. "Unguents," says *Pliny*, "keep best in alabaster."

ALEXANDER (*helper of men, strong, virtuous*)—(1) a son of Simon, who carried our Lord's cross. (Mark xv. 21.)

—(2) lately high priest, and among those who examined Peter and John, when brought before the Sanhedrim for healing a man lame from his birth at the gate called "Beautiful." (Acts iv. 6.)

—(3) a Jew of Ephesus, who encouraged the tumult raised by Demetrius. (Acts xix. 33.)

ALEXANDRIA (*irritation, prohibition*), a celebrated city in Egypt, founded by Alexander the Great (B. C. 332), whence its name, and colonized by him with Greeks and Jews. It was the capital of Egypt under the Ptolemies, whose encouragement of learning brought hither the most celebrated philosophers of the East, as well as of Greece and Rome; whence it became the hot-bed of Gnosticism, and other heresies. It was the Alexandrine Jews who persecuted Stephen, (Acts vi. 9.) *Apollos* was born here (Acts xviii. 24); and in a ship of Alexandria Paul was taken to Rome. (Acts xxvii. 6.) Mark, the Evangelist, after the death of Peter, is said to have retired into Egypt, and founded a Christian Church in this city.

ALPHÆUS (*the thousand, learned*)—(1) the father of Matthew or Levi; Mark ii. 14.

—(2) one of the Apostles, and the Father of James the Less (Matt. x. 3; Mark iii. 18; Luke vi. 15; Acts i. 13), and husband of Mary the sister of the mother of our Lord; he is thought to be the same with Cleophas (Luke xxiv. 18; John xix. 25), the latter being his Syriac or Hebrew name, and Alphæus his Greek name.

AMEN (verily), "it is true." (John iii. 3, 5.)

AMINADAB (*a free people*), son of Aram, and father of Naason, and of Elisheba, the wife of Aaron, and one of the progenitors of our Lord. (Matt. i. 4; Luke iii. 33.)

AMON (*faithful*), son and successor of Manasseh, king of Judah, and a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 10.)

AMOS (*a burden, mighty*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 25.)

AMPHIPOLIS (*a city surrounded*), a city of Macedonia, called also Chrysopolis, through which Paul and Silas passed on their way to Thessalonica, after their escape from imprisonment at Philippi. (Acts xvii. 1.) It is said that Paul did not stay at Amphipolis, because there was no synagogue there.

ANANIAS (*the cloud of the Lord*)—(1) a son of Nebedæus, and a high priest of the Jews, A. D. 59. When Paul was brought before him by Claudius Lysias, his ignominious treatment of the Apostle met with a very severe rebuke from Paul, who excused himself by alleging that he was ignorant of his office. (Acts xxiii. 1-5.) He went to Cesarea to accuse Paul before Felix (Acts xxiv. 1), and at last was killed by a seditious faction, headed by his own son, at the commencement of the Jewish wars.

—(2) one of the first Christians of Jerusalem; but from attempting, in conjunction with his wife *Sapphira*, to defraud the Apostles, and lie to the Holy Ghost, they were both struck dead at Peter's feet. (Acts v. 1-5.)

—(3) a disciple of Christ at Damascus, directed by the Lord in a vision to visit Saul, who had just arrived in the city after his conversion. (Acts ix. 10.) Knowing Saul's late proceedings he was afraid (verse 13); but being a second time enjoined, he proceeded, and after restoring his sight, baptized him (verse 15-20; Acts xxii. 12); he is thought to have been one of the *seventy* disciples, and to have become bishop of Damascus, in which city he died a martyr, by order of Licinius (or Lucianus) the governor.

ANDREW (*strong man*), one of the twelve Apostles. (See Appendix A.)

ANNA (*gracious, merciful*), a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher (Aser), and a widow of 84 years of age; coming into the temple at the presentation of the Lord, where Simon was offering up his hymn of thanksgiving, she also gave thanks unto God, and spake of the Lord to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. (Luke ii. 36-38.)

ANNAS (*answering, merciful, afflicting*), called also *Ananus* by Josephus, was high priest of the Jews under Quirinus, the governor of Syria; he was deprived by Valerius Gratus, the successor of Quirinus; still, however, retaining the title of high priest; and when his son-in-law, Caiaphas (or Joseph) obtained the dignity a few days after, which he held from A. D. 26 to A. D. 35, Annas acted as his sagan or deputy, and possessed considerable influence both over his son-in-law and over the people. Our Lord, when betrayed, was brought before him (Luke iii. 2; John xviii. 13-24); and at a subsequent period he encouraged the persecution of the Apostles. (Acts iv. 6.)

ANTIOCH (*for, or against a wagon*)—(1) the capital of Syria, founded by Seleucus Nicanor, B. C. 301, and named Antioch in honor of his father, Antiochus. It was the birth-place of *Luke* and *Theophilus*; and here Paul and Barnabas preached (Acts xi. 19, 20, 22, xiv. 26, xv. 22, 35); and it was the center of Paul's movements. It is also noted as the first place where the disciples of our Lord were called CHRISTIANS. (Acts xi. 26.) It subsequently suffered much from earthquakes, and is now but a trifling place, known as *Antakia*.

— (2) the capital of Pisidia in Asia Minor, founded by the same Seleucus, where Paul and Barnabas preached, but from which they were driven out by a tumult of the Jews. (Acts xiii. 14.)

ANTIPAS HEROD. See HEROD.

ANTIPATRIS (*for, or against a father*), a small town on the road from Jerusalem to Cesarea, rebuilt by Herod, and so called in honor of his father, Antipater; about 18 miles from Joppa, and 40 from Jerusalem. Paul passed through it when taken a prisoner to Cesarea. (Acts xxiii. 31.)

APOLLONIA (*destruction*), a city of Macedonia between Amphipolis and Thessalonica; through which Paul passed when going to the latter place through Philippi. (Acts xvii. 1.)

APOLLOS (*Apollonius, a destroyer*), a Jew of Alexandria, learned in the Scriptures, and an eloquent preacher of the Gospel; first at Ephesus, where he arrived in the absence of Paul about A. D. 57, and at which time he was only acquainted with John's baptism, yet still with the truth that Jesus was the Messiah (Acts xviii. 24); but he became better informed by the teaching of Aquila and his wife Priscilla (Acts xviii. 25–28), after which he went to Corinth, where his eloquence and philosophic arguments produced such an effect as to create a party in the Corinthian Church, which Paul cautioned those believers to guard against, and not to boast themselves as disciples either of Paul, or of Apollos, or of Cephas, *but of Christ*. He subsequently left Corinth for Ephesus to meet Paul, who particularly urged him to return to Corinth, after which out of regard for him the Apostle recommended him to the friendly consideration of Titus. What ultimately became of him is not known.

APOSTLES (*a messenger*), those commissioned by Jesus Christ to preach the Gospel; appointed (Matt. x. 1; Mark iii. 13; Luke vi. 13); commissioned (Matt. x. 1, xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15); sent forth (Matt. x. 5; Mark vi. 7; Luke ix. 1); their power to bind and loose (Matt. xviii. 18; John xx. 23); to perform great works (John xiv. 12); witnesses of our Lord's resurrection (Acts i. 22.) (See Appendix A.)

APPII FORUM, a forum or market town built by Appius Claudius, about 50 miles from Rome. (Acts xxviii. 15.)

AQUILA (*an eagle*), a Jew, born at Pontus in Asia Minor, and who resided in Rome, till the edict of Claudius compelled him with his wife Priscilla to quit that city; whence he retired to Corinth. While here, Paul for some time took up his abode in his house, both being tent-makers (Acts xviii. 2, 3, 26), and by the Apostle's teaching Aquila and his wife were converted to Christianity. When Paul left Corinth, Aquila and Priscilla accompanied him to Ephesus, where he left them to improve that Church during his absence at Jerusalem. They were instrumental in saving Paul's life, but whether it was when the Apostle was brought before Gallio at Corinth (Acts xviii. 12), or in the tumult at Ephesus excited by Demetrius (Acts xix. 24), is not known. They subsequently went to Rome, as we find Paul saluting them in his epistle to the Romans, A. D. 58, and afterward returned to Ephesus about A. D. 65; as he salutes them again in his Epistle to Timothy, who was then at Ephesus; what became of them after this is not known.

ARABIA, an extensive country of Asia, lying between Syria, Palestine, the Arabian and Persian Gulfs, and the Indian Ocean. Its inhabitants are descended from the Ishmaelites, and some of them were in Jerusalem at the noted day of Pentecost, and heard the Apostles preach (Acts ii. 11); hither Paul retired after his conversion, a short period for study and reflection; some indeed say for *three* years; he probably did not go far from Damascus.

ARAM (*highness, deceiving*), a progenitor of Joseph, the husband of Mary. (Matt. i. 3; Luke iii. 33.)

ARCHELAUS (*praise of the people*), the son of Herod the Great, by Malthace; on the death of his father the people proclaimed him king, but his brother Herod Antipas having disputed his title before Augustus, the Emperor allowed him only a half of his inheritance, and the title of Ethnarch instead of King. The cruelty of his government, however, lost him even that; after holding it but seven years, and on being called to Rome to answer for his mal-administration, he was banished to Vienne in Gaul, where he died. He was reigning in Judea on the return of the Holy Family from Egypt. (Matt. ii. 22.)

AREOPAGUS (*hill of Mars*), a tribunal or supreme council of magistrates in the middle of the city of Athens, on the summit of the Hill of Mars, whence its name, and opposite to the Acropolis or citadel, and before which Paul was brought "as a setter forth of strange gods." (Acts xvii. 19-33.) It is said to have been instituted by Cecrops, the founder of the city.

ARETAS (*virtuous*, or from the Arabic *Al Harath*, a name common to Arabian kings). A king of Petra in Arabia Petraea, including eventually Damascus and the country round; he was father-in-law to Herod Antipas, against whom he levied war because of his repudiating his daughter. Aretas sanctioned the apprehension of Paul, whose conversion excited the Jews against him, but he escaped from Damascus by being let down from the walls in a basket. (Acts ix. 23, 24.)

ARIMATHEA (from *Ramatha*, "height"), a town about 36 miles west of Jerusalem between Lydda and Joppa, where *Joseph* the counselor lived, who begged the body of Jesus from Pilate. (Matt. xxvii. 57; Mark xv. 43; Luke xxiii. 51; John xix. 38.) It is thought to have been the same place as Rama or Ramatha.

ARISTARCHUS (*best prince*), a Macedonian of Thessalonica, and a convert to Christianity: he was a companion of Paul in many of his travels, and was almost killed in the riot at Ephesus, but made his escape with the Apostle (Acts xix. 29); whom he thence accompanied into Greece, Asia (Acts xx. 4), and finally to Rome (Acts xxvii. 2); where he suffered imprisonment with the Apostle, and was beheaded at the same time.

ARPHAXAD (*healing*), a progenitor of Abraham and of Christ. (Luke iii. 36.)

ASA (*a physician*), son and successor of Abijam on the throne of Judah, and a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 7, 8.)

ASIA, which in the New Testament implies Asia Minor, included the regions of Bithynia, Cappadocia, Caria, Cilicia, Galatia, Lycaonia, Lycia, Lydia, Mysia, Pamphylia, Paphlagonia, Phrygia, Pisidia, Pontus; and the islands of Cyprus and Rhodes; also the *seven churches* of Ephesus, Laodicea, Pergamos, Philadelphia, Sardis, Smyrna and Thyatira. (Acts vi. 9, xvi. 6, xix. 10, 26, 31, xx. 16, 18, xxvii. 2.)

ASSOS (*drawing near to*), a sea-port town of Mysia, some say of Troas, whence Paul proceeded with Luke and others to Mitylene; Assos was about midway between the latter place and the city of Troas. (Acts xx. 13, 14.)

ATHENS (*without increase, of Minerva*), a celebrated city of Greece, and the capital of Achaia, noted for its population, wealth, magnificence, philosophy and the fine arts; as well as for its idolatry. Paul visited it about A. D. 52, and "preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection." The Epicureans and the Stoics, after disputing with him, brought him before the judges of the Areopagus, accusing him of being "a setter forth of strange gods." Paul defended himself, and having observed an altar bearing the inscription "To the Unknown God," he unfolded to them in a most powerful argument the living and true God, whom they had hitherto been "ignorant of" (Acts xvii. 15-33.) Many of his hearers were converted, among whom was Dionysius, the Areopagite, who is said to have ultimately become bishop of Athens; also a woman named Damaris, and others (Acts xvii. 34; xviii. 1.)

ATTALIA (*Attaleia, increasing*), a sea-port of Pamphylia, founded by Attalus, King of
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Pergamos, whence its name: hither Paul and Barnabas came from Perga, and preached the Gospel about A. D. 47 (Acts xiv. 25), on their return to Antioch at the close of Paul's first missionary journey.

AUGUSTUS CÆSAR, (*Octavius*) Emperor of Rome, in the 40th year of whose reign, A. U. C. 750, B. C. 4, JESUS CHRIST was born at Bethlehem, in Judea; reckoning, that is, from his alliance with Antony and Lepidus in the Triumvirate, B. C. 43. He commanded the enrollment to be made, which brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem. (Luke ii. 1; Acts xxv. 21, 25, xxvii. 1.)

AZOR (*helper, entry*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Matt. i. 13, 14.)

AZOTUS (*inclination, leaning*), in Hebrew, and in the Old Testament, *Ashdod*: a city 30 miles north of Gaza, on the Mediterranean, where Philip was found after baptizing the Ethiopian Eunuch. (Acts viii. 40.)

BABYLON. (Matt. i. 11, 17; Acts vii. 43.)

BAR, in the composition of names, implies the "*son of*," as *Bar-Jesus*, son of Jesus; *Bar-Jonas*, son of Jonas.

BARABBAS (*son of confusion*), a thief and murderer, released instead of Jesus. (Matt. xxvii. 17, 21; Mark xv. 11; Luke xxiii. 18; John xviii. 40.)

BAR-JESUS (*son of Jesus*), a Jewish magician of the island of Cyprus (Crete); who, trying to prevent Sergius Paulus, the proconsul, from embracing Christianity at the preaching of Barnabas and Paul, was severely rebuked and struck blind by Paul, (Acts xiii. 6-11.) Luke gives him the Arabic name of *Elymas*, which means the *sorcerer*, or *Wise-man*. (Acts xiii. 8.)

BAR-JONA (*the son of a dove, or of Jonas*), an appellation given to Peter, indicating him to be the son of Jona, or Jonas. (Matt. xvi. 17; John i. 42; xxi. 17.)

BARNABAS, (*son of consolation*), a surname given to *Joses*, a Levite of the island of Cyprus, and probably after his conversion, when he sold his possessions and laid the money at the Apostles' feet. (Acts iv. 36.) He is said to have studied under Gamaliel, when he acquired an intimacy with Saul, which will account for Barnabas introducing him to the Apostles as lately converted to Christianity, when they avoided him at the time he visited Jerusalem because of his former hatred to the cause, A. D. 37. (Acts ix. 26, 27.) Barnabas, five years after was sent by the Apostle to Antioch, to strengthen the disciples there (Acts xi. 22); and finding the numbers increasing, he went to Tarsus, and brought back Saul to assist him. (Acts. xi. 25.) He next, in company with Saul, took to Jerusalem the subscriptions of the brethren of Antioch for the poor saints in Judea, A. D. 44. (Acts xi. 30); and when they had returned, having his nephew John Mark with him (Acts xii. 25), he and Mark afterward accompanied Saul on his first *Apostolic Journey*, A. D. 45 (Acts xiii. 1, 2, 50); while at Lystra, Barnabas was taken for *Jupiter* (Acts xiv. 12); at length they returned to Antioch; shortly after, Barnabas with Paul and Titus were sent to Jerusalem to consult the Apostles on the subject of circumcision (Acts xv. 2, 12), and Barnabas, with Silas and others, took back the decision of the Council, A. D. 50-1. It was not long, however, before he was led by Peter into some error on this very point, which brought upon him the reproof Paul. And at the next journey of the latter, Paul having objected to Mark accompanying them, Barnabas separated from him and journeyed with his nephew to Cyprus. (Acts xv. 35-39.) This step did not lose him the friendship of Paul, for the Apostle makes kind mention of him in his Epistle to the Corinthians. What became of Barnabas after this is not known; according to Baronius he was stoned to death at Salamis, in Cyprus.

BARSABAS (*son of rest, or of the oath*)—(1) surnamed *Justus*, the unsuccessful candidate for the Apostleship vacant by the falling away of Judas Iscariot. (Acts i. 23.) The lot fell upon Matthias. (Acts i. 26.) He is said to have been one of the Seventy.

—(2) the surname of *Judas*, one of the chief disciples of Jerusalem, sent with Barnabas and Silas to Antioch, to carry the decree of the council. (Acts xv. 22.)

BARTHOLOMEW (*a son that suspends the waters, son of Ptolemy*), one of the twelve Apostles. (Matt. x. 3; Mark iii. 18; Luke vi. 14; Acts i. 13; see Appendix A.)

BARTIMEUS (*son of blindness*), the son of Timæus, a blind beggar of Jericho, cured by our Lord. (Matt. xx. 30; Mark x. 46.)

BEELZEBUB, or *Belzebub* (*lord of flies*), the same as Baalzebub, a name of a Phœnician idol, worshipped at Ekron, and said to preserve the people from the flies or mosquitoes, with which that region was troubled; but why applied by the Jews in our Saviour's time to Satan, "the prince of the devils," is not known. (Matt. x. 25, xii. 24; Mark iii. 22; Luke xi. 15-19.)

BEREA (*heavy*), a city of Macedonia, where Paul preached with much success on leaving Thessalonica. (Acts xvii. 10-14, xx. 4.)

BERNICE (*the weight of victory*), daughter of Agrippa I., king of the Jews, and sister of Agrippa II., with whom she eventually lived in incest. She first was married to Mark, son of Alexander Lysimachus, alabarch of Alexander; afterward to her own uncle Herod, king of Chalcis; and at his death to Polemon (Polemo II.), king of Pontus and Cilicia. It was not long, however, before she quitted her last husband, and returned to her brother Agrippa, with whom she lived as just observed. Bernice was with Agrippa at Cesarea staying with Festus, and when Paul was brought before him, (Acts xxv. 13-27, xxvi. 30.)

BETHABARA (*house of passage*), a village beyond Jordan at the common ford of that river where John baptized. (John i. 28.) It is by some critics considered the same as *Bethania* or *Bethany*.

BETHANY (*house of song or affliction*)—(1) a town at the foot of the Mount of Olives, fifteen furlongs east of Jerusalem, on the road to Jericho, where Lazarus, and his sisters, Martha and Mary, dwelt. (Matt. xxi. 17; John xi. 1, 18, xii. 1.) Also Simon, the leper, at whose house Jesus was anointed (Matt. xxvi. 6, 7; Mark xi. 1, 12); and from the neighborhood of which Christ ascended into heaven. (Luke xxiv. 50.)

—(2) also, a village on the east side of Jordan, the same as *Bethabara*.

BETHESDA (*house of mercy*), a celebrated pool near the sheep market in Jerusalem, having five porches round it, and noted for its medicinal virtues. (John v. 2.)

BETHLEHEM (*house of bread*), a city of Judah, six miles south of Jerusalem, on the road to Hebron. It was also called "*Bethlehem Ephratah*" (Mi. v. 2), to distinguish it from another Bethlehem in Zebulun, in lower Galilee (Josh. xix. 15; Judg. xii. 10.) It is renowned as the birth-place of the SAVIOUR of the world, the LORD JESUS CHRIST. (Matt. ii. 1, 5, 6; John vii. 42.) It is also called "*the City of David*," because David was likewise born here. (Luke ii. 4-15.) Herod put to death its male children of two years old and under. (Matt. ii. 16.)

BETHPHAGE (*house of figs*), a small village at the foot of the Mount of Olives, between Bethany and Jerusalem, in the lands of which figs were cultivated. (Matt. xxi. 1; Mark xi. 1; Luke xix. 29.)

BETHSAIDA (*house of fruits*)—(1) a town of Galilee on the western shore of the Lake of Tiberias (Sea of Galilee). The Apostles Peter, Andrew and Philip, were of this place (John i. 44, xii. 21), but as it profited not from our Lord's ministry, who frequently visited it, and even cured a blind man there (Mark viii. 22), He denounced a woe against it. (Matt. xi. 21; Luke x. 13.) Philip the Tetrarch enlarged the town, and called it "*Julia*," in honor of the daughter of the Emperor Augustus.

—(2) a town on the eastern side of the Lake of Tiberias, in the district of Gaulonitis, over which Philip was tetrarch. (Luke iii. 1.) To a desert-place near here Jesus retired at one time (Luke ix. 10); and at a subsequent period He is said to have taken ship from this place to Capernaum. (Matt. xiv. 22-34; Mark vi. 45; John vi. 17.)

This town was enlarged by Philip, and called "*Julius*," for the same reason as the other Bethsaida.

BYTHNIA (*violent precipitation*), a province of Asia Minor, on the shore of the Euxine Sea, opposite to Constantinople, and some time under the government of Pliny. (Acts xv. 7.)

BLASTUS (*one who brings forth*), a chamberlain to Herod, king of Judea. (Acts xii. 20.)

BOANERGES (*sons of thunder*), a name given by our Lord to *James* and *John*, the sons of Zebedee (Mark iii. 17); because of their requesting Christ to call fire down from heaven on certain villages of the Samaritans that had refused to entertain Him. (Luke ix. 53, 54.) The name was probably prophetic of their zeal and power in preaching the Gospel.

BOAZ, or *Booz* (*strength*), son of Salmon and Rahab, and the husband of Ruth. A progenitor also of our Lord. (Matt. i. 5; Luke iii. 32.)

CÆSAR (*cut or gash*), a general name applied to the Roman emperors. (Matt. xxii. 17, 21; Mark xii. 14, 17; Luke xx. 22, xxiii. 2; John xix. 12, 15; Acts xvii. 7, xxv. 8, 11, 21, xxvi. 32, xxvii. 24, xxviii. 19; Phil. iv. 22.) To Augustus. (Luke ii. 1.) To Tiberius. (Luke iii. 1.) To Claudius. (Acts xi. 28.)

CAIAPHAS (*a searcher*), also named *Joseph*, was a Sadducee, and the high-priest of the Jews at the time of Christ's crucifixion. He was the son-in-law of *Annas* (or *Ananus*). He urged that Jesus should be put to death (John xi. 49, xviii. 13, 14, 28), and was the chief instrument in effecting it. (Matt. xxvi. 3, 57; Mark xiv. 53; Luke iii. 2; xxii. 54.)

CAINAN (*possessor, one who laments*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 36, 37.)

CALVARY (*a skull, calvus, a bald pate*), *the place of a skull*, the same as the Hebrew word *Golgotha*. It was a little hill of a skull-like form, north-west of Jerusalem, just without the walls, and upon which CHRIST was crucified. (Luke xxiii. 33.) Criminals were usually executed there, it is supposed.

CANA (*zeal*), a town of Galilee in the tribe of Zebulun, 6 miles north-east of Nazareth, and 16 north-west of the Lake of Tiberias. Here our Lord performed His first miracle of turning water into wine (John ii. 1-11), and likewise His second, of healing a nobleman's son of Capernaum. (John iv. 46-54; xxi. 2.)

CANDACE (*pure possession*), a queen of Ethiopia, whose eunuch was converted by Philip. (Acts viii. 27.) Candace was the name of the dynasty, not of an individual.

CAPERNAUM (*city of comfort or consolation*; from *Caphar* "village," and *Nahum*, "a comforter"); a town on the borders of Zebulun and Nephthalim, on the western shores of the Sea of Galilee, and which our Lord made the usual place of His abode, hence called, "His own city." (Matt. iv. 13, 14, viii. 5; Mark i. 21; John ii. 12.) Here Christ performed many mighty works (Mark ii. 1-12; John iv. 46, vi. 17, 24, 59)—and from the great infidelity of the people denounced a woe against it. (Matt. xi. 23; Luke x. 15.) In the neighborhood was Matthew's receipt of custom, whence he was called to be a disciple. (Matt. ix. 1, 9.)

CAPPADOCIA (*an apple, a violet*), a region of Asia Minor, having Pontes on the north, the Euphrates on the east, Galatia on the west, and Lycaonia on the south. People from this country were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. (Acts ii. 9.)

CEDRON (*turbid*), a brook in Palestine (John xviii. 1), called also *KIDRON*; which see.

CENCHREA (*millet*), the seaport of Corinth, whence Paul sailed to Ephesus. (See Acts xviii. 8.)

CEPHAS (*a stone*), the name given by our Lord to Peter. (John i. 42.)

CESAREA (*bush of hair*), a maritime city on the shores of the Mediterranean, 62 miles north-west of Jerusalem, anciently the tower of Strato; when beautified and enlarged by Herod the Great, he named it Cesarea in honor of the emperor Augustus; it was the place of residence of the Roman proconsul. (Acts viii. 40, ix. 30, xviii. 22.)

PHILIPPI, a town near the source of the Jordan, about a day's journey from Sidon, and a day and a half from Damascus. It was beautiful and almost rebuilt by Philip the Tetrarch, who named it *Cesarea* in honor of the emperor, Tiberius, and *Philippi* was added to distinguish it from the other Cesarea. Our Lord visited its neighborhood (Matt. xvi. 13), and while there healed the woman troubled with an issue of blood. (Mark v. 25.)

CHALDEANS (*robbers, fields*), the people whence Abraham came. (Acts vii. 4.)

CHARRAN (*a calling out*), the country of Mesopotamia, whence Abraham came. (Acts vii. 2.)

CHIOS (*open*), or Coos, an island off the coast of Asia Minor, near Lesbos. Paul passed it as he journeyed from Mitylene, toward Samos. (Acts xx. 15.)

CHORAZIN (*the secret*), a town near Capernaum on the western coast of the Sea of Galilee; against the inhabitants of which a woe was denounced by our Lord on account of their impenitence. (Matt. xi. 21; Luke x. 13.)

CHRIST (*anointed*.)

CHUZA, or *Chusa* (*a seer*), a steward to Herod Agrippa, and husband of Joanna. (Luke viii. 3.)

CILICIA (*which turns over*), a country of Asia Minor, bordering on the Mediterranean, and north of Cyprus. Its chief town was *Tarsus*, the native place of Saul. (Acts xx. 39, xxii. 3, xxiii. 34.) The men of this country disputed with Stephen (Acts vi. 9.) Subsequently they were visited by Barnabas and Paul, and Silas. (Acts xv. 23, 41, xxvii. 5; Gal. i. 21.)

CLAUDA (*lamentable voice*), a small island near the south-west coast of Crete. (Acts xxvii. 16.)

CLAUDIA (*lame*), a pious Roman lady, a convert of Paul's, and thought to be the wife of Pudens; some say a British lady, and sister of Linns. (2 Tim. iv. 21.)

CLAUDIUS CÆSAR, the fifth emperor of Rome. In the fourth year of his reign the famine predicted by Agabus occurred. (Acts xi. 28.) In the ninth, he banished all the Jews from Rome. (Acts xviii. 2.)

— LYSIAS, the Roman tribune commanding the guard in Jerusalem. He rescued Paul from a conspiracy of the Jews. (Acts xxi. 23.) Ordered him to be scourged (Acts xxii. 24), and afterward dispatched him with a letter to Felix. (Acts xxiii. 26.)

CLEOPAS or *Cleophas* (*the whole glory*, contracted from *Cleopatros*), also called *Alphæus*, was a disciple of our Lord's, and said to be the brother of Joseph, the reputed father of Christ. He married *Mary*, the sister of the Virgin (John xix. 25), and was the father of *James the Less*, of *Jude*, of *Joseph* or *Joses*, and of *Simeon*, subsequently bishop of Jerusalem. Cleopas was one of the two disciples overtaken by Jesus, while walking to Emmaus. (Luke xxiv. 18.) Cleopas is found contracted into *Clopas* (John xix. 25), which has led some critics to suppose that *Cleophas*, the disciple going to Emmaus, is not the same individual as *Clopas*, the husband of Mary, the Virgin's sister.

CNIDUS, or *Gnidus* (*age*), a city standing on a promontory of the same name in Caria, a district of Asia Minor, jutting out between Rhodes and Cos. Paul passed it on his way to Rome. (Acts xxvii. 7.)

Coos, or *Cos* (*top*), a small island at a little distance from the south-west point of Asia Minor, which Paul passed on his way to Jerusalem. (Acts xxi. 1.)

CORBAN, the Hebrew word for a gift or offering made to God; the Jews sometimes swore by it; and our Lord reproved them for cruelty to their parents in making a

Corban of what should have been appropriated to their necessities. (Matt. xxiii. 18; Mark vii. 11, 12.)

CORNELIUS (*a horn*), a Roman centurion of the Italian band, living at Cesarea, whose piety and charity were such, that it pleased God in a miraculous manner by direction of an angel (Acts x. 1-7), and through the instrumentality of Peter, to make him acquainted with the Gospel of salvation (Acts x. 25), whence he and his family received the Holy Spirit, and were baptized (Acts x. 31). He is supposed to have belonged to the great Cornelian family of the Scipios, of Sulla, and the mother of the Gracchi.

COSAM (*divining*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 28.)

COUNCIL (*the first*). Certain men coming from Judea to Antioch, taught that *salvation* was not by *faith* alone, but that, "except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses ye cannot be saved." (Acts xv. 1.) Considerable discussion arose in consequence, which ended in Paul and Barnabas, and certain others, going to Jerusalem unto the Apostles and elders about this question (Acts xv. 6); they assembled together, and thus formed what has been considered the *First Christian Council*, A. D. 49, or 50, or 51. *James* appears to have presided, and after Peter had expressed his opinion, that "only through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved," and Barnabas and Paul had followed to the same effect, speaking of the miracles and wonders wrought through them among the Gentiles, he delivered his opinion, which resulted in the *decree*, that the Gentiles needed not circumcision, nor to keep the Mosaic Law; . . . and it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, that they should "abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication." (Acts xv. 23-29.) This, having been formally written out, was sent to Antioch by the hands of Paul, and Barnabas, and others, and was to be read to the various Churches.

CREATION effected by God (Acts xiv. 15, xvii. 24); by the Lord Jesus Christ. (John i. 3, 10; 1 Cor. viii. 6; Eph. iii. 9; Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 2; Rev. iv. 11.)

CRISPUS (*curled*), chief ruler of the synagogue at Corinth, who was converted and baptized by Paul. (Acts xviii. 8; 1 Cor. i. 14.) Some say he became bishop of Ægina.

CRUCIFIXION. The charges upon which our Lord was condemned were in accordance with the tribunals before which He was arraigned. He was brought (1st) before the Jewish Sanhedrim upon a charge of *blasphemy*; "Art thou the Christ the Son of the Blessed (God)?" "Jesus said, I am." (Matt. xxvi. 63-66; Mark xiv. 61, 62.) They then adjudged Him guilty of death; but not having the power of life and death, they carried Christ before Pilate, and charged Him (2dly) with *sedition*; saying, "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar" (Luke xxiii. 2). Pilate, however, finding no fault in Him, was anxious to release Him. (3dly) Jesus was again brought before the people, and they now accuse him of *treason* in calling Himself a King: "Art thou the king of the Jews?" said Pilate. Jesus said, "Thou sayest." (Matt. xxvii. 11; John xviii. 33-37.) But our Lord having stated His kingdom not to be of this world, Pilate again attempted to let Him go. The clamor of the Jews prevailed, and our Lord was therefore condemned to undergo the Roman punishment of crucifixion.

CYPRUS (*fair*), a large island in the Mediterranean Sea between Cilicia and Syria; and the native place of Barnabas (Joses). (Acts iv. 36.) Christianity was introduced here soon after the persecution following the death of Stephen. (Acts xi. 10, 20.) Here also Paul and Barnabas successfully preached the Gospel. (Acts xiii. 4, xv. 39.) At Paphos, the governor, Sergius Paulus, became a convert. (Acts xiii. 7.) Paul sailed by the island twice after this (Acts xxi. 3, xxvii. 4), and Barnabas is said to have returned here, and to have met his death by martyrdom at Salamis. *Mnason* was also a native of Cyprus. (Acts xxi. 16.)

CYRENE (*a wall, coldness*), a city in Libya in Africa; whence came *Simon*, who carried our Saviour's cross (Matt. xxvii. 32; Mark xv. 21; Luke xxiii. 26), and *Lucius* (Acts xiii. 1.) The Jews from this place had a synagogue in Jerusalem (Acts ii. 10, vi. 9), and were among the chief opponents of Stephen. (Acts xi. 20.)

CYRENIUS, or QUIRINUS, the Roman deputy of Syria. (Luke ii. 1, 2.) He is said to have been sent into Syria about A. U. C. 749, to make an enrolment of the people; and possibly was associated with *Saturninus*, the then governor; but he was not actually governor till A. U. C. 755.

DALMANUTHA (*leanness, a branch*), a city on the east of Tiberias in the district of Magdala; some say east of the sea, and some say west. (Matt. xv. 39; Mark viii. 10.)

DALMATIA (*deceitful lights*), a country of Illyricum on the gulf of Venice, where Titus preached the Gospel. (2 Tim. iv. 10.)

DAMARIS (*a little woman*), a female convert of Paul's, and thought to have been the wife of Dionysius, the Areopagite. (Acts xvii. 34.)

DAMASCUS (*a sack of blood*), a celebrated city of Syria, the oldest in the world; and tradition makes it the place where Abel was slain. It was claimed by Aretas king of Arabia. Saul came here on his persecuting errand, but was converted by the way, and on his arrival, after three days, Ananias, by direction of an angel, came to him, cured him of his blindness, and baptized him. (Acts ix., xxii. 5-13.) Paul is said to have now gone into Arabia, and on returning to Damascus, and preaching his new faith, the Jews sought his life; but he escaped by a basket down the wall. (2 Cor. xi. 32; Gal. i. 17.)

DANIEL (*judgment of God*), his prophecy about the abomination of desolation (Dan. ix. 27, xii. 11), referred to by our Lord. (Matt. xxiv. 15; Mark xiii. 14; Luke xxi. 20.)

DAVID (*beloved*.) Jesus Christ is frequently spoken of in the New Testament as the "Son of David." (Matt. i. 1, 6, ix. 27, xii. 23, xv. 22, xx. 30, 31, xxi. 9, xxii. 42, 45; Mark x. 47, 48, xii. 35, 37; Luke iii. 31, xviii. 38, 39, xx. 41, 44; John vii. 42; Rom. i. 3; 2 Tim. ii. 8, &c.)

DEACONS; the seven appointed (Acts vi. 5), their duties prescribed. (1 Tim. iii. 8, 12.)

DECAPOLIS (*ten cities*), a country of Palestine containing *ten* principal cities on both sides of the Jordan, whence its name. (Matt. iv. 25; Mark v. 20, vii. 31.) The chief inhabitants of this district were foreigners, which will account for the abundance of swine kept amongst them. (Matt. viii. 30.) The ten cities, according to Pliny, were: 1. Scythopolis; 2. Philadelphia; 3. Raphanæ; 4. Gadara; 5. Hippos; 6. Dios; 7. Pella; 8. Gerasa; 9. Canatha; 10. Damascus.

DEMETRIUS (*belonging to Ceres, or corn*)—(1) a silversmith of Ephesus, who made little shrines, or portable models of the celebrated temple of Diana in that city. Hearing of the great progress of the Gospel, and fearing lest his trade should suffer thereby, he raised so great a tumult that Paul was compelled to leave the city. (Acts xix. 24, 38.)

DEMETRIUS (2) the *elder*, an eminent Christian alluded to by John. (John iii. 12.)

DERBE (*a sling*), a city of Lycaonia to which Paul and Barnabas fled when expelled from Iconium. (Acts xiv. 6.) Its site is not discoverable, but some imagine it to be *Divle*.

DIANA (*luminous, perfect*), a celebrated goddess (of chastity) of the heathen, principally worshiped at Ephesus, where there was a most splendid and costly temple erected to her. Paul, by his preaching, made himself particularly obnoxious to her worshippers. (Acts xix. 24, 35.)

DIDYMUS (*a twin*), the surname of the Apostle, *Thomas* (John xi. 16), or the Hebrew or Syriac signification of the name *Thomas*.

DIONYSIUS (*from heaven, or moved forward*), a member of the Areopagus at Athens

whence his name of Dionysius the Areopagite, who after hearing Paul became a convert to the Gospel. (Acts xvii. 34.) He is said to have been the first bishop of Athens, and to have been burnt to death for his zeal in the faith. A. D. 95.

DORCAS (*a gazelle, or female roe*), a female convert to Christianity, the widow of Joppa, and celebrated for her alms deeds. (Acts ix. 36, 41.) Having died, she was raised to life by Peter. (Acts ix. 39, 40.) Called also *Tabitha*, which see.

DRUSILLA (*sprinkled with dew*), the third daughter of Herod Agrippa I., and sister of Bernice; she married first Epiphanes, son of Antiochus, king of Comagena: but he refusing to turn Jew, she left him and married Azizus, king of Emessa; becoming afterward attached to *Felix*, the Roman governor, she abandoned Azizus, and became the wife of the Roman.

EGYPT (*anguish*), in Hebrew, *Mizraim*, a celebrated country of Africa to which the Holy Family retired when Herod ordered the destruction of all the children of Bethlehem. (Matt. ii. 13-19.) Allusion is also made to Joseph's sojourn there after being sold by his brethren. (Acts vii. 9, 39.)

ELAMITES (*a young man, or virgin*), a name given to the country of Persia, anciently peopled by Elam, the son of Shem. Some of these people were present in Jerusalem at the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. (Acts ii. 9.)

ELEAZAR (*aid of God*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Matt. i. 15.)

ELIAKIM (*God ariseth*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Matt. i. 13; Luke iii. 30.)

ELIEZER (*help of God*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 29.)

ELIJAH, or ELIAS (*God the Lord, or a strong Lord*), a celebrated prophet of Israel, promised to be sent again before the coming of the day of the Lord. (Mal. iv. 5.) John the Baptist declared to be he. (Matt. xi. 14, xvi. 14, xvii. 3, 4, 10-13, xxvii. 47, 49; Mark vi. 15, ix. 4, 5, 11-13, xv. 35, 36; Luke i. 17, iv. 25, ix. 8, 19, 30, 33, 54; John i. 21, 25.)

ELISEUS (*my God saveth*), a name given by Luke to the prophet Elisha. (Luke iv. 27.)

ELIUD (*God of praise*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Matt. i. 14, 15.)

ELIZABETH (*oath or fullness of God*) the wife of Zacharias, a Jewish priest, and mother of John the Baptist. (Luke i. 5, 7, 24, 36), saluted by Mary; (Luke i. 40-45), her delivery; (Luke i. 57.)

ELMODAM (*God of measure, or of garments*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 28.)

ELYMAS (*a sorcerer, or wise man*), another name of the magician *Bar Jesus*, who resisted the preaching of Paul in Cyprus, and would have prevented the conversion of Sergius Paulus, the proconsul, but he was struck blind by the Apostle. (Acts xiii. 8.) See BAR-JESUS.

EMMAUS (*fearful, counsel, hot baths*), a village seven or eight miles north-west of Jerusalem, celebrated for the conversation of our Lord on the evening of His resurrection, with two disciples walking thither. (Luke xxiv. 13.)

ENEAS, or ÆNEAS (*praised*), a man who was miraculously healed of the palsy by Peter when at Lydda. (Acts ix. 33, 34.)

ENOCH (*taught*), the father of Methuselah, translated to heaven on account of his great faith. (Heb. xi. 5.) He prophesied the judgments of God upon sinners. (Jude 14, 15), where he is said to have written a book of prophecies, but this is only conjecture; he was a progenitor of our Lord. (Luke iii. 37.)

ENON, or ENOX (*a cloud, or well*), a place near Salim by the river Jordan where John baptized, because there was much water there. (John iii. 23.) It was eight miles south of Scythopolis.

ENOS (*desperation*), son of Seth, and progenitor of Christ. (Luke iii. 38.)

EPIHESUS (*desirable*), formerly one of the most celebrated cities of Asia Minor, noted for its temple of Diana, one of "the seven wonders of the world." Paul preached there for three years, but the tumult of Demetrius and the craftsmen compelled him to leave. (Acts xviii. 19, 24; xix. 17, 28, 35; xx. 10.)

EPHRAIM (*increasing*), a city on the road to Jericho toward the Jordan, about eight miles from Jerusalem, whither our Saviour retired just after raising Lazarus from the dead. (John xi. 54.)

EPICUREANS, a sect of Grecian philosophers founded by Epicurus, who considered *pleasure* the chief good, and *pain* the chief evil. They held *that* the world was made not by God, but by a fortuitous concourse of atoms; *that* God concerns not Himself with its government; *that* the soul dies with the body; *that* there are no angels; *that* there is a God, but no Providence. This sect opposed Paul at Athens. (Acts xvii. 18.)

ER (*watchman*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 28.)

ERASTUS (*amiable*), the chamberlain or treasurer of the city of Corinth, (Rom. xvi. 23), an office which he resigned on being converted, and then accompanied Paul to Ephesus, whence he was sent with Timothy into Macedonia, (Acts xix. 22), and subsequently returned to Corinth. (2 Tim. iv. 20.)

ESAIAS. See ISAAH.

ESLI (*near me*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 25.)

ESROM (*dart of joy*), a descendant of Phares, and spoken of by Matthew in his genealogy of our Lord. (Matt. i. 3; Luke iii. 33.)

ESSENES, a sect in the time of our Saviour. The name is of Egyptian origin. They differed from the Pharisees in not relying on traditions or a rigorous observance of ceremonies: and from the Sadducees in their belief of a future state; yet they pretended to great sanctity of manners, and much self-denial: the austerity and recluse life of the Essenes are thought to have given rise to monkish superstition. They are not mentioned by name in the New Testament, but they are supposed to be alluded to by Paul in Col. ii. 18, and in the Ephesians, and Epistles to Timothy. From Philo and Josephus we learn that they believed in the immortality of the soul; were absolute predestinarians; strict observers of the Sabbath; and held the Scriptures in high reverence, but neglected their plain and literal meaning, indulging in mystical and allegorical interpretations. The time of their origin is unknown.

ETHIOPIA (*burning, black*), an extensive country of Africa to the south of Egypt, (now Abyssinia) governed by Queen Candace, whose eunuch was instructed in the Gospel and baptized by Philip, the deacon. (Acts viii. 27.)

ERNUCHS were of various kinds, (Matt. xix. 12); the one of Ethiopia converted by Philip. (Acts viii. 27.)

EUROCLYDON (*a north-east wind*), a dangerous wind in the Levant or eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea. (Acts xvii. 14.)

EUTYCHUS (*happy*), a young man of Troas, who fell from a window while Paul was preaching, and was picked up dead, but Paul restored him to life. (Acts xx. 9, 10.)

EVENING, the evening of the Jews consisted of two divisions; the *former* evening commenced at noon, as soon as the sun began to decline; the *second* or *latter* began at sunset, so that the time "between the two evenings," when the passover was slain, was about three o'clock in the afternoon.

EZEKIAS, or *Hezekiah* (*strength of the Lord*), son and successor of Ahaz, King of Judah; and a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 9, 10.)

FAIR HAVENS, a place on the coast of Crete, possessing good anchorage, whence its name. (Acts xxvii. 8.)

FELIX (*happy*). Claudius Felix, the procurator of Judea, succeeded Cumanus, and

meeting with *Drusilla*, the sister of Agrippa, he persuaded her to leave her husband Azizus, king of Emessa, and then took her as his own wife. Paul was sent a prisoner to him (Acts xxiii. 24, 26, 33), and on arriving at Cesarea, the Apostle was brought before him and partially examined. (Acts xxiv. 3-23.) After a few days, he was brought before Felix again, and his wife Drusilla, and in his defense Paul preached so forcibly of Jesus Christ and judgment to come, that Felix trembled (Acts xxiv. 24, 25); hoping, however, to receive money for his release, he detained the Apostle two years in prison, till his government was superseded by the arrival of *Portius Festus* (Acts xxiv. 27; xxv. 14), when Felix returned to Rome, A. D. 50.

Festus (joyful). Portius Festus was the successor of Felix as procurator of Judea: three days after his arrival at Cesarea he proceeded to Jerusalem, where he was entreated by the Jews to order Paul to be brought to the latter city, intending to assassinate him by the way. (Acts xxv. 1-3.) Festus, however, desired his accusers to go back with him to Cesarea, where Paul should be examined. On his return, therefore, the Apostle was brought before him: but Paul, perceiving the design of the Jews to get him into their power, appealed unto Cæsar. (Acts xxv. 4-12.) A few days after, king Agrippa and Bernice coming to salute Festus, the latter stated Paul's case to them (Acts xxv. 14-27), and the Apostle was again brought up; by his pleading he almost persuaded Agrippa to be a Christian; and the whole company esteemed him innocent, but having appealed unto Cæsar, Festus ordered him to Rome. (Acts xxvi.) Festus died in Judea, A. D. 62, and was succeeded by *Albinus*.

GABBATHIA (high), a Hebrew word for "the Pavement;" an elevated place in Pilate's palace, probably a terrace or balcony, where he pronounced judgment on our Saviour. (John xix. 13.)

GABRIEL (a man of God), one of the principal angels of heaven, sent formerly to Daniel (Dan. viii. 16, ix. 21, x. 16), and in later times to Zecharias, to announce to him the birth of John the Baptist (Luke i. 11-19), and six months afterward to the Virgin Mary. (Luke i. 26.)

GADARENES (walled), the inhabitants of *Gadara*, a city east of Jordan and of the Sea of Tiberias in the Decapolis; here our Saviour ejected the devils out of a man, and cast them into a herd of swine. (Mark v. 1; Luke viii. 26, 37.) The lands of the Gadarenes were intersected by those of the Gergesenes. (See Matt. viii. 28.)

GAIUS (lord, or earthly), one of Paul's converts, and thought to have been a Macedonian (1 Cor. i. 14), but resident at Corinth, where he entertained Paul (Rom. xvi. 23), and afterward accompanied him to Ephesus. (Acts xix. 29.) This Gaius is also thought to have been the same to whom John addressed his third epistle, and who is styled "Gaius of Derbe," in Acts xx. 4.

GALILEE (turning, rolling). Galilee was a large province divided into Upper and Lower Galilee. It contained the tribes of Issachar, Zebulun, Nephthalim, Asher, and part of Dan: and was bounded by Mount Lebanon on the north, by the river Jordan and the Sea of Galilee on the east, by Chison on the south, and by the Mediterranean on the west. *Lower Galilee* contained the tribes of Zebulun and Asher. *Upper Galilee* abounded in mountains, and was termed "Galilee of the Gentiles," from possessing a mixed population of Egyptians, Arabians and Phœnicians, interspersed amongst the Jews. It is the scene of many of our Lord's miracles and teachings.

GALILEE OF THE GENTILES. See *GALILEE*.

GALILEE, SEA OR LAKE OF. A lake of Palestine (Luke v. 1), called also the "sea of Chinnereth" (Num. xxxiv. 11; Deut. iii. 17); "Chinnereth" (Josh. xi. 2), there being a town called Chinnereth near (xix. 35), and "the Sea of Tiberias." (John vi. 1.) It is now *Bahr Tubariyeh*. Anciently this lake was surrounded by busy cities; vessels crossed its waters; the sights and sounds of life were there. Now it is solitary: the cities are no

more: the fishing vessels have ceased to ply their occupation: the aspect is bleak, and the scenery monotonous. Yet, almost more than to any other spot, do the affections of the Christian heart cling to this lake. The most remarkable fact in its physical geography is its great depression. Its surface is about 650 feet (some make it as much as 845) *below* the level of the ocean. This has a marked effect on the temperature, climate, and natural products. The heat is intense during the summer months. The harvest on the shore is nearly a month earlier than on the neighboring high lands of Galilee and Bashan. Frost is unknown, and snow very rarely falls. The trees, plants, and vegetables are those usually found in Egypt, such as the palm, the lote-tree, the indigo plant, &c. Though the whole basin of the lake, and indeed the Jordan valley, is of volcanic origin, as evidenced by the thermal springs and the frequent earthquakes, yet the main formation of the surrounding wall of mountains is limestone.

GALLIO (*living on milk*), the brother of Seneca, the philosopher, and proconsul of Achaia; he resided at Corinth, where Paul was brought before him by the Jews, accused of "teaching men to worship God contrary to the Law." (Acts xviii. 12.) Gallio dismissed the charge without a hearing, declaring that he had nothing to do with disputes concerning their law (Acts xviii. 15, 16), upon which they seized *Sosthenes*, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before Gallio's face, but the proconsul troubled not himself with the matter. (Acts xviii. 17.)

GAMALIEL (*reward of God*), a celebrated Pharisee, and doctor of the law; he was the tutor of Paul (Acts xxii. 3), and it is said that Barnabas was also a pupil of his. When Peter and certain other of the Apostles had been seized and brought before the Sanhedrim for preaching in the name of Jesus, Gamaliel recommended that they should not be treated severely, which advice was followed. (Acts xxii. v. 34.)

GAZA (*strong*), a city of the ancient Philistines, which was destroyed by Alexander Janneus, about B. C. 96. It was rebuilt by Gabinius, and conferred by Augustus upon Herod; toward this place Philip proceeded by direction of the angel when sent to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts viii. 26), and when Luke wrote, the city had again been destroyed, and was then desolate.

GENNESARET (*garden of a prince*), a name given to the Sea of Galilee. (see GALILEE), and likewise to the land adjoining it. (Matt. xiv. 34; Mark vi. 53; Luke v. 1.)

GENTILES (*"the nations"*), a name applied by the Hebrews to all who were not Jews. They are promised by the prophets to be called to the faith (Ps. ii. 8), and Paul is particularly considered the Apostle of the Gentiles (1 Tim. ii. 7), while the others were termed the Apostles of the circumcision (Gal. ii. 8). Luke, in the "Acts" usually designates the Gentiles by the name of *Grecians* and *Greeks* (Acts vi. 1, xi. 20, xviii. 4, &c.); and so does Paul in his Epistles (Rom. i. 14, 16, ii. 9, 10, x. 12; 1 Cor. i. 22, 24; Gal. iii. 28). So John in his Gospel. (John xii. 20.)

Gate. The entrances to walled cities in the East were, and still are, secured by gates, either of wood, iron, or brass. (Acts xii. 10.) Among the special purposes for which they were used may be mentioned: 1. As places of public resort. (Gen. xix. 1, 23, x. 24, xx. 24; 1 Sam. xiv. 18, &c.) 2. Places for public deliberation, administration of justice, or of audience for kings and rulers, or ambassadors. Deut. xvi. 18, xxi. 19, xxv. 7; Josh. xx. 4; Judg. ix. 35, &c. 3. Public markets. (2 Kings vii. 1.) In heathen towns, the open spaces near the gates appear to have been sometimes used as places for sacrifices. (Acts xiv. 13; comp. 2 Kings xxiii. 8.) The gates of the city were carefully guarded, and closed at nightfall. (Deut. iii. 5; Josh. ii. 5, 7; Judg. ix. 40, 44.)

GERGESENES (*men from pilgrimage*), or *Gergashites*, the posterity of Canaan; a people who settled on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, in the region of Decapolis. The town was called *Gergesa*, or *Geresa*, and in the same district was the city of *Gadara*, whence

the Gadarenes, and Gergesenes have been confounded one with another, so that our Lord going into the country of the Gadarenes (Mark v. 1), is the same as going into the region of the Gergesenes. (Matt. viii. 28.)

GETHSEMANE (*plentiful valley*, or *oil press*), a village on the Mount of Olives, whither our Saviour sometimes retired, and in a garden of which He endured His agony, and was betrayed. (Matt. xxvi. 36; Mark xiv. 32.) "The space inclosed as Gethsemane," says *Prof. Hackett*, "contains about one-third of an acre, and is surrounded by a low wall, covered with white stucco. It is entered by a gate, kept under lock and key, under the control of one of the convents at Jerusalem. The eight olive trees here are evidently very aged, most of them, though they are still verdant and productive, are so decayed that heaps of stones have been piled up against their trunks, to keep them from being blown down by the wind. . . . Other olive trees, apparently quite as old, occur just beyond the limits of the inclosure. It may be allowed that the original garden may have been more or less extensive than the present site, or have stood a few rods farther to the north or the south, but far, certainly, from that spot, it need not be supposed to have been."

GOLGOTHA (the Hebrew word for the *place of a skull*, the same as *Calvary*, which see). Here our Saviour was crucified. (Matt. xxvii. 33; Mark xv. 22; John xix. 17.)

GOMORRAH (*rebellious people*), or *Gomorraha*, one of the cities destroyed by fire in the time of Lot; their fate a warning to others. (Matt. x. 15; Mark vi. 11.)

GREECE. A large country in the south of Europe; in its more extended sense it includes Ionia, and Asia Minor. Paul's visit was to Greece Proper. (Acts xx. 2.) Its inhabitants were called Grecians. (Acts vi. 1, ix. 29, xi. 20.)

GREEK, a term in the New Testament implying a *Gentile* (which see), and who was, or was not, a proselyte to Judaism, or converted to Christianity. (Mark vii. 26; John vii. 35, xii. 20; Acts xiv. 1, xvi. 1, xvii. 4, 12, xviii. 4, 17, xix. 10, 17, xx. 21, xxi. 28.) A *Grecian* was a *Hellenistic* or *Grecizing Jew*, who held to the Septuagint Scriptures (Acts vi. 1, ix. 29), and of Alexandrian rather than Babylonian sympathies (see "*Hebrew*").

HEBER (*companion*), a progenitor of Abraham, and of Christ. (Luke iii. 35.)

HEBREW. A *Hebrew* was a direct descendant from Abraham, educated in Judea, well versed in the learning and traditions of his forefathers, and conversant with the Hebrew tongue (Acts xxi. 40, xxii. 2, xxvi. 14), and holding to the Targums and Chaldee paraphrases of the Scriptures. They were the *Aramaean Jews* who resided in the region of the Tigris and Euphrates, and in Syria and Palestine. In one sense, therefore, the Hebrew was more esteemed than the *Hellenists*.

HELI (*ascending*), the father, or rather the *father-in-law* of Joseph, the husband of Mary. (Luke iii. 23.)

HELLENISTIC JEWS, were those Jews not purely descended from the stock of Abraham; and who adopted Grecian habits, and spoke the Greek tongue according to the Hebrew idiom, whence their name of *Hellenists* or *Grecians* (Acts vi. 1), as opposed to the pure *Hebrews*, and the pure *Greeks* or *Hellenes*; and their language was called *Hellenistic Greek*, which is the language of the New Testament. They came from the "dispersed Jews" of Alexandria; as the Hebrews from those of Babylonia and Mesopotamia.

HERMON. Called Great Hermon, north-east of Gennesaret, is considered by many as the most probable locality of the scene of the Transfiguration of our Lord. "It is impossible," says *Stanley*, "to look up from the plain to the towering peaks of Hermon, almost the only mountain which deserves the name in Palestine, and not be struck with its appropriateness to the scene. That magnificent height, mingling with all the views of Northern Palestine, from Shechem upward, though often alluded to as the northern barrier of the Holy Land, is connected with no historical event in the Old or New Testament. Yet this fact of its rising high above all the other hills of Pal-

tine, and of its setting the last limit to the wanderings of Him who was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, concurs with the supposition which the words of the Scripture narrative inevitably force upon us. High up on its southern slopes there must be many a point where the disciples could be taken 'apart by themselves.' Even the transient comparison of the celestial splendor with the snow, where alone it could be seen in Palestine, should not, perhaps, be wholly overlooked."

HEROD THE GREAT (*mount of pride*), was an Idumean, and the son of Antipater and Cypros; by skillful management he obtained from Mark Antony the kingdom of Judea, B. C. 36; and to conciliate the Jews, he divorced his wife *Doris*, and united himself to *Mariamne* of the royal family of the Asmoneans; but he maintained himself upon the throne by the most atrocious cruelty and bloodshed. On the fall of his patron Antony Herod judiciously secured the friendship of Augustus (Octavius), by whom he was confirmed in the possession of his kingdom. The jealousy, however, of the king, and his remorse of conscience, made him suspicious of all around him; his wife, whom he loved to extravagance, he ordered to execution, as he had lately done her father and her brothers; and not long after, her mother shared the same fate. Herod next cast aside the mask of religion, and attempted to uproot the prejudices of the Jews in favor of the Mosaic Law, and make them conform to the customs of heathen nations; this design of Romanizing Judea generated the hatred of the Jews against his rule; conspiracies were plotted against his life, which he frustrated by redoubled watchfulness, and a most rigid system of police; at length, thinking it better to endeavor to quiet the indignation of the Jews, and yield in some measure to their religious prejudices, he undertook to rebuild the Temple on a scale of great magnificence. The dreadful troubles, however, which continued to arise from the dissensions in Herod's family, hastened him to the grave, and were such as scarcely to find a parallel in history. His two sons by *Mariamne*, Alexander and Aristobulus, were accused of conspiring for the crown, and were immediately put to death; another son, named Antipater, soon after formed a like design, and met a similar fate; five days after which, *Herod*, who had been a long time ill with a most excruciating disease, himself died in the 37th year of his reign. Just before the execution of Antipater, our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST was born (Matt. ii. 1); an event which created great anxiety in the mind of Herod (Matt. ii. 3); on the visit of the Magi, he endeavored through them to find out where the infant Jesus was, that he might destroy Him (Matt. ii. 7, 8); but the Magi, under the guidance of a Superior Power, frustrated his design; in a moment of rage, therefore, he ordered all the male children of Bethlehem of two years old and under to be put to death, thus hoping to secure the death of our Saviour (Matt. ii. 16); but the Holy family had retired into Egypt, and escaped his murderous design, and soon after *Herod* died as above stated; and Archelaus, his son, reigned in his stead.

HEROD AGRIPPA I. (*sick, sorrowful*), the son of *Aristobulus*, and grandson of Herod the Great, was brought up at the court of Rome; on leaving Rome, his uncle Herod Antipas supplied him with funds, till his great extravagance compelled his uncle to withhold his liberality. Agrippa then borrowed large sums of money from the Jews, and returned to the court of Tiberius, the emperor; but he had not been long here before he was accused of having absconded from Judea with money out of the imperial exchequer. By the assistance of the Empress Antonia, Agrippa appeased the anger of Tiberius. Shortly after, however, Caligula succeeded to the empire, and invested Agrippa with the tetrarchy of Batanea and Trachonitis, which his uncle Philip had possessed, and likewise with the tetrarchy of Lysanias. Claudius, the succeeding emperor, gave him in addition Judea and Samaria. At length, with a view of gratifying the Jews, he began to persecute the Church of Christ (Acts xii. 1); he put to death James the Apostle (Acts xii. 2), and imprisoned Peter (Acts xii. 3, 4); but the hand of retributive justice overtook him, for shortly after, proceeding to Cesarea to hold certain

games in honor of Claudius, the applause and impious adoration of the people led him to forget the existence of a Supreme Being, and in a moment an angel smote him with disease, because he gave not God the glory; and in the course of five days, racked with torturing pains, he was eaten up of worms, and died. (Acts xii. 20-23.)

HEROD AGRIPPA II. was the son of the above, and called simply "Agrippa;" he was staying at the court of Claudius at the time of his father's death; where he was detained a few years, the emperor sending Cuspius Fadus into Judea to direct the government. On the death, however, of his uncle *Herod*, king of Chaleis, Claudius bestowed on Agrippa his dominions, A. D. 48; and four years afterward, A. D. 52-3, annexed to them the provinces of Gaulanitus, Trachonitis, Batanæa, Paneas and Abilene which had formerly belonged to Lysanias. Nero, the successor of Claudius, gave him still further Julius in Persæa, and Tarichæa and Tiberias in Galilee. A little before this, when Festus was governor of Judea, Agrippa, and Bernice his sister, who lived with him in a state of incest, went to Cesarea to salute him (Acts xxv. 13); while there, Festus spoke of the imprisonment of Paul (Acts xxv. 14-27); and Agrippa being anxious to hear him, the Apostle was brought forth; after hearing his history and defense (Acts xxvi.), Paul by the force of his argument almost persuaded Agrippa "to be a Christian" (Acts xxvi. 28), and at the conclusion Agrippa said, that "the prisoner might have been set at liberty, had he not appealed to Cæsar." (Acts xxvi. 32.) After some years, A. D. 66, the rebellion of the Jews broke out, when Agrippa was compelled to unite his forces with those of the Romans, and after the fall of Jerusalem he retired to Rome with his sister, where he died, about A. D. 90.

HEROD ANTIPAS, (*for, or against all*), was the son of Herod the Great, by *Cleopatra*, of Jerusalem: he succeeded to a portion of his father's dominions, as tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. (Luke iii. 1.) In honor of Julia, the wife of the emperor Augustus, he called Bethsaida *Julius*; and in honor of Tiberius he called the sea of Cinnereth the "*Sea of Tiberias*." Antipas first married the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia, but he soon divorced her for *Herodias*, his brother Philip's wife. (Matt. xiv. iii.) For this incestuous proceeding John the Baptist reprovèd him. (Matt. xiv. 4.) Antipas therefore, instigated by Herodias, imprisoned John, and eventually ordered him to be beheaded. (Matt. xiv. 5-11; Mark vi. 14, 17, 18; Luke iii. 19, 20, ix. 7, 9.) The fame of Jesus reaching the ears of Antipas, he thought John had risen from the dead (Matt. xiv. 1); and he is said to have sought the death of our Lord (Luke xiii. 31); but when Christ was sent before him by Pilate to be examined he found no fault in Him: (Luke xxiii. 7-15.) Subsequently, Antipas was accused to Tiberius of having joined the conspiracy of Sejanus against the emperor, and of succoring the Parthians, the enemies of Rome; he was accordingly banished to Lyons in Gaul, where he died.

— PHILIP (*lover of horses, a warrior*), the tetrarch of Ituræa and Trachonitis (Luke iii. 1), is thought by some to have been the first husband of Herodias, who left him to live with his brother Herod Antipas. (Matt. xiv. 3; Mark vi. 17; Luke iii. 19.) Most critics, however, on the authority of Josephus, take Philip, *the tetrarch* (Luke iii. 1), to be a different person from Philip, *the husband of Herodias* (Luke iii. 19, &c.); the tetrarch they imagine to have been the son of Herod the Great by *Malthace* (others say by *Cleopatra*), and the husband of Herodias to have been a son of *Mariamne* (daughter of Simon the high priest), and this Mariamne having been discovered plotting against Herod was divorced, and her son Philip disinherited. The pride and ambition therefore of Herodias not relishing this disgrace, she abandoned Philip, and married Herod Antipas. Herod Philip, the *tetrarch*, the same critics observe, married *Salome*, the daughter of Herodias; and, they say, that the "Philip" of the Evangelists is the "Herod son of Mariamne" of Josephus; a private individual different from Philip the tetrarch. Philip the tetrarch was a very amiable prince, and much beloved by his subjects; he

enlarged and beautified the city of Paneas, and in honor of Tiberias called it *Cesarea* (Cesarea Philippi.)

HERODIANS, a sect of the Jews in the time of our Lord, and rather of a political than a religious character (Matt. xxii. 16; Mark iii. 6, xii. 13); according to Tertullian and others, they took their name from believing Herod to be the Messiah, and who was to raise the country to the highest pitch of glory; but there is no foundation for this idea in Scripture. They most probably were a set of men of very profligate habits, and strongly attached to the family and rule of Herod; and by consequence very zealous for the authority of the Romans, and the introduction of Roman manners, games and other heathen usages. This brought them opposed to the Pharisees, who considered it contrary to the law to have a king who was not of their own nation, and therefore held it to be illegal to pay the taxes. Some think the Herodians belonged to the sect of the Sadducees; but this is doubtful. The caution of Christ to His disciples to "beware of the leaven of Herod" (Mark viii. 15), probably meant to beware of suffering views of interest and worldly policy to interfere, or be commingled with true religion.

HERODIAS (*mount of pride*), the daughter of Aristobulus and Bernice, was granddaughter of Herod the Great, and sister of Herod Agrippa I. She married her uncle Philip, by whom she had a daughter Salome, but he falling into disgrace, and being obliged to live in private, Herodias left him, and married his brother Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee. This proceeding incurring the censure of John the Baptist (Matt. xiv. 3-6; Mark vi. 17-22; Luke iii. 19), she procured his imprisonment; and, subsequently, through her daughter Salome, whose dancing inflamed Herod, effected his death. Her husband shortly after falling into disgrace was banished to Lyons in Gaul, whither she accompanied him; and there, it is supposed, died.

*HOUSE. Oriental houses are very unlike our own. They are commonly square in their form, and of a single story. On approaching them from the street, a single door is seen in the center, and, usually, directly above it, a single latticed window. This destitution of doors and lights from the streets, though it gives their dwellings a somber appearance, is yet adapted to the habits of retirement and secrecy among the people of the East, where they are desirous of keeping their *females* from observation. On entering the only door in front, the first room is a small square room, surrounded with benches, called the *porch*. In this room the master of the family commonly transacts business, and, on private occasions, receives visits. Passing through the porch, you enter a large square room directly in the center of the building, called the *court*. This court is paved commonly with marble, and if possible, a *fountain* of water is formed in the center, to give it beauty, and to diffuse a grateful coolness. This room is surrounded by a gallery, or covered walk, on every side. From that covered walk, doors open into the other apartments of the house.

This center room, or court, is commonly uncovered or open above. In wet weather however, and in times of great heat of the sun, it is covered with an awning or canvas, stretched on cords, and capable of being easily removed or rolled up. From the court to the roof the ascent is by flights of stairs, either in the covered walk or gallery, or in the porch. The roof is nearly flat. It is made of earth, or in houses of the rich is a firmly constructed flooring, made of coals, chalk, gypsum and ashes, made hard by repeated blows. On those roofs spears of grass, wheat or barley, sometimes spring up, but these are soon withered by the sun. (Ps. cxxix. 6-8.) The roof is a favorite place for walking, for repose in the cool of the day, for conversation, and for devotion. It was surrounded with a *balustrade*, or railing, breast-high, on the sides, but where a house was contiguous to another, and of the same height, the railing was lower, so as to walk from one roof to another. In cities constructed in this manner, it was possible to walk through a considerable part of the city on the roofs of the houses. A breast-work or railing was, of course, built in the same manner around the open space in the

center, to prevent them from falling into the court below. This railing or breast-work is what Luke v. 19 says, they let the paralytic down through.

ICONIUM (*coming*), now Cognior, Koniah, or *Koniych*, was formerly the capital of Lycaonia in Asia Minor: Paul and Barnabas came hither from Antioch in Pisidia (Acts xiii. 51, xvi. 2), and while here they preached in the synagogue (Acts xiv. 1); but the unbelieving Jews having stirred up a tumult against them, they fled to Lystra. (Acts xiv. 2-6, 19.)

IDUMÆA (*red, earthy*), a district of Arabia, south of Judea, extending to the Red Sea, and anciently called the land of *Edom*, from having been occupied by the descendants of Edom, another name of Esau. Herod the Great is said to have been an Idumæan: and many of its inhabitants joined the multitudes following Jesus. (Mark iii. 8.)

INCENSE. This substance was composed of the perfumes stacte, onycha, galbanum and pure frankincense. (See Exod. xxx. 34-38.) All incense which was not made of these ingredients was forbidden to be offered. (Exod. xxx. 9.) The Jews were forbidden to make this composition for private use. Incense was burned by the priest morning and evening. It was placed in a *cup* or *vase*, called the *censer*, upon the Golden Altar in the Holy Place, hence called the *Altar of Incense*, with burning coals beneath, producing by its smoke a powerful perfume, filling the temple with its fragrance. Incense would seem to be symbolical, not of prayer itself, but of that which makes prayer acceptable—the intercession of Christ. In Rev. viii. 3, 4, the incense is spoken of as something distinct from, though offered with, the prayers of all the saints, and in Rev. v. 8, it is the golden vials, and not the odors or incense, which are said to be the prayers of saints.

ISAAC (*laughter*), the child of promise, son of Abraham and Sarah, and father of the patriarch Jacob (Matt. i. 2; Luke iii. 34; Acts vii. 8), his being in the kingdom of heaven alluded to by our Lord. (Matt. viii. 11; Luke xiii. 28.)

ISAIAH, or ESAIAS (*health, or salvation of the Lord*), one of the greater prophets, and who, from prophesying especially concerning Christ, is called the *Evangelical* prophet. His prophecies are frequently referred to in the New Testament: as in Matt. iii. 3 iv. 14, viii. 17, xii. 17, xiii. 14, xv. 7; Mark vii. 6; Luke iii. 4, iv. 17; John i. 23, xii. 38, 39, 41; Acts viii. 28, 30, xxviii. 25.

ISCARIOT. See JUDAS.

ISRAEL (*prevailing*), a name given to the patriarch Jacob by the angel who wrestled with him: in the New Testament the name is applied to his descendants, the Jews (*passim*); hence *Israelites*.

Italy, a celebrated country in the south of Europe, of which Rome was the capital. Aquila came from this place (Acts xviii. 2), and Paul journeyed hither when a prisoner (Acts xxvii. 1). The Roman cohort garrisoned in Judea, and commanded by Cornelius the centurion, was called "the *Italian band*." (Acts x. 1.)

ITURÆA (*mountainous*), a province of Syria or Arabia, beyond the Jordan, east of Batanœa, and south of Trachonitis, over which *Philip* was tetrarch when John the Baptist commenced his ministry. (Luke iii. 1.)

JACOB (*heeler, supplanter*)—(1) the son of Isaac and Rebecca, and twin brother of Esau, and the father of the twelve patriarchs. He is referred to in Matt. i. 2, viii. 11; Luke iii. 34, xiii. 28; Acts vii. 14.)

—(2) the father of *Joseph*, the husband of Mary. (Matt. i. 15.)

JACOB'S WELL—a deep well near the city of Shechem (or Sichem, or Sychar), in Samaria, cut out of the rock; it became celebrated from the discourse of our Saviour with the woman of Samaria. (John iv. 5-30.)

JAIRUS (*illuminated*), a chief ruler of the synagogue at Capernaum, whose daughter, falling dangerously ill, he besought Jesus to heal her. (Mark v. 22; Luke viii. 41.) As our Lord was proceeding, the girl died; but when He arrived at the ruler's house, He raised her to life. (Mark v. 35-43; Luke viii. 49-56.)

JAMES (*supplanter*)—(1) *the Greater*, the son of Zebedee and Salome, and brother to John the Evangelist. (See Appendix A.)

—(2) *the Less*, the son of Alphæus or Cleopas, and brother of our Lord.

JANNA (*answering, afflicted, poor*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 24.)

JARED (*ruling, coming down*), the father of Enoch, and a progenitor of Christ. (Luke iii. 37.)

JASON (*healing*), a kinsman of Paul's, in whose house he dwelt at Thessalonica, and who hazarded his life to save the Apostles in a sedition excited in that city. (Acts xvii. 5-9.) He seems after this to have gone to Rome. (Rom. xvi. 21.)

JECHONIAS, or *Jeconiah* (*stability of the Lord*), son and successor of Jehoiachim, king of Judah, and a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 11, 12.)

JEREMIAH (*exalting the Lord*), one of the greater prophets, who lived in the reign of King Josiah. (Matt. ii. 17, xxvii. 9.) John the Baptist thought to have been he. (Matt. xvi. 14.)

JEREMY, the same as *Jeremiah*, which see.

JERICO (*the moon, month*), a city about 26 miles north-east of Jerusalem, and six from the Jordan. Christ passed through it, and performed a miracle in its neighborhood. (Luke xix. 1)—the parable of the good Samaritan laid here (Luke x. 30.) By the faith of its assailants in the time of Joshua its walls fell down.

JERUSALEM (*vision of peace*), the metropolis of Palestine, and the seat of government from the time of David. It was called *Salem* in the time of Abraham, and Melchizedec was its king (Gen. xiv. 18; Heb. vii. 2), and subsequently it was called *Jebus* (Josh. xv. 8), whence its derivation, "*Jebus-Salem*," "*Jerusalem*." Christ lamented over it (Matt. xxiii. 37), and foretold its destruction (Matt. xxiv. 2-28), which took place by the Roman armies under Titus, A. D. 70. It is mentioned continually in New Testament history, and it was the scene of our Lord's passion. (Matt. xxvi., xxvii., &c.)

JESSE (*a gift, a being*), the son of Obed and father of David, and therefore a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 5, 6; Luke iii. 32.)

JESUS (*Saviour*)—(1) our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST.

—(2) the name of *Jeshua* or *Joshua*, the captain of Israel. (Acts vii. 45.)

JEWS (*praising*), the people of Israel, so called from their ancestor, *Judah*, especially after the Babylonish captivity.

JOANNA (*gift of the Lord*)—(1) the wife Chuza, Herod's steward; after being healed by our Lord, she followed and administered unto Him. (Luke viii. 2, 3.)

—(2) mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 27.)

JOATHAM, or *Jotham* (*absolute, perfect*), son and successor of Uzziah, king of Judah, and a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 9.)

JOEL (*willing, swearing*), the son of Pethuel, and one of the minor prophets; he was contemporary with Jeremiah, and his prophecy is referred to by Peter. (Acts ii. 16.)

JOHN (*gracious, holy*)—(1) *the Baptist*, the son of Zacharias, the priest, and Elizabeth, was born six months before our Lord. His birth, name and office, were foretold to his father while performing his functions in the Temple (Luke i. 10-17; Mal. iv. 5), and for his incredulity he was struck dumb until the naming of the child, when his faith gave him the name of *John*, and Zacharias' speech was immediately restored. From this time the child was brought up in the wilderness in a very abstemious manner, and in coarse clothing (Matt. iii. 4; Mark i. 6), and when he became 30 years of age, he manifested himself to the world as the forerunner of the Messiah, whom he declared about to come. (Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 7; John i. 6, 15, 19, 27.) He preached repentance and confession of sins, and induced many to be baptized in the Jordan, whence he was called "*The Baptist*." (Matt. iii. 1; Mark i. 5; Luke iii. 3; John iii. 23; Acts i. 5, xi. 16, xiii. 24.) He baptized Christ Himself (Matt. iii. 14), and the next day proclaimed

Him to be the "Lamb of God." (John i. 29.) A little time after, in consequence of reproving Herod for marrying Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, he was imprisoned (Matt. iv. 12; Mark i. 14; Luke iii. 19), and at the instance of Herodias, by the request of her daughter Salome, Herod commanded him to be beheaded. (Matt. xiv. 1; Mark vi. 14, 16; Luke ix. 7.) While John was in prison, he sent certain of his disciples to inquire if Jesus was the expected Messiah. (Matt. ix. 14, xi. 2, 4; Mark ii. 18; Luke v. 33, vii. 18, 19, 22, xi. 1; John iii. 25.) Subsequently Jesus bore testimony to the character of John. (Matt. xi. 7, 14; Luke vii. 24, xvi. 16; John v. 33, 36, x. 41.) John was much esteemed by the people (Matt. xxi. 26; Mark xi. 32; Luke xx. 6), and Herod was afraid of him (Mark vi. 20), yet for his oath's sake he sacrificed him to the revengeful temper of Herodias. Paul found some of John's disciples at Ephesus, who, not knowing whether there was any Holy Ghost, were baptized by the Apostles. (Acts xix. 3-7.)

—(2)—(*the Apostle and Evangelist*). (See Appendix A.)

—(3) MARK. (See Mark.)

—(4) A son of Annas the high priest, before whom and others, the Apostles were examined for preaching in the name of Jesus. (Acts iv. 6.)

JONA (*a dove*), or Jonas, the father of Peter. (Matt. xvi. 17; John i. 42, xxi. 15-17.)

JONAH (*a dove*), or Jonas, one of the minor prophets, son of Amittai, and he who was sent to preach repentance to the Ninevites; but in his endeavor to avoid this duty he was cast into the sea, and swallowed by a whale, in which he remained three days and three nights. When the Jews asked our Lord for a sign, He gave them only the sign of the prophet Jonas. (Matt. xii. 39-41, xvi. 4; Luke xi. 29, 30.)

JONAN (*a dove*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 30.)

JOPPA (*comeliness*), Japho, or Jaffa, a sea-port of Judea, on the Mediterranean, 30 miles south of Cesarea, and 45 north-west of Jerusalem. Peter visited Joppa, where he remained at the house of Simon the tanner many days. In this city he raised Tabitha (Dorcas) to life (Acts ix. 36, 43), and while here Cornelius sent for him. (Acts x. 5, 23, xi. 5.)

JORAM, or Jehoram (*height of the Lord*), son and successor of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 8.)

JORDAN (from *Jor*, a spring, and *Dan*, a town near its source), the principal river of Judea, rising at the foot of the Anti-Libanus mountains at Cesarea Philippi (Paneas). It runs a course of upward of 100 miles due south, passing through Lake Merom, and the Sea of Galilee, and finally empties itself into the Dead Sea. John baptized in this river (Matt. iii. 6; Mark i. 5, 9; John i. 28, iii. 26), and here Christ also was baptized. (Matt. iii. 13.)

JORIM (*exaltation of the Lord*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke. iii. 29.)

JOSAPHAT, or Jehosaphat (*the Lord is the Judge*), the son and successor of Asa, king of Judah, and a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 8.)

JOSE (*sparing, lifting up*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 29.)

JOSEPH (*increasing*)—(1) the son of the patriarch Jacob, by Rachel (John iv. 5); he was sold into Egypt by his brethren. (Acts vii. 9, 13, 14.)

—(2) *The husband of Mary* was the son of Jacob, and grandson of Matthan; and as well as being a descendant of the royal house of David, he was also the *reputed* father of Christ. (Matt. i. 6, 16; Luke i. 27, iii. 23.) An angel informed him of the nature of Mary's conception, which reconciled him to her position (Matt. i. 19, 24), after which he proceeded with her to Bethlehem to be taxed, where CHRIST was born. (Luke ii. 4, 16.) Directed by an angel, he retired with Mary and the child into Egypt, till the death of Herod (Matt. ii. 13), after which he returned (Matt. ii. 19), and took up his

abode at Nazareth, where it is supposed he followed the calling of a carpenter. (Matt. xiii. 55; Luke iv. 22; John i. 45, vi. 42.) In one of his visits to Jerusalem to keep the passover, Joseph lost the child Jesus, then about 12 years old, and after three days found Him in the temple disputing with the doctors. (Luke ii. 41-43.) What became of Joseph is not known, but he is thought to have died before our Lord entered on His public ministry.

—(3) of *Arimathea*, a Jewish counselor, and private disciple of Christ's. (Matt. xxvii. 57-59; Mark xv. 42-45; Luke xxiii. 50; John xix. 38.) He did not consent to the condemnation of Jesus (Luke xxiii. 51), and after our Lord's crucifixion he went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus, and after wrapping it in linen, buried it in his own tomb. (Luke xxiii. 52, 53.)

JOSEPH (4) called also *Barsabas*, and surnamed Justus; he was a candidate with Matthias for the Apostleship, vacant by the death of Judas Iscariot, but he lost it. (Acts i. 23)

—(5) called also *Joses*, which see.

—(6, &c.) mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 24, 26, 30.)

JOSES (the same as *Joseph*) was the son of Mary and Cleophas, and brother of James the Less, and therefore one of the brethren of our Lord. (Matt. xiii. 55, xxvii. 56; Mark vi. 3, xv. 40, 47.) Some critics think this person to be the same as Joseph, called also *Barsabas*. See above. *Joseph* (4).

JOSEPH, or *Josiah* (*the fire of the Lord*), son and successor of Amon, king of Judah, and a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 10, 11.)

JUDA (*confession, praise*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 26, 30, 33.)

JUDAS (*confession, praise*)—(1) or *Barsabas*, one of the disciples sent by the Apostles from Jerusalem to Antioch, with the decree of the council respecting adherence to the Mosaic ritual. (Acts xv. 22-32.)

—(2) *Gaulanitis*, or the Galilean, a native of the city of Gamala, in that district, and who raised a rebellion in Judea against the enrolment of taxing ordered by Cyrenius, in which he perished. (Acts v. 37.)

—(3) *Iscariot* (*hireling, or a man of Karioth, or Cerioth, to which he belonged*), one of the Apostles of our Lord, and appointed their treasurer. (Matt. x. 4; Mark iii. 19; Luke vi. 16.) He was angry with Mary for anointing our Lord, and wasting the ointment. (John xii. 4.) Christ foretold his treachery. (Matt. xxvi. 21; Mark xiv. 18; Luke xxii. 21; John vi. 71, xiii. 21, 26.) Judas, after this, went and bargained with the Pharisees (Matt. xxvi. 14; Mark xiv. 10; Luke xxii. 3); he then betrayed our Lord in the garden of Gethsemane (Matt. xxvi. 47; Mark xiv. 43; Luke xxii. 47; John xviii. 3), but repenting of his infamy, he returned the money to the chief priests, and went and hanged himself. (Matt. xxvii. 3; Acts i. 18.)

JUDAS (4) or *Jude*, called also *Lebbeus* (*confessing*), and *Thaddeus* (*confessing*), or the *Zealot*, was the son of Mary and Cleophas, and the brother of James the Less, and consequently one of the brethren of our Lord. (See Appendix A.)

—(5) or *Judah*, a son of Jacob, and a progenitor of Joseph, the husband of Mary. (Matt. i. 2, 3; Luke iii. 33.)

JUDEA (*confessing*), a name derived from *Juda*, and applied not only to the portion of the tribe of Judah, but sometimes to the whole land of Israel; called also *Canaan*, *Palestine*, *Land of Promise*, and the *Land of Judea*. (Matt. xxiv. 16; Acts i. 8.)

JULIUS (*soft, downy*), the centurion of the Augustan cohort, to whose care Festus committed Paul to be conveyed a prisoner to Rome. (Acts xxvii. 1.) He showed to the Apostle great courtesy (Acts xxvii. 3), suffering him to land at Sidon, and visit his friends there, and saved him from the murderous designs of the soldiers. (Acts xxvii. 43.)

JUPITER (*the father that helpeth*), the supreme god of the heathens, whom they regarded as the maker of heaven and earth, and ruler of the universe. (Acts xix. 35.) Jupiter and Mercury the god of *eloquence*, were supposed to be those gods who most frequently assumed the human form; the former was represented as a large, majestic-looking man, and aged, while the latter, who generally attended him, was young, light and active; on which account, when Paul and Barnabas were preaching in and about Lystra in Lycaonia, they made so great an impression as to lead the people to call Barnabas *Jupiter*, and Paul *Mercurius*, because he was the chief speaker. (Acts xiv. 12, 13.)

JUSTUS (*just*)—(1) the surname of *Joseph Barsabas*, one of the candidates for the Apostleship vacant by the death of Judas Iscariot, but the lot fell upon Matthias. (Acts i. 23.)

—(2) a Christian in Corinth, converted by Paul, and in whose house the Apostle preached. (Acts xviii. 7), when rejected from the synagogue.

KIDRON, or **CEDRON** (*making black, or salt*), a brook running through the valley of Jehoshaphat, on the east side of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives. Our Lord crossed it on His way to the garden of Gethsemane. (John xviii. 1.)

KISH, or **CIS** (*hard, straw*), the son of Ner, a Benjamite, and father of king Saul. (Acts xiii. 21.)

LAMECH (*poor, smitten*), father of Noah, and a progenitor of our Lord. (Luke iii. 36.)

LASEA (*thick, wise*), a city of the isle of Crete, near to the Fair Havens. (Acts xxvii. 8.)

Laying on of hands, in blessing (Matt. xix. 15), in healing (Mark v. 23, vi. 5, xvi. 18; Luke iv. 40, xiii. 13; Acts ix. 17, xxviii. 8), in imparting the gifts of the Spirit (Acts viii. 17, 19, xix. 6), in ordaining (Acts vi. 6, xiii. 3).

LAZARUS (*help of God*)—(1) the brother of Martha and Mary, living at Bethany, near Jerusalem, and in whose house Christ sometimes lodged. He was taken ill, and died, and after he had been in the grave four days, our Lord raised him to life. (John xi. 2, 5, 11, 14, 43, xii. 17.) After this, six days before Christ's last passover, Lazarus sat at table with Him (John xii. 2), and many people came to see him. (John xii. 9.) What became of Lazarus is not known.

—(2) the poor afflicted man in the parable who sat at the rich man's gate begging, and when dead was received into Abraham's bosom. (Luke xvi. 19–25.)

LEBBEUS (*confessing, praising*), one of the twelve Apostles (Matt. x. 3), the same as *Judas* or *Jude*, which see; also Appendix A.

LEGION, a body of foot soldiers in the Roman army, comprising ten cohorts, each cohort fifty maniples, and each maniple fifteen men, whence a full legion contained 6,000 men. Jesus cured a demoniac, who called himself "*Legion*," as if possessed by a legion of devils. (Mark v. 9.) Christ told Peter that twelve legions of angels would come to His relief if it were necessary. (Matt. xxvi. 53.)

LEVI (*joined*)—(1) one of the twelve Apostles, also called *Matthew*. (Mark ii. 14; Luke v. 27, 29.)

—(2) mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 24, 29.)

LIBERTINES. The Jews are thought to have been either emancipated slaves from Italy, or their descendants (*Libertini*), or a people from a place in Africa, near Carthage called *Libertina*; they had a synagogue in Jerusalem for their special use, and joined with the Cyrenians and Alexandrians in disputing with Stephen. (Acts vi. 9.)

LIBYA (*gross*), a province of Egypt in Africa, from which place many Jews were in Jerusalem on the noted day of Pentecost. (Acts ii. 10.)

LOCUSTS. The insects of this name are still used for food in the East. There are different ways of preparing them for food. Sometimes they are ground and pounded,

and then mixed with flour and water and made into cakes; or they are salted and then eaten; sometimes smoked, boiled or roasted, stewed, or fried in butter. *Dr. Kitto*, who tasted locusts, says they are more like shrimps than anything else; and an English clergyman, some years ago, cooked some of the green grasshoppers (*Locusta viridissima*), boiling them in water half an hour, throwing away the head, wings and legs, and then sprinkling them with pepper and salt, and adding butter. He found them excellent.

THE LORD'S SUPPER, instituted by Christ just before His death. It is also called the "*Eucharist*," because Christ in the institution of it *gave thanks* unto God. The passages of Scripture particularly recommending this sacrament are Matt. xxvi. 26; Mark xiv. 22; Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. v. 7, 8, x. 16, xi. 23-29; Acts ii. 42, xx. 7.

LOT (*wrapped, joined*), the nephew of Abraham, delivered from the destruction of Sodom by an angel, but his wife looking back became a pillar of salt. The circumstance alluded to by our Lord as a warning. (Luke xvii. 28, 32.)

LUCIUS (*of light*), of Cyrene, one of the prophets of the Christian Church at Antioch (Acts xiii. 1), and by some thought to have been one of the Seventy.

LYCAONIA (*a wolf*), a province of Asia Minor, forming part of Cappadocia; here Paul preached in the cities of Iconium, Derbe and Lystra. (Acts xiv. 6, 11, &c.)

LYCIA, a province of Asia Minor, having Phrygia on the north, and the Mediterranean on the south; Paul landed at the port of Myra, in Lycia, on his journey to Rome. (Acts xxvii. 5.)

LYDDA (*standing water*), a city about 14 miles north-east of Joppa, and 32 north-west from Jerusalem. Peter visited the saints in this place (Acts ix. 32), and cured one Eneas of the palsy (Acts ix. 33, 34), and before he left, they all "turned to the Lord." (Acts ix. 35, 38.)

LYDIA (*standing water*), a woman of Thyatira, a seller of purple, who dwelt at Philippi, in Macedonia. (Acts xvi. 14.) She was a Jewish proselyte, and converted to Christianity by Paul, and herself and family were all baptized. After this she prevailed on the Apostle and his fellow-laborers to make her house their home. (Acts xvi. 15-40.) Lydia was also a country of Asia Minor, peopled by the posterity of Lud.

LYSANIAS (*dissolving, sadness*), a tetrarch of Abilene, a small province of Lebanon. (Luke iii. 1.)

LYSIAS (*dissolving*), the chief captain of the Roman troops in Jerusalem. (Acts xxiii. 26; see Claudius Lysias.)

LYSTRA (*dissolving*), a city of Lycaonia in Asia Minor, 40 miles west of Iconium, and of which place Timothy was a native. (Acts xvi. 1, 2.) Paul and Barnabas preached the Gospel here, and having miraculously cured a lame man, they were taken for gods, for the tutelary deities of the city, Jupiter and Mercurius; and sacrifices prepared for them. Jews, however, from Antioch and Iconium excited the people against the Apostles even to stoning them, and Paul was cast out of the city as dead. (Acts xiv. 6, 8, 11; 2 Tim. iii. 11.) Its site is not discoverable.

MAATH (*wiping away, fearing*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 26.)

MACEDONIA (*burning, worshipping, crooked*), a large country of Greece. Paul while at Troas was called in a vision to preach the Gospel in Macedonia (Acts xvi. 9, xix. 21), and there founded the churches of Philippi, and Thessalonica. Silas and Timothy also preached there. (Acts xviii. 5.) The Churches there were very liberal in their contributions to the poor saints.

MAGDALA (*a tower, graptus*), a town and territory placed by some authorities on the eastern side of the Lake of Tiberias, and by others on the western side near Capernaum.

(Matt. xv. 39.) It included Dalmanutha (see Mark viii. 10), and is supposed to have given name to Mary Magdalene.

MAGI, Persian or Arabian philosophers, well versed in the moral and physical sciences; they came to worship the infant Messiah, and are supposed to have come from Arabia, as their gifts of frankincense and myrrh were the produce of that country. (Matt. ii. 1-14.)

MALCHUS (*king, counsellor*), a servant of the high-priest Caiaphas, whose ear Peter cut off when our Lord was betrayed. (John xviii. 10.)

MALELEEL, or *Mahaleel (praising God)*, a progenitor of Christ. (Luke iii. 37.)

MAMMON, the Syriac word for *riches*. Our Saviour says we cannot devote our lives to the acquirement of riches and in seeking after righteousness at the same time; we cannot serve God and Mammon. (Matt. vi. 24; Luke xvi. 9, 11, 13.)

MANAEN, or *Manahem (comforter, leader)*, Christian prophet in Antioch, brought up and educated with Herod Agrippa I.; some say, with Herod Antipas. (Acts xiii. 1.)

MANASSES, or *Manasseh (forgotten)*, son and successor of Hezekiah, king of Judah, and progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 10.)

MARCUS (*filled, polite*), the son of *Mary*, Barnabas' sister, in whose house the Apostles used to assemble. He is thought to have been converted by Peter, as that Apostle calls him his son. He is the same as John, Mark, or Mark the Evangelist. (Acts xii. 12, 25, xv. 39.)

MARS HILL (*the Areopagus*), an insulated precipitous rock in the middle of Athens, where was the celebrated seat of judicature so called, opposite to the Acropolis, before which Paul defended himself. (Acts xvii. 22.)

MARTHA (*bitter, provoking*), the sister of Lazarus, and Mary of Bethany. (Luke x. 38; John xi. 1, 5.) She was reproved by our Lord for being too much concerned about temporal matters. (Luke x. 40, 41.) On the death of her brother Lazarus she expostulated with Christ for His delay. (John xi. 20-40.) Subsequently, when Christ was supping at the house of Simon in Bethany, Martha served. (John xii. 2.)

MARY (*exalted bitterness, mistress of the sea*), (1) *the Mother of Our Lord*, and espoused wife of Joseph. She was of the royal line of David, and cousin to Elizabeth, the wife of Zacharias, the priest. (Matt. i. 16-20, xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3; Luke i. 5, 27, 36.) The angel Gabriel announced to her the birth of Jesus. (Luke i. 26-35.) She visited Elizabeth and offered up a song of thanksgiving, (Luke i. 46-55,) and having gone to Bethlehem, brought forth the Saviour. (Luke ii. 1-7.) The shepherds now visit her (Luke ii. 16-19), she next presented the child in the temple to the Lord (Luke ii. 21-24), and after receiving the visit of the Magi (Matt. ii. 11), and retiring for a short time into Egypt (Matt. ii. 13-21), she went to Nazareth, but came annually with the infant to Jerusalem to the passover. (Luke ii. 41.) On one occasion, however, when Jesus was 12 years old, Mary lost sight of Him. (Luke ii. 42-51.) When Christ had commenced His ministry, she attended Him at the marriage in Cana (John ii. 1), and once, when He was teaching, inquired for Him (Matt. xii. 46; Mark iii. 31; Luke viii. 19). Mary attended our Lord at His crucifixion, when she was committed to the care of John (John xix. 25), and after the ascension of Christ she was with the other disciples. (Acts i. 14.) What became of the mother of our Lord after this is not known.

—(2) *Magdalene*, a woman of Magdala, out of whom our Lord cast seven devils (Luke viii. 2, 3), after which she followed Him and contributed to His maintenance. She witnessed Christ's crucifixion at a distance (Matt. xxvii. 56; Mark xv. 40; John xix. 25), waited watching at the sepulchre (Matt. xxvii. 61; John xx. 1), and brought spices to embalm his body. (Matt. xxviii. 1; Mark xvi. 1; Luke xxiii. 55, 56); but

Christ had risen, and Mary Magdalene was the first who saw Him after His resurrection. (Mark xvi. 9; John xx. 11-18). and again a second time. (Matt. xxviii. 9; Luke xxiv. 10.) She was a person of some property, but whither she went after this is not known.

— (3) *Mother of James the Less*, and of Joses, wife of Cleophas or (Alphæus), was the sister of the mother of our Lord; she witnessed the crucifixion afar off (Mark xv. 40, 47), and afterward stood by the cross (John xix. 25). She accompanied the other women to the sepulchre (Matt. xxvii. 56, 61, xxviii. 1), having brought spices to embalm Christ's body. (Mark xvi. 1.) Further than this nothing more is known.

MARY (4), *Mother of Mark*, or of John, whose surname is Mark. In her house the Apostles were accustomed to assemble; Peter went there on his escape from prison; (Acts xii. 12.)

— (5) *Sister of Martha and Lazarus*. She listened to our Lord's discourse while Martha served (Luke x. 39-42), and was present when her brother Lazarus was raised to life (John xi. 1-46), at a subsequent period, when Christ supped at Betheny in the house of Simon, she anointed His feet. (John xii. 1-8; Matt. xxvi. 6; Mark xiv. 3. Luke vii. 36.)

MATTIAN (*gift, hope, death of them*), the grandfather of Joseph, the husband of Mary (Matt. i. 15.)

MATTHAT (*gift*), mentioned by Luke in the genealogy of our Lord, as the grandfather of Mary. (Luke iii. 24), another (Luke iii. 29).

MATTATHA (*his gift*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 31.)

MATTATHIAS (*gift of the Lord*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 25, 26.)

MATTHIAS (*gift of the Lord*), an Apostle chosen in the room of Judas Iscariot, and thought to have been one of the Seventy. (Acts i. 23, 26.)

MATHUSALA, or *Methuselah* (*he sent his death*), the father of Lamech, and progenitor of Christ; he died aged 969 years. (Luke iii. 37.)

MELEA (*supplied*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 31.)

MELCHI (*my king, my counsel*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 24, 28.)

MELITA (*flowing with honey*), now *Malta*, an island in the Mediterranean Sea, on which Paul was wrecked as he was taken to Rome (Acts xxviii. 1, &c.), here he shook the viper from his hand, and healed many of their diseases.

MENAN (*numbered, rewarded*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 31.)

MERCURIUS (*of merchandise*), or *Mercury*, one of the heathen gods, the god of eloquence, and whom the people of Lystra thought Paul to be. (Acts xiv. 12.) See JUPITER.

MESOPOTAMIA (*middle of rivers*), a large country of Asia, between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, anciently styled *Padan-Aram*. (Acts vii. 2.) Jews from here were in Jerusalem on the noted day of Pentecost. (Acts ii. 9.)

MILETUM, correctly MILETUS (which see.)

MILETUS (*red kernels*), a city and seaport of Ionia, about thirty miles south of Ephesus, and where Paul directed the elders of the Ephesian Church to meet him. (Acts xx. 15-17.)

MILL. Grinding in the East was performed, as it is now, chiefly by hand. The mill-stones were about two feet in diameter, and half a foot in thickness. The lower one was fixed, and the upper one was turned by a handle or crank. This was done by two persons, who sat opposite to each other. One took hold of the mill-handle, and turned it half way round, the other then seized it, and completed the revolu-

tion. This was done by women, by servants of the lowest order, and was a laborious employment. (See Ex. xi. 5; Job xxxi. 10; Isa. xlvii. 2 Judg. xvi. 21.)

MITYLENE (*assailing, breaking the law*), the capital of the isle of Lesbos, 8 miles from Asia Minor, through which Paul passed on his way from Corinth to Jerusalem. (Acts xx. 14.)

MINASON (*seeking, remembering*), a Jew of Cyprus, converted by our Lord himself, and who was one of the Seventy. Paul abode at his house in Jerusalem. (Acts xxi. 16.)

MYRA (*flow, weep*), a city of Lycia in Asia, whence Paul embarked for Rome. (Acts xxvii. 5.)

MYRIA (*abominable*), a province of Asia Minor, having Phrygia on the east, and the Hellespont on the west: here Paul preached. (Acts xvi. 7, 8.)

NAAMAN (*fair*), the Syrian, the general of the army of Benhadad, king of Syria, cured of leprosy by Elisha (Eliseus): the case referred to by our Lord. (Luke iv. 27.)

NAASON (*that foretells, a serpent*), a son of Aminadab, and a progenitor of Joseph the husband of Mary. (Matt. i. 4; Luke iii. 32.)

NACHOR (*hoarse, angry, dry*), also *Nahor*, the grandfather of Abraham, and a progenitor of Christ. (Luke iii. 34.)

NAGGE (*light*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 25.)

NAIN (*beauty*), a city of Palestine 2 miles south of Mount Tabor, where Christ raised the widow's son to life. (Luke vii. 11-18.)

NAPHITALI (*wrestling likeness*), called also *Nephthalim*: the sixth son of Jacob: the inheritance of this tribe lay in the northern part of Canaan, between Mount Lebanon to the north, and the Sea of Cinnereth (Galilee) to the south: Christ's residence here fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah. (Isa. ix. 1, 2; Matt. iv. 13-15.)

NATHAN (*given*), a son of David mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 31.)

NATHANAEL (*gift of God*), a disciple of our Lord's, and supposed to be the same as Bartholomew. (John i. 45-50.) He saw Christ after His resurrection. (John xxi. 2.)

NAUM (*comforted*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 25.)

NAZARENE, *Nazareans*, or *Nazarite*, (*kept, a flower*),—(1) an inhabitant or native of Nazareth, whence Christ has been so named. (Matt. ii. 23.)

— (2) A man under a vow either for his whole life, as Samson and John the Baptist, or only for a time, (as those in Num. vi. 18-20; Amos ii. 11, 12), to abstain from wine and intoxicating liquors, to let the hair grow, and not to enter a house where there was a dead corpse, nor be present at a funeral. Paul, or as some say, Aquila, had a vow of this sort in Cenchrea. (Acts xviii. 18.)

— (3) a sect of Judaizing Christians, who held that there could be no salvation without full conformity to the law of Moses. They coincided in a great measure with the Ebionites, and accepted only Matthew's Gospel: they likewise objected to the ceremonial strictness of the Pharisees; and held Paul in high estimation.

— (4) a term applied to the Christians by the Jews and heathens, by way of reproach. Paul in this view is accused by one Tertullus, as being "a ringleader of the sect of Nazarenes." (Acts xxiv. 5.)

NAZARETH is situated among the hills which constitute the south ridges of Lebanon, just before they sink down into the plain of Esdraelon. Of the identification of the ancient site there can be no doubt. The name of the present village is *en Názirah*, the same, therefore, as of old; it is formed on a hill or mountain (Luke iv. 29), it is within the limits of the province of Galilee (Mark i. 9), it is near land, according

to the implication in John ii. 1, 2, 11; a precipice exists in the neighborhood (Luke iv. 29), and, finally, a series of testimonies reach back to Eusebius, the father of church history, which represent the place as having occupied an inviolable position. The modern Nazareth belongs to the better class of Eastern villages. It has a population of 3,000 or 4,000, a few are Mohammedans, the rest Latin and Greek Christians. Most of the houses are well built of stone, and have a neat and comfortable appearance. The streets or lanes are narrow and crooked, and after rain are so full of mud and mire as to be almost impassable.

NEAPOLIS (*new city*), a sea-port of Macedonia, a few miles south of Philippi. Paul came here from Samothrace. (Acts xvi. 11.)

Nephtalim. See NAPHTALI.

NERI (*light of the Lord, land sown biennially*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 27.)

NICANOR (*victorious*), one of the seven first appointed *deacons* (Acts vi. 3-6); nothing further is known of him.

NICODEMUS (*innocent blood, victory of the people*), a Pharisee and ruler of the Jews, belonging to the Sanhedrim, and who became a disciple of Christ after his conversation with Him. (John iii. 1, 4, 9.) He subsequently defended our Lord before the Sanhedrim (John vii. 50), and joined with Joseph of Arimathea in His burial. (John xix. 39.)

NICOLAS (*conqueror of the people*), a Jewish proselyte of Antioch, who afterward became a Christian; and on account of his zeal and piety was subsequently appointed a deacon. (Acts vi. 5.) His name is said to have been improperly connected with the sect of the *Nicolaitans* (which see.)

NIGER (*black*), the name of one Simeon, a prophet and teacher of Antioch, who assisted in ordaining Saul and Barnabas for their Apostleship. (Acts xiii. 1.) He is thought to have been one of the Seventy.

NINEVEH (*beautiful, a dwelling-place*), the capital of the ancient kingdom and empire of Assyria. (Jonah iii. 6; 2 Kings xix. 36.) The name appears to be compounded from that of an Assyrian deity, "Nin," corresponding, it is conjectured, with the Greek Hercules, and occurring in the names of several Assyrian kings, as in "Ninus," the mythic founder, according to Greek tradition, of the city. Nineveh is first mentioned in the Old Testament in connection with the primitive dispersements and migrations of the human race. (Gen. x. 11, &c.) It was a city of nineteen miles in length and eleven in breadth, and from forty-eight to sixty miles in circumference, and contained a population of about six hundred thousand. (Jonah iv. 11.) It was surrounded by a wall one hundred feet high, and wide enough for three carriages to go abreast, and was fortified by fifteen hundred towers of two hundred feet in height. For its luxury and wickedness the judgments of God fell upon it. (Neh. iii. 1; Zeph. ii. 13-15.)

NOAH (*rest*), the builder of the ark, in which he and his family alone, with certain animals of every kind, were saved when the world was drowned for its wickedness (Matt. xxiv. 37; Luke iii. 36, xvii. 26.) He was a preacher of righteousness, and his faith is spoken of in Heb. xi. 7.

NOE. See NOAH.

OBED (*a servant*), son of Boaz, and father of Jesse; also a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 5; Luke iii. 32.)

OLIVES, *Mount of*, or OLIVET; is a range of hills extending a mile in length from north to south, having three or four summits: from the center one, which is the highest, and rises out of the Garden of Gethsemane, our Saviour ascended up to heaven (Acts i. 12); on the southern one Solomon built temples to his idols. Olivet is a Sabbath-day's journey (about a mile) eastward of Jerusalem, fronting the temple: it is

separated from the city by the brook Kidron, and the valley of Jehoshaphat; and its districts were named, 1. Gethsemane, the place of oil-presses; 2. Bethany, the house of dates; 3. Bethphage, the house of figs, &c. The mountain takes its name from the luxurious and spontaneous growth of the olive-tree, which continues at this day, and was the scene of many circumstances connected with the life of Christ. (Matt. xxi. 1, xxiv. 3, xxvi. 30; Mark xiii. 3, xiv. 26; Luke xix. 29, 37, xxi. 37, xxii. 39; John viii. 1; Acts i. 12.)

OSIAS, or *Uzziah*, or *Azariah* (*strength of the Lord*), son of Jehoram king of Judah, and progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 8, 9.)

PAMPHYLIA (*nation of every tribe*), a province of Asia Minor, having the Mediterranean on the south, and Pisidia on the north; it is situated opposite to Cyprus, and its chief town is *Perga*. (Acts xxvii. 5.) Paul and Barnabas preached here (Acts xiii. 13, xiv. 24), and it was while they were in this province that Mark left them. (Acts xv. 38.)

PAPHOS, a city on the western coast of Cyprus, where the proconsul Sergius Paulus resided, who was converted by Paul (Acts xiii. 6), and where Bar-Jesus (Elymas) the sorcerer was struck blind for his opposition. (Acts xiii. 6-13.)

PARMENAS (*continuing*), one of the first seven deacons of the Church. (Acts vi. 5, 6.)

PARTHIANS (*flying from fear*), the Persians, or inhabitants between Media and Mesopotamia. Jews from among them were present at Jerusalem at the noted day of Pentecost. (Acts ii. 9.)

PASSOVER. There is considerable controversy in respect of the duration of our Lord's ministry. Some reckon it to have been but one year; some, three years; and others more. Dr. Lardner mentions *four* Passovers: the *first* at our Lord's baptism (John ii. 13); the *second*, when Christ healed the cripple at the pool of Bethesda (John v. 1); but that this feast was a passover is much questioned; the *third*, when the miracle of the five loaves and two fishes were performed (John vi. 4); the *fourth*, when the Jews sought to apprehend our Lord. This would make Christ's ministry extend to about *three years and a half*, according to the prophecy of Daniel. (ix. 26.) Very many writers consider the period of the *second passover* to have been just before our Lord went through the corn-fields on the Sabbath day as recorded in Luke vi. 1.

PATARA (*white-livered, bringing death*), a maritime city of Lycia, where Paul going from Philippi to Jerusalem embarked from Phœnicia. (Acts xxi. 1.)

PAUL (*marvelous, rest, little*), the name of Saul of Tarsus. Many writers suppose that *Saul* had from his birth the Gentile name of *Paul*; a not unusual thing with the Jews and others in that age—others say he took the name in honor of his first Gentile convert Sergius Paulus—others, because he was small in stature, or for humility sake, *Paulus* meaning *low, small, little*: be this as it may, he assumed the name of *Paul* to the exclusion of that of *Saul*, on the conversion of *Sergius Paulus*.

PENTECOST, a feast of the Jews held *fifty days* after the departure from Egypt, or after the Passover. Sometimes it was called the *feast of weeks*, because it was kept *seven weeks* after the Passover. The Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles on this day. (Acts ii. 1.)

PERGA (*earthly*), a maritime city of Pamphylia in Asia, upon the river Caystrus, where Paul and Barnabas preached the Gospel. (Acts xiii. 13, 14, xiv. 25.)

PETER, *stone or rock*.

PHALEC (*division*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 35.)

PHANUEL (*seeing God*), the father of the prophetess *Anna*, of the tribe of Asher. (Luke ii. 36.)

PHARAOH (*spreading vengeance, a king*), a common name of the kings of Egypt: two of which are referred to in the New Testament. (Acts vii. 13, 21.)

PHARES (*division*), a son of Judah, and a progenitor of Joseph, the husband of Mary. (Matt. i. 3; Luke iii. 33.)

PHARISEES (*separate*). This was the most celebrated and influential of the Jewish sects in the time of our Lord, including in its numbers the great mass of the people. This appellation is derived from the Hebrew word *Pharas* or *Pharash*, "to separate," from their separating themselves from the rest of the Jews as more devout and religious. They believed in the resurrection of the dead, and in the existence of angels, and spirits, mixed up with some notion of a transmigration of souls: they were also peculiar in attaching the first importance to the traditions of the elders, and in the observance of external rites and ceremonies; they placed also especial reliance on frequent ablutions and fastings, long prayers, and the rigorous observance of the Sabbath. When they had their beginning is not exactly known.

PHENICE (*red, purple, palm*), or *Phenice*, a sea-port on the western shore of Crete. Christianity was introduced here soon after the persecution following the death of Stephen. (Acts xi. 19.) Paul passed it when he was proceeding to Rome. (Acts xxvii. 12.)

PHENICIA, or **PHENICE**, or *Phœnicia*, a province of Syria, lying along the Mediterranean, the principal cities of which were Tyre, Sidon and Ptolemais. Paul passed through it in some of his journeys. (Acts xv. 3, xxi. 2.)

PHILIP (*lover of horses, a warrior*), (1) a native of Bethsaida, in Galilee, was one of the first called by our Lord (John i. 43, 44), he went and fetched Nathanael (John i. 45-47, 49), and he was afterward numbered among the Apostles. (See Appendix A.)

— (2) the *deacon*, appointed among the first seven (Acts vi. 5), is said to have been a native of Cesarea; at the persecution that broke out on the death of Stephen, Philip retired to Samaria where he performed many miracles, and made and baptized numerous converts, Simon Magus amongst the number. (Acts viii. 5-13.) Some time after, directed by an angel, he met with the Ethiopian eunuch on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza; having preached to him Jesus Christ, the eunuch believed, and was baptized (Acts viii. 26-38); immediately after, the Spirit of the Lord took him away and we find him at Azotus, preaching the Gospel in all the cities till he came to Cesarea. (Acts viii. 39, 40.) Subsequently to this, some twenty years, possibly, he was visited by Paul and his company, who stayed some days, during which Philip's four daughters prophesied. (Acts xxi. 8-10.) Here Philip is thought to have remained and died.

— (3) a son of Herod the Great. (Matt. xiv. 3; Mark vi. 17; Luke iii. 19.) See **HEROD PHILIP**.

— (4) another son of Herod the Great, and tetrarch of Ituræa and Trachonitis. (Luke iii. 1.) See under **HEROD**.

PHILIPPI (*warlike, lovers of horses*), (1) a city of Macedonia.

— (2) a city near the source of the Jordan, called **CESAREA PHILIPPI**, *which see*.

PHRYGIA (*dry, barren*), a large province of Asia Minor, divided into the Greater and the Lesser; it had Bithynia on the north, and Pisidia and Lycia on the south. The chief towns were Laodicea, Hierapolis and Colosse. Paul is said to have introduced Christianity into the province (Acts xvi. 6, xviii. 23); although the Jews from this country were present in Jerusalem at the noted day of Pentecost. (Acts ii. 10.)

PHYLACTERIES (*things to be especially observed*), slips of parchment on which were written certain words of the law, and which the Jews wore on their foreheads, on the wrists of their left arm, and on the hems of their garments, from a mistaken interpretation of Ex. xiii. 9, 16; the Pharisees wore theirs broader than other Jews. (Matt. xxiii. 5.)

PILATE, *Pontius* (*a hand, or of the sea*; and *armed with a dart*), the successor of Gratus in the governorship of Judea, which he held ten years (from about A. D. 26, to A. D. 36). (Luke iii. 1.) His impetuosity and obstinacy excited many disturbances among the Jews; and why he mingled the blood of certain Galileans with their sacrifices is

not known. (Luke xiii. 1.) Christ was brought before this tribunal; and although after examination he found no fault in Him, nor did Herod, and notwithstanding the warning of his wife, yet being willing to content the Jews, he condemned our Lord to be crucified against the dictates of his own conscience. (Matt. xxvii.; Mark xv.; Luke xxiii.; John xviii., xix.; Acts iv. 27, xiii. 28; 1 Tim. vi. 13.) He made five successive attempts, indeed, to release Christ, but when the Jews declared, "if thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend," his fear of the jealousy and suspicion of the Emperor Tiberius prompted him to yield to their malice, and therefore he immediately ordered our Saviour's crucifixion. Some time after this, having put to death a number of innocent Samaritans, he was accused before Vitellius, proconsul of Syria, who ordered him to Rome to answer the charge. Before Pilate arrived, Tiberius died; Caligula, his successor, hearing of the circumstances, banished Pilate to Gaul, where, it is said, on account of extreme indigence he committed suicide, about A. D. 41.

PISIDIA (*black with pitch*), a province of Asia Minor, having Pamphylia on the south and Galatia on the north; its chief town was Antioch: here Paul and Barnabas planted a Christian Church. (Acts xiii. 14, xiv. 24.)

PONTIUS PILATE. See PILATE.

PONTUS (*the sea*), a province of Asia Minor, having the Euxine Sea on the south. Jews from here were in Jerusalem at the noted day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 9); and it was the native place of Aquila (Acts xviii. 2); it is thought that it was converted to Christianity by Peter, since he addresses his first Epistle to them amongst others.

PORCIUS FESTUS (*a festival calf*). See FESTUS.

PRISCA. See PRISCILLA.

PRISCILLA (*ancient*), or *Prisca*; the wife of *Aquila* (Acts xviii. 2, 26), and whose house was so Christianized that Paul called it a Church. They came from Rome to Ephesus when Claudius banished all Jews from there; but returned thither again, as Paul salutes them in his Epistle to the Romans. They subsequently returned to Asia, where it is supposed they died. See *Aquila*.

PROCHORUS or PROCORUS (*presiding over the choirs*), one of the first seven deacons of the Christian Church. (Acts vi. 5.)

PROCONSUL, the governor of a province attached to the jurisdiction of the Senate of Rome, and who was elected *annually*. Such was Sergius Paulus at Cyprus. The governor of a province belonging to the jurisdiction of the Emperor, and usually calling for the exercise of military power, was termed a "*Proprætor*," or "*Legatus*," or "*Commissioner*," as the Governor of Syria. A subordinate jurisdiction in the Emperor's provinces was assigned to a "*Procurator*," or "*High Steward*," as were Pontius Pilate, Felix, and Festus. The *Proprætor* held office during the pleasure of the Emperor.

PTOLEMAIS (*assemblage of waters, warlike*), a sea-port town, now *Acre*, on the Mediterranean, at the borders of Galilee, and 27 miles south of Tyre. Paul stayed here one day in his journey from Ephesus to Jerusalem. (Acts xxi. 7.)

PUBLICANS. These were inferior officers, generally Jews, employed as collectors of the Roman revenue. The Roman Senate farmed the direct taxes, and the customs, to capitalists, who undertook to pay a given sum in the treasury (*publicum*), and hence received the name of *publicani*. In the provinces were managing directors, and under them were the *portitores*, the actual custom-house officers. The system was essentially a vicious one. The publicans, through their agents, overcharged when they had an opportunity. (Luke iii. 13.) They brought false charges of smuggling in the hope of extorting hush-money. (Luke xix. 8.) The employment brought out all the besetting vices of the Jewish character. The strong feeling of many Jews as to the absolute unlawfulness of paying tribute at all, made matters worse. Mr. Morier, at Persepolis, observes: "Here is a station of rah-dars, or toll-gatherers, appointed to levy a

toll upon kafilers, or caravans of merchants; and who, in general, exercise their office with so much brutality and extortion, that they are execrated by all travelers. The collections of the tolls are farmed, consequently extortion ensues, and as most of the rah-dars receive no other emolument than what they can exact over and above the prescribed dues from the travelers, their insolence is accounted for, and a cause sufficiently powerful is given for their insolence on the one hand, and the detestation in which they are held on the other." How unpopular the publicans were is evident from the fact that that they were classed with sinners (Matt. ix. 11, xi. 19), with harlots (Matt. xxi. 31, 32), with the heathen (Matt. xviii. 17).

PUBLIUS (*common*), the governor of *Melita* (or Malta), who treated Paul with great kindness when shipwrecked there: the Apostle healed his father. (Acts xxviii. 7, 8.)

PURSE, a sort of girdle which the Hebrews took with them when on a journey, and which is often found at the present day in Eastern countries. It was used by them for carrying their money (Gen. xlii. 35; Prov. i. 14; Isa. xlvi. 6); and if they were merchants, also their weights. (Deut. xxv. 13; Mic. vi. 11.) Ladies wore ornamental purses. (Isa. iii. 23.) A part of the girdle, sufficient to encompass the body, was sewed double, and fastened with a buckle. The residue was wound round above and below the first fold, and tucked under. The first fold had an opening, closed with a leather cover or strap, through which the contents of the purse were passed.

PUTEOLI (*the wells*), a city of Campania in Italy, about 8 miles from Naples. Paul stayed here seven days on his way to Rome. (Acts xxviii. 13.)

RAGAU (*a companion, breaking*), a progenitor of Abraham, and of Christ. (Luke iii. 35.)

RAHAB, or *Rachab* (*proud, strong, broad*), the harlot, or probably the *innkeeper* of Jericho who concealed the spies sent by Joshua. Paul speaks of her being saved by her faith; and James, by her works. Some consider this woman to be the mother of Boaz, alluded to by Matthew in his genealogy of our Lord. (Matt. i. 5.)

REMPHAN (*prepared*), an idol of the Egyptians carried by the Hebrews, which Amos reprov'd (Amos v. 26); the passage is quoted by Stephen in his argument with the Jews. (Acts vii. 43.)

RHEGIUM (*breaking*), a city of Italy in the kingdom of Naples, at which Paul landed on his way to Rome. (Acts xxviii. 13, 14.)

RHESA (*affection, a head*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 27.)

RHODA (*a rose*), a young maid of the household of Mary the mother of John Mark; she opened the door to Peter on his escape from prison. (Acts xii. 13, 14.)

RHODES (*a rose*), an island, and famous city south of the province of Caria, in Asia Minor, and so called from abounding in roses; it was celebrated for its brazen colossal statue, esteemed one of the seven wonders of the world. Paul visited this island in his last journey to Jerusalem as he came from Miletus. (Acts. xxi. 1.)

ROBOAM, or *Rehoboam* (*breadth of the people*), the son and successor of Solomon, and a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 7.)

ROME (*prevailing, mighty*), the chief city of Italy, and in the time of our Lord's ministry, the mistress of the world. Its name, and that of Romans, are not found in the Old Testament. Rome is first met with in the book of the Maccabees (1 Mac. vii. 1, 2), and it is thought to be referred to by Daniel (Dan. ii. 40) as the kingdom of iron. Jews from Rome were at Jerusalem at the noted day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 10), but some few years after, by an edict of Claudius, all Jews were expelled the city (Acts xviii. 2). Paul had long desired to visit Rome (Acts xix. 21, xxiii. 11; Rom. i. 7, 15); but the only times he visited it, the Apostle was a prisoner there, first when he appealed to Cæsar, A. D. 61, when he remained two years (Acts xxviii. 16, 30, 31), and secondly, at the time of his martyrdom, A. D. 65-66. At this last period, Peter was at

Rome also, and suffered death in the same persecution. Peter is said to refer to Rome in one of his Epistles under the name of *Babylon*, a name also adopted by John for the same purpose. The word *ROMAN* is found to refer either (1) to its inhabitants (John xi. 48; Acts xxviii. 17), or (2) to its privileges. (Acts xvi. 21, 37, 38, xxii. 25-29, xxv. 16.)

RUFUS (*red*), the son of Simon, the Cyrenian, who carried the cross of Christ; he is honorably mentioned by Mark (Mark xv. 21), and is thought to have been, as well as his mother, a very intimate friend of Paul's; both of whom the Apostle mentions in the most affectionate terms.

RUTH (*watered, filled*), the wife of Boaz, and referred to by Matthew in his genealogy of our Lord. (Matt. i. 5.)

SABBATH (*rest*), the *seventh* day, on which God rested from the work of creation, and sanctified it as a day of holy rest for man and beast. (Gen. ii. 2.) After the crucifixion of our Lord, it was changed to the *first day* of the week, in commemoration of His having then risen from the dead (Matt. xxviii. 1; Mark xvi. 1; John xx. 19, 26), and was called the "*Lord's day*." (Rev. i. 10.) On this day also the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles. (Acts ii. 1; see also Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xv. 20, xvi. 1, 2 Heb. iv. 9.) The Jews were very strict in their observance of the Sabbath; not making a fire, nor baking bread, nor cooking victuals, all of which was done the day before (Friday), hence called the *Preparation day*.

A *Sabbath day's journey* (Acts i. 12) was reckoned at two thousand cubits, or *one mile*, beyond which distance it was forbidden to journey, on the Sabbath, hence the warning of our Lord in Matt. xxiv. 20.

SADDUCEES (*just*), a sect of the Jews who rejected the traditions of the elders, and bound themselves only by the written law: they maintained that there was no future state of rewards and punishments, no resurrection from the dead, neither angels nor spirits. (Matt. xxii. 23; Acts xxiii. 8.) The Messiah they expected was to be a temporal prince, for their views were limited to the enjoyment of the present life; and their great opposition to our Lord, and to His disciples, was the doctrine of a resurrection, and the future judgment. (Acts iv., v. 17.) They took their name from one Sadoc, a follower of Antigonus Sochæus, president of the Sanhedrim, about B. C. 250; but whose doctrines Sadoc completely corrupted.

SADOC (*just*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Matt. i. 14.)

SALA (*sending, spoiling*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 35.)

SALAMIS (*shaken*), afterward *Constantia*, a city on the eastern coast of the island of Cyprus. Paul and Barnabas preached the Gospel here for a short time, on their first missionary journey; and at Paphos converted Sergius Paulus. (Acts xiii. 5.)

SALATHIEL (*asked of God*), a grandson of king Josiah, and a progenitor of our Lord (Matt. i. 12.) Also another. (Luke iii. 27.)

SALIM (*foxes, pathways*), some place on the banks of the Jordan now unknown, where John baptized. (John iii. 23.) See Ænon.

SALMON (*peacemaker, perfect*), father of Boaz, and a progenitor of Joseph, the husband of Mary. (Matt. i. 4, 5; Luke iii. 32.)

SALMON (*flowing, commotion*), a sea-port and promontory on the eastern side of the isle of Crete (Candy), passed by Paul when taken to Rome. (Acts xxvii. 7.)

SALOME (*peace*), the wife of Zebedee, and mother of James the Great, and John the Evangelist. (Mark xvi. 1.) She attended our Saviour in His journeys, and ministered to Him; and it was she who requested that her two sons might sit one on our Saviour's right hand, and the other on His left in His kingdom (Matt. xx. 20); she also was at the sepulchre with the other women at our Lord's death. (Matt. xxvii. 55, 56; Mark xv. 40, xvi. 1; Luke xxiii. 55.)

SAMARIA (*keeping, a thorn*), the country between Judea and Galilee, formerly belonging to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh: the city, afterward called *Sebaste*, was the

capital of the kingdom of Israel. Our Lord passed through it (Luke ix. 52), and held conversation with a Samaritan woman (Luke xvii. 11; John iv. 4, 9); and at first the Apostles were forbidden to enter into any village of the Samaritans. (Matt. x. 5.) At the persecution, however, following the death of Stephen, many Christians retired thither (Acts viii. 1, ix. 31); Philip preached the Gospel amongst its inhabitants with great success (Acts viii. 5, 14), and although a strong hatred existed between the Jews and the Samaritans (John iv. 9, viii. 48), yet many of the Samaritans believed. (Luke x. 33, xvii. 16; John iv. 39.)

SAMOS (*full of gravel*), an island in the Mediterranean, off Asia Minor, a few miles south of Ephesus. Paul landed here on his way to Jerusalem, just before reaching Miletus. (Acts xx. 15.)

SAMOTHRACIA (*full of gravel, rough*), an island in the Ægean Sea, peopled by Samians, and Thracians, whence its name. Paul leaving Troas for Macedonia came first to this island. (Acts xvi. 11.)

SAMUEL (*heard or asked of God*), a judge, and prophet of Israel; who anointed King Saul, and his successor David; two of the books of the Old Testament are called after his name. He is spoken of by Peter (Acts iii. 24), and by Paul (Acts xiii. 20; Heb. xi. 32).

SANDALS. The word translated *shoes* (Luke iii. 16), has a signification different from what it has in our language. At first, in order to keep the feet from the sharp stones, or the burning sand, small pieces of wood were fastened to the soles of the feet, called *sandals*. Leather, or skins of beasts dressed, afterward was used. The foot was not covered at all; but the sandal, or piece of leather, or wood, was bound by thongs. The wooden sandal is much worn in Arabia, Judea and Egypt. It has a raised heel and toe, and, though often expensive and neat, it was usually a cheap, coarse and very clumsy article.

SANHEDRIM, the great council of the Jewish nation, comprising 70 or 72 judges or senators, and which originated from the 72 elders appointed at the recommendation of Jethro to assist Moses. Our Lord was brought before it (Matt. xxvii. 1; John xi. 47), and Peter and John (Acts iv. 5-7), and the Apostles (Acts v. 21, 27), and Stephen also (Acts vi. 12-15).

SAPPHIRA (*declaring, fear, handsome*), a Christian woman, and wife of Ananias, who was struck dead with him for lying to the Holy Ghost. (Acts v.) See ANANIAS.

SAREPTA (*perplexity of bread, a goldsmith's shop*), another name for *Zarephath*, a city on the Mediterranean shore between Tyre and Sidon, where the prophet Elijah lodged some time with the widow. (1 Kings xvii. 9.) Our Lord adverted to the fact. (Luke iv. 26.)

SHARON, or SHARON (*plain field*), a fertile region of Palestine, extending between Cesarea and Joppa, proverbially noted for its beauty and fruitfulness, whence the phrase, the "rose of Sharon;" the people of this district were so astonished at Peter's cure of Eneas, that they "all turned to the Lord." (Acts ix. 35.)

SARUCH (*a branch, palm tree*), or *Serug*, a progenitor of Abraham, and of Christ. (Luke iii. 35.)

SAUL (*lent, ditch, sepulchre, death, hell*), (1) the name of Paul before his conversion (Acts vii. 58), and which he retained till after he made a convert of *Sergius Paulus*, the pro-consul of Cyprus (Acts xiii. 7-9), in honor of whom, it is said, he took the name of *Paul*. (Acts xiii. 9.)

— (2) also the son of Cis or Kis, anointed king over Israel by the prophet Samuel, and which Paul mentions in his discourse to the people of Antioch in Pisidia. (Acts xiii. 21.)

SCEVA (*in order, prepared*), a ruler of the synagogue at Ephesus, whose seven sons

went about pretending to cast out devils; invoking, however, the name of Jesus, the possessed were more dreadfully afflicted than before. (Acts xix. 14-16.)

SCRIBES (*writers*), originally mere transcribers of the law, but subsequently doctors of the law (whence they were also termed "*lawyers*") (Matt. xxii. 35; Luke x. 25), and expounders of it to the people. The diversity of opinions they gave forth, and their corruptions, misinterpretations, and additions to the written word of God, gave birth to that obstinacy and blindness of the Jews which led them to reject Jesus as the Messiah; from them originated the other sects. (Matt. v. 20; vii. 29; xvi. 21; xvii. 10; xx. 18; xxiii. 2, &c.)

SCRIP. This was a bag in which the shepherds of Palestine carried their food or other necessities. The scrip of the Galileans, made of skin or coarse cloth, was used especially to carry their food on a journey, and slung over their shoulders.

SELEUCIA (*troubled, broken, flowing over*), a sea-port of Syria on the Mediterranean coast, near the mouth of the Orontes, and about 15 or 16 miles west of Antioch. It takes its name from its founder, Seleucus, and it was also his burying-place; here Paul and Barnabas embarked for Cyprus. (Acts xiii. 4.)

SEM, or *Shem*, (*a name, renowned*), a son of Noah, and progenitor of Christ. (Luke iii. 36.)

SEMEI (*hearing, obeying*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 26.)

SERGIUS PAULUS (*a net*), a proconsul of Cyprus, converted to Christianity by Paul, notwithstanding the opposition of Elymas, the sorcerer. (Acts xiii. 7-12.)

SETH (*set, put*), son of Adam, and progenitor of Christ. (Luke iii. 38.)

SEVENTY DISCIPLES, sent forth to preach by our Lord. (Luke x. 1—they return. Luke x. 17.)

SIEBA, *Queen of*, (*captivity, encompassing*), Sheba is supposed by some to have been Arabia, by others Ethiopia. (1 Kings x.; 2 Chron. ix.) Our Lord alludes to her coming so great a distance to hear the wisdom of Solomon as the Queen of the South. (Matt. xii. 42; Luke xi. 31.)

SIDON, or ZIDON (*hunter, ship of judgment*), a celebrated city of Phœnicia on the Mediterranean coast north of Tyre. Many of its inhabitants became followers of our Saviour. (Matt. xi. 21, 22; xv. 21; Mark iii. 8; vii. 24, 31; Luke iv. 26; vi. 17; x. 13, 14). Paul on his way to Rome touched at Sidon. (Acts xxvii. 3). A few years before this they incurred the displeasure of Herod. (Acts xii. 20.)

SILAS (*considering*), one of the chief men among the first disciples, and thought to have been one of the Seventy. He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their return to Antioch with the decree of the council of Jerusalem respecting conformity to the Mosaic ritual (Acts xv. 22, 27, 32); he remained here a little time (Acts xv. 34), and then accompanied Paul on his second journey (Acts xv. 40); when at Philippi the unbelieving Jews excited an uproar, which led to Paul and Silas being imprisoned, and put in the stocks (Acts xvi. 19-24); they were miraculously released by an earthquake; and after converting the jailer (Acts xvi. 25-33), they went on to Thessalonica, (Acts xvii. 1), but a disturbance occurring here also, they proceeded to Berea (Acts xvii. 10); Silas stayed a short time (Acts xvii. 14, 15), and followed Paul to Corinth, (Acts xviii. 5), where he joined him, and proceeded with him to Ephesus, Cesarea and Jerusalem. What became of Silas after this is not known. It is generally believed that the name *Silas* is only a contraction of the Latin *Silvanus*, a common practice among the Greeks, and which is strengthened by the fact of the *Silvanus*, mentioned in Paul's Epistles, according exactly as to his position and circumstances with the *Silas* in the Acts. He preached with Paul at Corinth, and was there when Paul wrote his Epistles to the Thessalonians. He appears also to have been esteemed by Peter, for this Apostle sent his Epistle to Silvanus.

SILOAM (*sent, bough, armor*), a pool under the walls of Jerusalem on the east, between

the city and the brook Kidron: it issued from a rock, and formed two reservoirs or pools; at one of these our Lord restored sight to the man born blind, telling him to go and wash in the pool. (John ix. 7.)

SIMEON (*hearing, obedient*), (1) a pious old man of Jerusalem, who expected the coming of Christ for the redemption of Israel, and lived to see Him (Luke ii. 25-28); uttered forth a hymn of thanksgiving (Luke ii. 29-32), and concluded by blessing Joseph and Mary, and giving some intimation of her future trials. (Luke ii. 34, 35.) This is all that is known of him.

— (2) *also* a teacher of the Church, who from his swarthy complexion was called *Niger*. (Acts xiii. 1.)

— (3) *also* used for *Simon*; as for *Simon Peter* in Acts xv. 14, referring to what Peter had said in verse 7, &c.

— (4) mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 30.)

SIMON (*hearing, obeying*), (1) the *Canaanite*, so called from being born in Cana of Galilee, and likewise named *Zelotes* or “the Zealous” (Luke vi. 15; Acts i. 13); either from his great *zeal*, or from having been one of the *Zealots* (which see). He was an Apostle (see Appendix A; Matt. x. 4; Mark iii. 18), and is supposed to have been the brother of James the Less, and of Jude; but nothing further is known of him.

— (2) the *Cyrenian*, was the father of Alexander and Rufus; he happened to be passing by when our Lord, exhausted with mental anguish and bodily fatigue, could no longer bear the weight of His cross; the soldiers in consequence stopped Simon, and insisted on his carrying it to the place of execution. (Matt. xxvii. 32; Mark xv. 21; Luke xxiii. 26.) This is all that is known of him.

— (3) the father of *Judas Iscariot*. (John vi. 71, xii. 4, xiii. 2, 26.)

— (4) the *Lepcr*, dwelt at Bethany, and there entertained our Lord at supper, a few days before His passion; Lazarus, and his sisters Martha and Mary were present; and the last took this opportunity of anointing Christ's feet. (Matt. xxvi. 6; Mark xiv. 3; John xi. 2.)

— (5) **MAGUS**, or the *Sorcerer*, so called from his practice of magic, and his impostures, as well as his skill in astrology, medicine and other sciences; became a professing convert to the Gospel, upon the preaching of Philip the deacon, in Samaria, and was baptized by him. (Acts viii. 5, 9-13.) When the Apostles Peter and John came there to confer upon the new disciples the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Magus offered money to purchase those gifts; Peter severely rebuked him, and urged him to repentance; Magus immediately besought the prayers of the Apostle in his behalf (Acts viii. 18-24), and this is all the information of him afforded us in Scripture. What became of Simon Magus is not exactly known; some say that he went to Rome about eight years after, and died there while performing some piece of magic. (See Appendix A.)

— (6) son of *Mary and Cleophas*. (Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3.)

— (7) **PETER**, the Apostle.

— (8) the *Pharisee*, with whom our Lord dined, after he had raised to life the son of the widow of Nain; and at whose house a sinful woman anointed Christ's feet much to the displeasure of Simon. (Luke vii. 36.)

— (9) the *Tanner*, a resident of Joppa, with whom Peter lodged when he visited that place, and raised Tabitha (Dorcas) to life. (Acts ix. 43; x. 6, 17, 32.)

SODOM (*secret, heel*), a city of Canaan, destroyed by fire from heaven on account of the wickedness of its inhabitants, at the same time with Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, and which stood where the Dead Sea is. Its fate is alluded to as a warning by our Lord. (Matt. x. 15; xi. 24; Mark vi. 11; Luke x. 12; xvii. 29.)

SOLOMON (*peaceable*), the son of David by Bathsheba; he succeeded his father on the throne of Israel. He built the temple with great splendor, and was renowned for

his wisdom and the prosperity of his kingdom. He was a progenitor of our Lord, (Matt. i. 6); and his great glory is alluded to by Christ. (Matt. vi. 29; xii. 42; Luke xi. 31; xii. 27.)

SOLOMON'S PORCH, a kind of terrace, or piazza, standing on the vast structure reared by Solomon, four hundred cubits from the valley beneath, in order to widen the level of the top of the mountain to admit the plan of the temple: and as it was the only work of Solomon's that existed in the second temple, it retained his name. Jesus walked here when he discoursed with the Jews (John x. 23); so did Peter and John after healing the lame man at the gate called "Beautiful" (Acts iii. 11). The other Apostles also did many miracles here. (Acts v. 12.)

SOSPATER, or **SOPATER** (*health of his father*), a Christian convert of Berea, called *Sopater* in Acts xx. 4; and saluted by Paul as his kinsman.

SOSTHENES (*mighty savior*), chief of the synagogue of Corinth, having succeeded *Crispus*, when the latter became a Christian: he was the accuser of Paul before *Gallio*, the proconsul; but when the Apostle was discharged, the Greeks and others rushed on *Sosthenes* and gave vent to their rage by inflicting on him a sound thrashing. (Acts xviii. 17.)

STEPHEN (*crowned*), a Hellenistic Jew; and said to have been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel: he became a convert to Christianity, and was afterward the chief of the seven primitive deacons. (Acts vi. 5.) He performed many miracles, and defended the doctrines of the Gospel with such learning and zeal that the exasperated Jews stoned him to death. (Acts vi., vii.)

STOICS (*a porch*), a sect of heathen philosophers at Athens, the followers of Zeno, who held his school in a *porch* of that city, whence their name. They maintained that all things were the result of necessity or fate; that men had no free-will, and ought to be unaffected by the passions; hence they exercised great austerity and apathy, upheld suicide, and denied a future state of rewards and punishments. The Stoics were numerous in Athens when Paul visited that city. (Acts xvii. 18.)

SUSANNA (*lily, rose, joyfulness*), a pious woman, who attended our Saviour and administered to His necessities. (Luke viii. 3.)

SYNAGOGUES were the Jewish places of public worship. The building was surrounded with seats for the men—the "rulers" occupying the "chief seats," which faced the rest. The women were placed in a gallery, or behind a screen. In the center, conspicuous to all, was the pulpit for the reader, while in the side of the building nearest to Jerusalem was an "ark," in which were deposited the "rolls" of their Scriptures. Worship was begun with prayers in the language of the district, read from a service book, by the "angel" or "apostle" of the synagogue; then was read a portion of the law and of the prophets (Acts xiii. 15), in Hebrew, by the reader, from a roll taken from the ark, and put into his hand by the "minister" (*Chazan*), the reader standing (Luke iv. 16), the congregation sitting. After the book was returned to the minister (Luke iv. 20), and after this followed an exposition of the Scripture read, and then, after a little pause, some one stood up and gave forth a word of exhortation. Our Lord sat during this elucidation. (Luke iv. 20.) At the close came the "benediction," and the "Amen."

SYRACUSE (*drawing violently*), the capital of the island of Sicily, on its eastern coast; here Paul spent three days on his way to Rome. (Acts xxviii. 12.)

SYRIA (*high, descending, slander*), the country lying between the Euphrates on the east, and the Mediterranean on the west, having Cilicia on the north, Judea, Phœnicia and Arabia on the south. Antioch was the capital, and *Cyrenius* was governor. (Luke ii. 2.) The fame of our Lord reached throughout it. (Matt. iv. 24.) The Apostles sent letters thither (Acts xv. 23), and Paul visited it (Acts xv. 41, xviii. 18, xxi. 3; Gal. i. 21.) *Naaman*, cured of the leprosy by Elisha, was of this country. (Luke iv. 27.)

SYRO-PHœNICIAN. Phœnicia, having been conquered by Syria, the latter prefixed *Syria* to its old appellation, whence *Syro-Phœnician*. The Canaanitish woman of Matthew (xv. 22, 24), is called by Mark a Syro-Phœnician (vii. 26); the country originally was peopled by Canaanites.

TABITHA (*a doe-buck*), a Christian woman of Joppa, and renowned for her piety and alms-deeds, and whom Peter restored to life. She was called also *Dorcas* (which see.) (Acts ix. 36, 40.)

TARSUS (*winged*), the capital of Cilicia, in Asia Minor, where Paul was born; it is called also *Tarshish*. (Acts ix. 11, 30, xi. 25, xxi. 39, xxii. 2.)

TAVERNS, *the Three*, (*a city*); some say only an *Inn*, about 33 miles south of Rome, where Paul's friends met him. (Acts xxviii. 15.)

TERTULLUS (*a liar, wondrous*), an advocate employed by the Jews to plead against Paul before Felix, the governor of Judea. (Acts xxiv. 1, 2.)

THAMAR, or *Tamar*, (*a palm-tree*), mother of Phares, and Zara, spoken of by Matthew. (Matt. i. 3.)

THARA (*good, small*), also Terah, the father of Abraham, and a progenitor of Christ (Luke iii. 34.)

THEOPHILUS (*friend of God, devout*), an eminent Christian to whom Luke inscribes his "Gospel," and the "Acts of the Apostles." Some think he was a magistrate; others, that the appellation means any good Christian. (Luke i. 3; Acts i. 1.)

THESSALONICA (*the other victory of God*), a city of Macedonia in which Paul planted a Christian Church.

THEUDAS (*flowing with water*), a seditious impostor, who excited a tumult among the Jews, which ended in himself and four hundred of his followers being slain (Acts v. 36.)

THOMAS (*twin, bottomless depth*), one of the Apostles of our Lord. (See Appendix A.)

THYATIRA (*sweet savor of labor, sacrifice, contrition*), a city of Asia Minor, on the borders of Lycia and Mysia, the native place of Lydia. (Acts xvi. 14.) Here was also one of the seven Churches to the angel of which Christ sent a message.

TIBERIAS (*good vision, navel, breaking asunder*), a city of Galilee on the western shore of the lake of Tiberias. The names of both the sea and the city were given by Herod Antipas, in honor of Tiberias Cæsar. (John vi. 1, 23.)

TIBERIUS, the successor of Augustus in the empire of Rome; he reigned from A. D. 14 to A. D. 37. In the fifteenth year of his reign John the Baptist began to preach. (Luke iii. 1.)

TRACHONITIS (*strong, cruel*), a small barren district south of Damascus, of which Philip was tetrarch. (Luke iii. 1.)

TROAS (*bored through*); a maritime city of Phrygia or Mysia, 25 miles north of Assos.) Paul made several visits here; in his first visit he had a vision inviting him into Macedonia. (Acts xvi. 8, 11.) He immediately sailed thither, and called at Troas many times after. (Acts xx. 5, 6.)

TROGYLLIUM (*a pauntry*), a promontory at the foot of Mount Mycale, opposite to Samos from which it is distant about five miles. (Acts xx. 15.)

TROPHIMUS (*nourished*), a convert of Paul's, and born at Ephesus; he accompanied the Apostle to Jerusalem, and went with him into the temple, which led the Jews to charge Paul with taking Greeks into the temple (Acts xx. 4, xxi. 28, 29); afterward he was taken ill at Miletum, where Paul left him.

TWELVE. "In the Scriptures," says *Prof. Stuart*, "we might naturally expect to find the number of *twelve* often introduced, on account of the twelve tribes of Israel. Thus in Ex. xv. 27, twelve fountains of water at Elim; Ex. xxiv. 4, twelve pillars around the altar; Lev. xxiv. 5, twelve cakes of show-bread; Ex. xxviii. 10, 12, twelve gems

in the breast-plate of the high priest; Num. vii. 3, 87, xxix. 17, offerings of different kinds by twelves; Num. vii. 84-87, various vessels to be made for the temple by twelves; Num. xiii. 3, *seq.*, twelve spies to the land of Canaan; Josh. iv. 3, twelve stones from the Jordan, carried by twelve men, and thrown into a monumental heap; 1 Kings iv. 7, 26, twelve prefects of Solomon's household, and twelve thousand horsemen; 1 Kings vii. 25, twelve brazen oxen, supporting the laver; 1 Kings x. 20, twelve brazen lions near the throne; Ezek. xliii. 16, the altar twelve cubits long and broad; not to mention many other twelves. In the New Testament the twelve Apostles take the lead. In the Apocalypse we have twelve thousand in each of the twelve tribes, who are sealed in the forehead as the servants of God. (Rev. vii. 4, *seq.*) In Rev. xxi. 12, *seq.*, we have an account of the New Jerusalem with twelve gates (comp. Ezek. xlvi. 31, *seq.*), and twelve angels to keep them, and the names of the twelve tribes are written on them. There are also twelve rows of stones in the foundation of the walls on which the names of the twelve Apostles are inscribed. Besides all this, the city measures twelve thousand furlongs, and its walls are twelve times twelve cubits high."

TYCHICUS (*casual*), a Christian of Ephesus, converted by Paul, whom he accompanied to Jerusalem. (Acts xx. 4.) He was very much beloved by the Apostle, and was entrusted with his letters to certain Churches. Paul sent him to Ephesus (Eph. vi. 21; 2 Tim. iv. 12), afterward to Colosse, and subsequently to Titus.

TYRE (*breaking with a flail, siege, binding, singing, strength, rock*), a famous and ancient city and sea-port of Phœnicia, on the Mediterranean coast, about 20 miles south of Sidon. Our Lord alluded to it when reproving the Jews for their unbelief. (Matt. xi. 21; Luke x. 13). It subsequently excited the anger of Herod. (Acts xii. 20).

ZACCHÆUS (*pure, meat, just*), a chief publican, or farmer-general of the revenue. When Christ passed through Jericho, he was very anxious to see Him, but could not from the smallness of his stature; he therefore climbed up a sycamore tree. Here our Lord saw him, and calling him down, proposed to be his guest. Zacchæus' heart was opened, and he became a sincere believer. (Luke xix. 2-9).

ZACHARIAS (*mindful of the Lord*), also *Zachariah* and *Zechariah*, a priest of the course of Abia, husband of Elizabeth, and father of *John the Baptist*. (Luke i. 5-10). When the angel Gabriel visited him, and announced the birth of a son, he doubted, and consequently was struck dumb till the event was fulfilled. (Luke i. 11-23, 59-64.) He then prophesied concerning the redemption of Israel. (Luke i. 67-79).

ZARA (*rising*), a descendant of Judah alluded to by Matthew. (Matt. i. 3.)

ZEBEDEE (*doury, endowed*), a fisherman of Galilee, the husband of *Salome*, and father of the Apostles James and John, both of whom left him to follow our Saviour. (Matt. iv. 21; x. 2; xx. 20; xxvi. 37; xxvii. 56; Mark i. 19, 20; iii. 17; x. 35; Luke v. 10; John xxi. 2.) He is thought to have been not a poor man, for he had a ship of his own and hired servants. (Mark i. 20.)

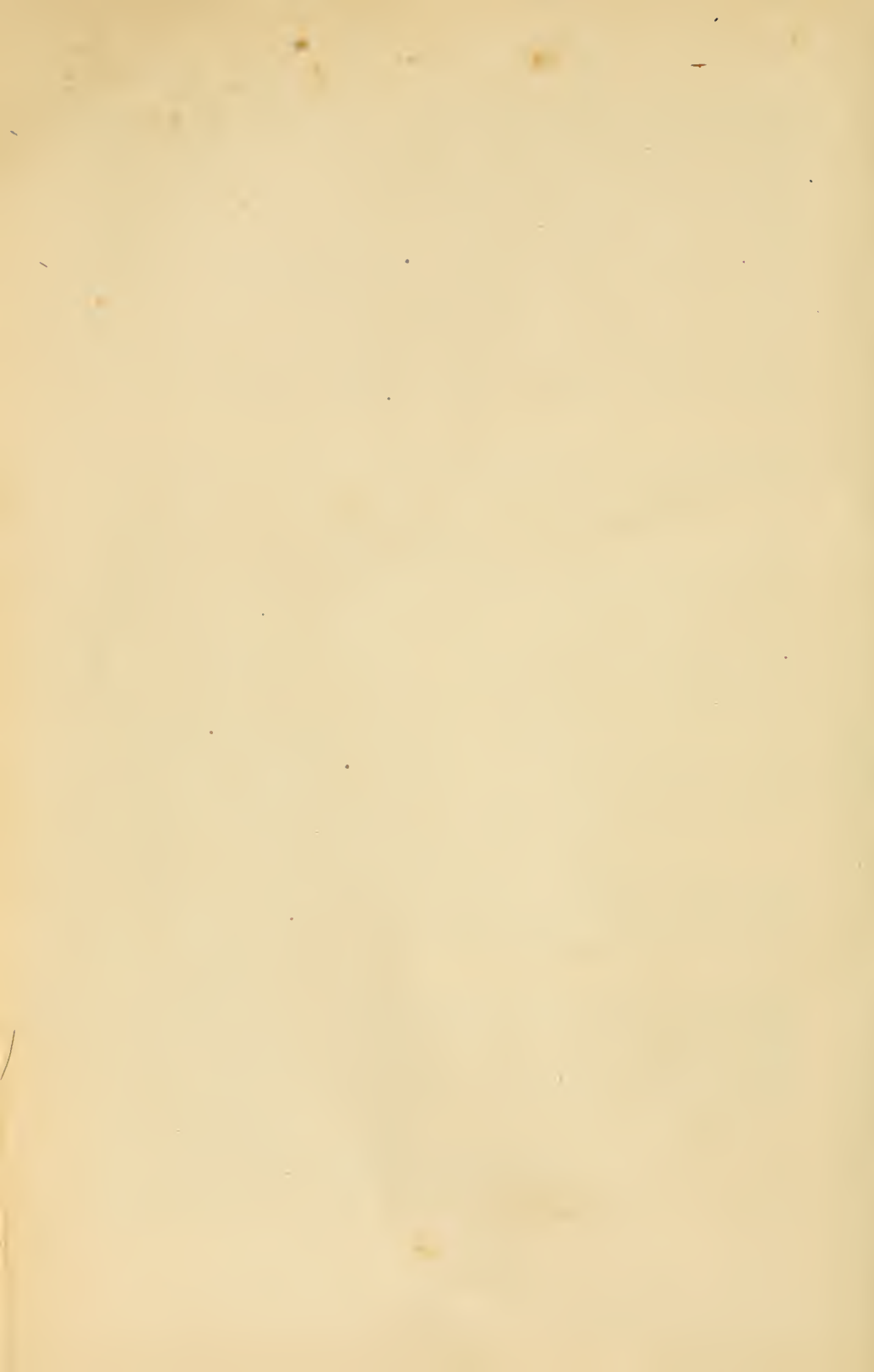
ZEALOTS, A sect in Judea, extremely *zealous* for the exact fulfillment of the Mosaic law; maintaining that religious liberty and the Divine law were to be upheld by force of arms: and that tribute was due to God only, and not to the Romans, nor any foreign power: they therefore continually exhorted the people to shake off the Roman yoke.

ZEBULUN (*dwelling place, abiding*), the portion of Galilee allotted to that tribe, and in which it was prophesied by *Isaiah* (Isa. ix. 1, 2), that our Lord's ministry would be exercised. (Matt. iv. 13, 15).

ZELOTES (*full of zeal, zealous.*) See SIMON ZELOTES, ZEALOTS.

ZOROBABEL, or *Zerubbabel*, (*banished*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Matt. i. 12, 13; Luke iii. 27.)











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